

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

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Signs of the Times

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SONG

*Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God!
He, whose word cannot be broken,
Form'd thee for his own abode:
On the Rock of Ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
Thou may'st smile at all thy foes.*

*See! the streams of living waters,
Springing from eternal love,
Well supply thy sons and daughters,
And all fear of want remove.
Who can faint, while such a river
Ever flows their thirst t' assuage?
Grace, which, like the Lord, the giver,
Never fails from age to age.*

*Round each habitation hovering,
See the cloud and fire appear,
For a glory and a covering,
Showing that the Lord is near.
Thus deriving from their banner,
Light by night, and shade by day,
Safe they feed upon the manna
Which he gives them by the way.*

*Blessed inhabitants of Zion,
Washed in the Redeemer's blood!
Jesus, whom their souls rely on,
Makes them kings and priests to God:
'Tis his love his people raises
Over self to reign as kings;
And as priests, his solemn praises
Each for a thank-offering brings.*

Newton.

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EDITORIAL

DEATH



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

and precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. (Eccl. 3:2- Eccl. 7:1 - Ps. 116:15).

Death is a subject that is principal in the scriptures, and should be greatly considered by all, for every thing that has life is subject unto it. Yet there are many who give no thought to its im-

The Holy Scriptures tell us there is a time to be born and a time to die, that the day of death is better than the day of one's birth,

portance and do not understand what it is. Most people realize that when we die we are buried or cremated and our bodies return to the dust from whence we are made. To many that is the complete end, and they know not that there is life beyond the grave.

Now may God give us grace to search the scriptures and rightly divide the word of truth, that our efforts may be of comfort or edification to one or more of his little children.

What is the meaning of death? It is a separation from something. When man dies a corporal death he is separated from life in this world; and there is a death that separated man from God in the garden of Eden. When God made Adam and placed him in the garden of Eden he gave him a commandment, saying, *"of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* Although God commanded him to eat not of this fruit, God did know that he would do so, for he did not say, "if ye eat," but, "in the day that thou eatest thereof." God had a just and holy purpose in this, as well as all things that come to pass, for, *"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven."* *"Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand."* When God gave this commandment to Adam, Eve and all his posterity were in him and therefore received the commandment also. Eve had not yet been taken

from his side when the commandment was given, yet she said to the serpent who beguiled her, ***"God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die,"*** The serpent beguiled her, saying, ***"Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day thou eatest thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."*** We know that Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, and gave unto Adam and he did eat. In doing so, he transgressed the commandment of God, and God's holy justice demands the death of the transgressor. John tells us that sin is the transgression of the law. Paul said, ***"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned: (for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.) Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one (the first Adam) many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."*** (Rom 5:12-15). Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Adam was not deceived for he was a figure (image) of him that was to come, Christ, and Christ certainly

could not be deceived. Eve, being a figure of the church, was in Christ before the foundation of the world. Adam had no power to redeem his bride from death, but because of his love for her he went down into death with her. This death separated him from God, for he fell from his innocent, upright state into a state of sin and iniquity. Because of his love for his bride, Christ would also die for her, that he might redeem us, ***"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."*** (Titus 2:14). Nothing can be redeemed by anyone other than the owner, and we were Christ's in ancient eternity, for God chose us in him before the foundation of the world and predestinated us unto the adoption of children. (Eph ch.1). To this end Christ stood as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev 13:8). There was a covenant made between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: therefore, ***"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."*** (Gal 4:4-5).

God is love. He has loved us with an everlasting love and bestowed upon his sinful children his great love and mercy, but all of his holy attributes are equal and just, so that one cannot annul another. His love and mercy did not save us, but is the reason for the salvation given us: but it was the shed

blood of Jesus Christ that satisfied God's holy justice and brought salvation to his lost people. His holy law demands that the soul that sinneth must die, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission. (Heb 9:22). *"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."* (Heb 9:12). *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."* Heb 10:14).

For the joy that was set before him, Christ endured agonizing death on the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God. How was it lawful and just that Christ could shed his blood for ruined, lost sinners who were justly condemned to death? There is not a just court in the world that would allow a substitute to be executed in the place of a man who was justly sentenced to die. But should this be permitted, would justice be served? Certainly not. A substitute can never satisfy justice, for the one justly condemned would surely continue to be as guilty as before. Jesus Christ, therefore, did not die a substitute for us as some believe. God forbid that I should ever think of his holy Son as being a substitute for me or anyone. If he died only as a substitute, then all of us are yet in our sins, having no redemption from them, and we shall never see nor enter the kingdom of heaven and immortal glory.

There is no denying that Jesus died for his people, but how was holy justice satisfied when the just died for the

unjust? It is because they have a living unity with him. It is in him that we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28). Col 3:3, *"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with God in Christ."* In Ps. 139:15-16, *"My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and 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."* This substance was obviously the body of Christ. *"Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular."* (1 Cor 12:27). *"And he (Christ) is the head of the body, the church."*

The church is composed of the children chosen in him, and we read Heb 2:14, *"For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* In his Godhead he could not die, therefore he must become incarnate: become flesh and blood and under the law. Gal 4:4-5, *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."* Christ had to be under the law in order to fulfill it, which he did to a jot and to a tittle; and he is the end of the law for righteousness to

every one that believeth. We are no longer under the law, but under grace, for 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).

In Heb 2:17 we read, *"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."* Let us consider this high priest. The priests under the old law were made without an oath, but Jesus with an oath: *"The Lord sware and will not repent. Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."* The sacrificial offerings made by the priests under the old law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did: by which we draw nigh unto God. (See 9th ch. of Heb.) Jesus is the better hope, for he is the high priest, and also the perfect offering: *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."* (Heb 10:14). *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption."* (1 Cor 1:30). The word sanctify means, to be set apart as holy. The word Saints is also derived from it. Heb 2:11, *"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."* In his prayer to the Father in John 17, Jesus said, *"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." In Eph chapter 5 we read, *"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 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."* This glorious church is the body of Christ. *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bone."* Eph 5:30, verse 18 tells us that Christ is the head of the church, therefore, we being his body, there is a living unity with him that can never be severed. In light of this unity, how can Jesus Christ be considered a substitute? No way!

Jesus had no sins of his own to die for, but our sins were imputed unto him. *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."* (Isa 53:6) Our sins were imputed unto him, and his righteousness is imputed unto us. Abraham believed God, *"therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness. Now it is not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed unto him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."* (Rom 4:22-24). How do we believe? Jesus said, *"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."* And Paul said, *"Unto you*

it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."

When Jesus died on the cross, his bride, the church, was in him: *having been by the Spirit baptized into one body.* (1 Cor 12-13). *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into his death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* This life in this time world. 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 in Eph 2:1, *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."* This has reference to the new birth, being born again of the Holy Spirit. Volumes might be written about this particular death, but I must bring this to a close.

We now live in an earthly, fleshly body that must die and return to the dust, except we be here when Christ comes again. Jesus said of this body, *"Marvel not at this: for the time is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."* In Col 3:4, *"When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."* In Heb 2:27-28, *"And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he*

appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

One more quotation and I must stop. 1 Thes 4:14-17. *"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."*

Beloved brethren, it is my hope that I am one who will be caught up and be forever with him. Is this your hope also? Surely it is.

I realize that I have barely touched the surface of this vast subject, but if the Lord be in the matter, it is enough for this time. I ask an interest in your prayers of faith.

Eld. C.C. Wilbanks

ST. MATTHEW 5: 44-45.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Elder & Sister Key,

I have wanted to write and let you know how glad I am to be receiving the dear old Signs again but have put off doing so because words really can't express my thankfulness as I would like to be able to. I read and re-read the Sept. & Oct. issues which came in the same day's mail the first 24 hrs. after their arrival. The articles they contained truly did seem like manna from heaven. I especially liked Katherine Matthew's poem in the Sept. issue, as well as Elder Wilbanks article "Born Again." But they are all good. Often I am left in the Dark as to understanding as I'd like to, but I know that that is, and always has been, in God's hands.

Those who are blessed to write, whether in poem or written article, are blessed indeed. But so too, are those of us of like faith and experience to read such things, as they mirror so much of what we feel to be our own walk in this life. That's what I find so wonderful about the Old Baptist Signs. It is full of meat and drink for such as I. And that brings to mind the Old Baptist Hymn:

I am a stranger here below
 And what I am tis hard to know
 I am so vile, so prone to sin
 I fear that I'm not born again

When I experience call to mind
 My understanding is so blind
 All feeling sense seems to be gone

Which makes me fear that I am wrong.

I find myself out of the way;
 My thoughts are often gone astray
 Like one alone I seem to be
 Oh! Is then anyone like me?

I thank God everyday for all of the old copies of the Signs I have kept and inherited from loved ones gone before ... I read and re-read them and find food nearly every time I pick them up.

I have an audio tape recording of a Church meeting which I believe was back in 1969 at Naches, Wash. Elder Spangler Spoke on "The wrath of Man shall praise Him, and The rest He will restrain" which is very good and I am so glad to have the copy. The meeting was copied on audio tape by an aunt of mine and I re-copied it here a few years ago. I believe it was a three-day meeting, but I'm not sure. There was a hymn sung then that I'd never heard before, nor heard since, that I would very much like to obtain the words of. (I have the tune and part of the words to listen to, but need all the words to learn it.) They are in part as follows - (For the words to this song - see the first page of this issue - Editors).

Round the (???) hovering
 See the cloud & fire appear
 For (?) glory -
 Showing that the Lord is near

(?) Rising from this banner
 Light by night and shade by day
 Safe they feed upon the manna
 Which He gives them on the way.

The last words I believe are "Solid joy's and lasting treasures, none but Zions children know."

It was rather a poor recording, and much of it was hard to hear. Never the less, as I said before, I'm so thankful to have the copy. If the Hymn book is in print and available I'd be very glad to purchase one. (I have the D.H. Goble hymn - book.)

Well dear people, I know I've taken up enough of your time. My heart is full of praise to the Lord for His mercy to me, and tho I do feel forsaken and rejected at times, amazingly enough He has let my Hope in Him stand fast. What a blessing it is to be made to "glory in the Lord".

An unworthy one of the least, In Christ's love I hope.

Caroline Martin

ARTICLES

1 Cor. 1:20 & 21 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world.; For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God.

The Bible speaks of many gods and many lords, but I want to write about only one, the one God who is God and there is no other God like him. The God who created heaven and earth. In the beginning God created heaven and earth which was a mighty thing to do, unequalled since time be-

gan, this world with all the planets, the stars which extend to a distance the wisdom of men can't measure. The continents and all the oceans, do you believe God created all these things?

The natural wisdom of man, or the wise man of the world don't, they can't see their own wisdom as doing something so great, so they don't believe God did it. They can see and therefore know the earth is here, it had to get here someway, since these wise men won't accept the idea of creation they have to figure for themselves how it came to be here. So they have it all figured out, see there was this great bang, all these marvelous things we see about us just fell into place. I myself don't know where all the material was supposed to come from to produce this big bang. But of course I am not wise like they are.

God created man and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, not so says these natural wise men, because first there was a monkey, and by his own self he kept changing for the better until Lo and behold we now have a man. Are you beginning to see the wisdom of this world? Strange with all the bones they have dug up, they have never found a half monkey and half man.

Come on down through time and we find there was a great flood which God sent upon the earth, such as covered everything, what do the wise men of the world say about this? In their digging and searching for their answers, they have found evidence to show there was a great flood, so they say, oh yes there was a warm spell and some

large icebergs drifted south, melted and caused the flood. They say why God couldn't have covered the earth with water, why that would take a lot of water, and if He had of got that much, what did he do with it all later?

We read further, and we read where the Son of God (Jesus) was born of a virgin, later was crucified and after three days raised from the dead. At these things the wise men say, impossible, ridiculous etc. In their wisdom there is no room for miracles such as these. In their wisdom they can't do these things, so they won't believe them. Neither can they figure how a cow, a sheep and a chicken eat the same grass, yet one makes milk, one grows wool, while the other grows feathers.

Can't we now see why it is written, God has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes, now we can also see why the wisdom of man knew not God. All of these wonderful miracles were, I believe, ordinary things with God, but the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God, for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

I have been writing on fleshy or natural wisdom, and we know the bible in many places speaks of that relatively foolishness, such as the Apostle Paul said, I was determined to come not among you with enticing words of man's wisdom. Paul had been shown that man's wisdom was nothing of value in the spiritual sense, he had been shown the value of true wisdom from God. Like for instance the fear of God is the beginning of

wisdom. When a man comes face to face with God (I don't mean to see his face, for no man can see his face and live) he then is shown the awful sinful state of himself, he sees himself as he is, when he is shown the holiness, power and glory of God. This will surely bring a fear of God upon a man, not slavish fear, as you may think of a slave toward a cruel master, but a reverential fear, and this would be the beginning of wisdom, as you can see this wisdom is quite different from natural wisdom. This wisdom will show you the value of spiritual things over and above natural things. Like Solomon when he prayed, grant me wisdom to go in and out among the people, God had blessed him with wisdom to realize the value of this petition. When a man is blessed to see himself as a sinner in need of mercy from the God who blessed him here with life, as Job did when he said I abhor myself, this man has wisdom far exceeding the wisdom of this world.

The Queen of Sheba, when she came before Solomon, reports she had heard of his acts and his wisdom was true. How be it she didn't believe all those things until she came and saw them, she said, "happy are these men and happy are these thy servants, saying the half has not been told me. This is a true picture, and the results of the wisdom from God.

God said, "let there be light," and the sun appeared in the heaven, this is a natural light to give light to men all over the earth, everyone who lives on the face of the earth with normal eyesight has seen this light. Here again

the worldly wise men know it is there but can't believe God placed it there. Just like all the men of this world who have not been blessed with a spiritual birth cannot believe in these spiritual things, as it is with the worldly wise, it is foolishness unto them. God works in wonderful ways his miracles to perform.

We read and learn of the many wonders in the animal world, for instance, the migratory birds, how they migrate vast distances and arrive at some given point it seems without failure, many people say, why that is just the laws of nature. I guess you could call it that and you may be right. How does the small delicate butterfly manage to fly across the large body of water known as the Gulf of Mexico to winter in Old Mexico. I believe it is the power of almighty God directing all the movements of these animals and I believe he set them in motion at the creation. He saw and purposed every move they will make, their cause is set before them the same as it is with men. How can a man know his way, for it is God who directs his steps, and He says, walk with patience the course that is set before you. I believe the course has been laid out for each of his children, leading them in the way, and through the hard knocks which is needed to make and mold them in the exact way that is needed for their good and to his praise, much as it is with refining pure gold. I will be unto them a God and they shall be my people.

I don't believe any man knows exactly how long this earth has stood since creation, for with God one day is as a thousand years, and 1000 years as a day. Therefore the bible doesn't spell it

out as in a number of years, for a reason. I believe, because we walk by faith and not by sight. The earth was without form and void for how long? I have written all this about creation for this reason.

The wise men of this world who have all the answers have come up with this system called carbon dating, which according to their wisdom determines how old a particular item is by the amount of carbon it contains. To all this I have one question, which of these worldly wise men was there to tell God how much carbon to have in any individual item at creation?

Think about these large trees, I have read where some of them may be as much as 2000 yrs. old, their ages are determined by cutting down the tree and counting the rings in the stump, one ring represents one years growth. The first year after creation, how many rings would one of these trees have? Did God create these trees with or without these rings, did he create other things with or without carbon?

To sum up the wisdom of this world is this, for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, for it is written. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. Oh! the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out.

Frank Hunt

PSALM 62:7-8.

In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.

Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

VOICES OF THE PAST

“My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.”—DEUTERONOMY xxxii. 2.

In the falling of the natural dew there is something soft, still, and gentle. We therefore read, “We will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground” (2 Sam. xvii. 12), that is, stealthily and unseen. It does not rush down like the pelting hail, but falls stilly and often imperceptibly; so that we scarcely know it has fallen, till we go out in the morning and see every blade of grass tipped with the sparkling dew-drops; by these bright gems we know that dew has fallen during the still hours of the night. So spiritually, the kingdom of God is not in noise, rant, or wild excitement. The Lord was not in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice (1 Kings xix. 11, 12). And thus there may be a great deal of religious fire, but no presence of God felt; fleshly passions worked up into a storm, but no “still small voice” speaking to the conscience; a very earthquake of natural convictions, but no inward “demonstration of the sprit and of power.” But when the spiritual dew falls, it drops gently, softly, and stilly into the heart, and it is only known by the sweet and blessed effects it produces.

Dew also has a *softening effect*, especially in warm climates, where it falls very copiously. We therefore read, “Thou makest it soft with showers” (Psalm lxx. 10). It does not tear up the ground as with thunderbolts, but by moistening and softening penetrates into the soil. And thus the dew of God’s grace moistens and

softens the heart, humbles, dissolves, and fertilizes it; not by tearing it up with the thunderbolts of wrath and condemnation, but by dropping gently and stilly into it, so as to melt it into contrition, meekness, and godly sorrow before the throne of mercy and grace.

Elder J.C. Philpot

2 TIMOTHY IV. 3, 4.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

The apostle Paul, and all the apostles, were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and thereby duly qualified to give such instructions to Timothy, and to all other gospel ministers and gospel saints, as they were then, or ever should be in need of. Without the immediate inspiration of God, they could not have predicted the things which should come to pass in subsequent ages, both in reference to the church of God, and the development of the man of sin. In reference to the manifestation of that wicked spirit which was to be developed, Paul had already informed Timothy in the first epistle, iv. 1-3, that the Spirit had spoken expressly on that subject, saying, “Expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils”; and the Spirit had with equal clearness expressly spoken of the lies they should tell, the hypocrisy they should practice, what should be the state of their consciences, what heresies they should

utter, and what restrictions they should lay upon the church. Now, in closing this second and last epistle, when he was ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand, in his valedictory charge, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead, repeats to him the admonition to "preach the Word," and that constantly, and the admonition is enforced by reminding him of what the Spirit had expressly said, *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine."* The time specified, is the time which God had appointed, until which time the man of sin could not be manifested. *"And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then, [at that time] shall that wicked spirit be revealed."* The time is expressly declared by the Spirit, as the last time. All the powers of darkness could not anticipate the time which God had determined on for the fulfillment of these important events, nor could all the efforts, devices, good works or bad works, of saints or sinners, postpone that development one hour or one moment beyond the appointed time.

Some very conscientious and good brethren have seemed afraid to admit that God has set the bounds of wickedness of men and of devils, so that they have no power to change them; but we would ask such brethren whether the Spirit would speak to us of things which it would be wrong for us to believe? Would the Spirit tell us expressly,

things which we ought not to know? Has not the Spirit told us expressly that that wicked spirit shall be revealed in his time, and that God withholdeth it until its time, and has pledged his word that it shall in its time be revealed? Read the Scriptures on this; subject, and then ask yourselves, Could the beast with seven heads and ten horns, have risen up out of the sea before the great red dragon had been manifested? Or could the second beast have preceded the first? Or could the image of the beast have anticipated any of its predecessors? If they could not, it was because God had ordered things as they came to pass.

Even so, likewise the apostacy predicted in our text, has its time fixed. *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine."* But who are they that will not endure sound doctrine? Some have supposed that this could not mean christians, and that it must mean the world or antichrist. But when, we ask, has the world or antichrist ever endured sound doctrine? Did the world, the Jews or pagans, endure the sound doctrine set forth by Christ and his apostles, in their days? Did the carnal Israelites endure the sound doctrine that was reported to them by the prophets? Which of them did they not slay? The truth has, in all times since sin entered the world, been opposed by the world, and by all unconverted men. We cannot, therefore, suppose that the Spirit spake thus expressly of a time when nothing unusual was to be revealed. These nonendurers of sound doctrine

are marked as apostates, thus, "*Some shall depart from the faith.*" We do not understand that these apostates are the children of God, born of the Spirit, or that they ever possessed the vital principles of faith in their hearts. But we do contend that they are those who have professed the faith of the gospel, and have been held in the fellowship of the church of God, otherwise they could not depart from what they never professed to hold. Christ has said, "Every plant that my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." And again, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away." Thus signifying that all who enter not in by the door into the sheepfold, or church, are thieves and robbers, and all who come in without his grace, shall be cast out without his favor. These things began to develop in the apostolic age, and John speaks of some who went out from us, that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us. So in those events which are traced in the revelations made to John on Patmos, there were times signified in which the world rushed into the church nominally, but they could not endure the sound doctrine of the gospel, for they had neither ears to hear, nor hearts to understand or love it. Whatever direct allusion our text has to the times of the apocalyptic beasts, or false prophet, we feel justified by the words "last times" in the context, in applying the prophecy to the present time, including the last forty or fifty years. We do not feel sufficiently liberal to apply this subject to the various protestant or catho-

lic denominations, *by which the church of God has been surrounded in ages past, for we do not believe they, or any of them, ever did, or ever could, depart from the faith of the gospel, for they never, any of them, strictly speaking, held it, and they could not depart from what they never professed to hold.

*We speak of them as denominations; Christ has but one church on the earth. "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.*"—*Eph. iv. 4, 5.* We freely admit, and fully believe that as there have been many nominally connected with the church of Christ, who were not children of God, not born of God, not taught by his Spirit, so there have been many of God's children nominally connected with the various branches of antichrist, but so long as they remain there, they are living in disobedience to their Lord and Master; and, by that order of discipline which he has established in his church, we cannot extend our fellowship to them, as long as they continue to rank and file with the enemies. "*What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?*" "*Wherefore 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.*"—*2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.*

Within the space of the last half century, the prophecy of our text has been manifestly realized in the Baptist Church, which, as a church, is the

only organization that has ever stood on the foundation of the apostles. Many in this last time have departed from the faith, and in their apostasy have demonstrated that they could not endure sound doctrine. Those who are now denominated New School, or Missionary Baptists, or at least those churches who took that ground at the time of the division, once professed to hold the faith which we now hold. The same articles substantially, which were held by us before the separation, are held by us now, but these prominent sentiments which have distinguished the church of Christ from the apostles' days, and which they professed to hold once in common with us, they have now departed from, and do now wantonly repudiate them. They are, therefore, very manifestly embraced in the prediction of the text, as having departed from the faith. We challenge the world to point us to a single church or congregation of them who can at this day endure the sound doctrine which in all former ages characterized the Baptists, from the time of John the Baptist, until the time of their apostasy.

Neither Old School Baptists nor New School Baptists, will deny either of the following propositions, namely: first, that we were once all included in one religious denomination, and all professed the same faith and order. Second, that we are now very widely apart, that we do not all hold the same faith and order, and therefore one party or the other, or both, have departed from the faith which we all once professed to hold.

Now, as it is not very likely that either party will admit that they have so departed, but as each charges the other with having departed from the faith, we have but one alternative for the settlement of our respective claims--to the word and to the testimony. What does the Spirit expressly say, by the mouth of the inspired Paul, shall be the distinguishing marks or characteristics of those who in the last times will not endure sound doctrine? And with which party are these marks and characteristics found? Will any sane man who has any knowledge of the Old School Baptists, say that we have, since the division, after our own lusts, heaped to ourselves teachers? Will the New School Baptists themselves so charge us? So far from it, they have continually thrown it in our teeth, that instead of having heaps of teachers, that we have but very few, and they have been predicting that in a few years we shall have none. Some of them have exultingly said they expected to live to see the last of the Old School preachers buried. If, then, we have no such heaps of teachers, it cannot be that we are the party who are advertised in the holy Scriptures as having heaped to ourselves teachers.

Again, who will charge that the Old School Baptists have itching ears, leading them to lust after heaps of teachers, and evincing such lusts and such itching, by running after all the new doctrines and institutions of the age? Is it not proverbial that the Old School Baptists are behind the age? That they are an antieffort, unprogressive people, and more than five hundred

years behind the improvements of the age in which we live?

Once more! Will any one say that what preachers we have, have been raised up by any effort of ours? That we have employed any kind of machinery to heap or to multiply the number of our ministers? Do our teachers or ministers, show so much of the wisdom and polish of this world, as to give any just grounds to suspect that they have been called, qualified or brought into the work by the agency of men? No rational man who has any knowledge of us believes any such thing. The marks, therefore, which are to identify and distinguish the class of apostates in our text, cannot apply to the Old School Baptists. Nor can it be said in truth, of Old School Baptists, that they are turned away from the truth, and turned unto fables. We have been constantly charged with obstinacy, for so pertinaciously adhering to the Scriptures, as our only standard and rule of faith and practice. Our refusal to depart from the Bible as our standard of morality and religion, and to unite in the various schemes of the age for reforming society, reclaiming drunkards, converting sinners, and evangelizing the world, has brought down on us such epithets as Hardshells, Iron Jackets, and a profusion of titles indicative of anything but a readiness to turn away from what we hold to be the truth, and of being allured by fables. Flatteries and frowns alike have failed to draw the Old School Baptists from the Bible as their standard. We could mention cases where flattering titles of presidents, vice-presidents and directorships in popular, humanly devised religious societies, and lucrative missionary appointments, have been

tendered, as a bait to draw some of our number from their steadfastness in the faith, and other instances could be particularized where proscription, reproach and calumny, have also been employed for the same purpose, but all in vain. How then can any of the marks which divine revelation has fixed on the apostates, described in our text, apply to the Old School Baptists?

As these marks cannot be found on the Old School Baptists, they cannot be the people who have departed from the faith, or who cannot endure sound doctrine. We will now proceed to show that the New School or Missionary Baptists have them all as plainly stamped on them as was the mark which was set on Cain, and as indelibly written as were the words, "Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother of Harlots," &c., on the forehead of the woman that John saw sitting upon the scarlet-colored beast. (Rev. xvii. 5.)

The Mission Baptists who have gone out from us, have very clearly demonstrated that they cannot endure sound doctrine, not only by going out from us, on account of our holding sound doctrine, but also by heaping to themselves teachers. Their ears have itched for such doctrines as would make them popular in the eyes of the world, and give them a place and respectability with the worldly religionists of the age. This appears from their pleading the necessity of Theological schools, colleges and universities, for training young men for the ministry, because other religious denominations around them have such worldly institutions for that purpose, and lest they should thereby draw all the learned, wealthy, and influential, into

their societies. This itching for popularity has shown a lack of confidence in God to raise up suitable teachers for them, or a sufficient supply to compete successfully with other denominations. The instruction of the King of Zion to his disciples, is, to pray the Lord of the harvest to supply laborers for the gospel ministry, but their own lusts have dictated to them to heap teachers to themselves, in defiance of the command of Christ, and in contempt of his authority. They not only prepare for themselves a number corresponding to their congregations, but they heap them, so that they have quantities of them for transportation to foreign lands, and an abundant surplus to be employed as itinerant beggars, colporters, &c., at home. Thus they not only crowd out from their pulpits all such as would offend their delicate itching ears, with sound doctrine, but have troops of them to send forth, like the frogs of Egypt, into all the land, to come up into our houses, our kneading troughs, and our ovens. Is this picture overdrawn? Are there not hundreds of this heap now, and at all times, lounging about the cities and large towns, waiting for a call, and begging their way along, because they are too lazy to work for an honest living? Will any New School or Missionary Baptist deny that such is the case?

Who can deny that the New Order of Baptists raise up, call, educate and qualify their own teachers? For what other purpose do they organize their State Education Societies, build their

colleges, and establish their Theological schools? Their white cravated mendicants are constantly abroad in every neighborhood, soliciting funds, and their petitions are spread out before every State legislature, asking for State patronage, to aid them in their work.

Another mark of their apostacy is found upon them: They have turned away their ears from the truth, and are turned unto fables. In no part of the religious world can any be found who are more deadly set against the truth, or who manifest a greater hostility to the very doctrine which they themselves once professed to hold, than do the New Order of Baptists, who are commonly call the New School, or Mission Baptists. Their ears are turned away, and instead of listening to sound doctrine, they are turned to fables.

Webster thus defines the term fable: "1. A feigned story or tale, intended to instruct or amuse; a fictitious narration intended to enforce some useful truth or precept. 2. Fiction in general. 3. An idle story; vicious or vulgar fictions. 4. The plot or connected series of events in an epic or dramatic poem. 5. Falsehood; a softer term for a lie."

Are the New School Baptists turned to fables, as thus defined? Read their publications and the tracts which they have turned to, which they approve, and which they circulate. Read their "Dairyman's Daughter." Their "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and a thousand more of their fabulous stories which have been manufactured to order, and then decide whether these fictitious stories are the sound doctrine of the Bible, or fables.

But, not only in the tracts which they publish and circulate, but in the general ministry of the teachers which they have heaped to themselves, a system of fiction, instead of reality prevails. The sovereignty of God, and the exclusive work of the Spirit, in the quickening and regeneration of men, is denounced, and the power, ability and will of the creature, is extolled. Salvation is by them ascribed to the will and works of men, and the heaven taught truth of God, that salvation is alone of God by grace, through faith, and that not of the creature, but the gift of God, is by them rejected, and the fictitious doctrine of men, that salvation is effected by the use of means, instrumentalities, and that the gospel, or something else, is the means, and their heaps of teachers are the instruments of saving souls from hell, and of advancing them to heaven, is preached instead thereof. They have turned away from the truth of the gospel, to the fiction and fables of the schools; from the eternal realities which are taught by the word and Spirit of the true and living God, to the vain, delusive, fabulous fictions of their own vain imaginations, and to a teaching for doctrine, the commandments of men.

In conclusion of this long article, in which we have, as we believe, fully proved that all the marks of apostacy given in our text, are legibly written on those who have gone out from the Old School Baptists, and that none of them can be found upon the old apostolic order of Baptists which remain on the old Bible grounds, we would urge upon our brethren the solemn truth, that we have nothing wherein to boast over

those who are turned unto fables. God has, as we hope, made us to differ, and all that we have, we have received of him. Let us then rejoice, not that others have fallen, but rather that our names are written in heaven. And let him that standeth take heed lest he fall. May we trust alone in him who is able to keep us from falling, and to give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

Middletown, N. Y., October 1, 1856.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

Georgetown, Ky., March, 1862

Brother Beebe:—In perusing the fourth number, current volume of the Signs of the Times, my attention was called to the following request:

“Will Elder J.F. Johnson, of Kentucky, drop a few thoughts on 1 John 3: 14, 15, and oblige a reader of the Signs of the Times?”

T. Triplett.”

I cannot conceive why it is that my brethren and friends so frequently solicit my views on different and sometimes (to me) mysterious passages of scripture. If they could see my insufficiency as their unworthy servant feels it, they probably would make their requests to abler brethren. And, were I convinced that the Lord had called and chosen only the wise men after the flesh, the mighty and noble, I should despair of accommodating them. But, as he has chosen the foolish, weak, base and despised things, to confound the wise, mighty, etc., I am encouraged

to do the best I can to serve them. Again were I conscious that I could exercise any considerable degree of influence over those who read my poor communications on the subject proposed, I should approach them with timidity. But, as I hope and trust that none will endorse my views unless they are sustained by the scriptures, I am probably not at liberty, as a servant, to withhold such ideas as I may have when called on. It is much easier, however, for my friends to make requests than for me to comply. The subject proposed reads as follows:

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that; no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." I John 3:14,15.

Perhaps there are but few portions of the holy scriptures that is further beyond the power of arminians to reconcile to their theory than this, together with its connection. If it be a fact that our nature in the work of the new birth is so renovated as to change them from natural-carnal, to spiritual-heavenly ones, or if our natural passions are so changed as to lose their relish for natural objects, and desire only heavenly ones, in short, if all our natural enmity, malice, wrath, hatred, etc., are slain in that work, I cannot see why it is that the same individual is styled in the text a brother, and a murderer. Evidently the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are clearly exemplified in this connection; and it is as evident that the Spirit can not perform the works of the flesh, as it is that the flesh cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit. I see no possibility of reconciling

the different declarations in this connection without admitting the fact that the Christian is a complex character, possessing two distinct and radically different natures; one completely holy, sinless, and, therefore, incorruptible; the other entirely sinful, unholy and corrupt. As these two different natures are found in the same person, it is perfectly rational to suppose that there will be an incessant conflict going on between them, and every well informed Christian knows that this is the case; the flesh and spirit lust against each other. Perhaps we cannot imagine a more thorough antagonism between any other two things. In the sixth verse of this chapter it is said whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not, seen him, neither known him. Now, all Christians do know they sin continually; and it is also clearly shown in the scriptures that they have an existence in which they do not, cannot, sin. Erskine says of himself,

"To good and evil equal bent,
I'm both a devil and a saint."

Will any doubt the Christianity of Peter? He heartily acknowledged Christ to be the Son of the living God, and was told by him that flesh and blood had not revealed it to him, but: the Father which is in, heaven. Peter affirmed thrice that he loved him, and appealed to him the third time as knowing it; and yet Christ says to him. "Get thee behind me, satan; thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Although all the Lord's people possess this depraved nature, although Paul, the reputable apostle of Jesus Christ, possessed it in so great a degree that he acknowledged

himself the chief of sinners, and protested that; no good thing dwelt in his flesh, (all that is born of the flesh is flesh,) yet John declares in the text that we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." But we are so prone to seek for this life and love in our depraved nature, lives, persons and passions, that failing to find them there, we often doubt our having any participation in them. By nature we are all arminian, and when we give heed to our own arminian proclivities, and conclude that our natural lives; must be renovated, and our natural passions changed from the love of natural objects to that of spiritual or heavenly ones; and when we find them still glued to earthly things, or natural things, or natural objects, we often seem to forget that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolish unto him neither can he know, being they are spiritually discerned that we still carry with us this. natural man, this sinful body of death, and cannot be delivered from it until we slumber in our last sleep. As often as we seek to find the life of God, or the love of God exercised toward him or his people by our natural passions, so often we shall find ourselves disappointed, and doubting our interest in that eternal life and undying love to God and to his people.

I will here mention some of my own meditations on this subject, not as proof of my position, but to illustrate my thoughts, (for it is thoughts my friend has called for) on the subject. While residing in 'Narwick, N.Y., having retired to bed at the residence of my esteemed brother, E.M. Bradner, of that

place lamenting my barrenness and lack of love, or a feeling sense of the love to God, the question occurred to me, Have you the love of God in you at all? Immediately I commenced strictly and anxiously searching myself until I ransacked seemingly every faculty and corner, and finally arrived at the conclusion that I had not. My feelings at that time perhaps can be better imagined by those who may have had similar exercises (if any have had such), then I can express them. While gloomily rejoicing on the matter, a portion only of a very familiar connection of scripture occurred to my mind immediately attracting my attention so entirely that I could not or did not recollect for a considerable time that, however, was sufficient for the time being. It was the closing part of the chapter of Romans "the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Directly it occurred to me that I was searching in myself for what could be found no where else but in Christ Jesus our Lord. I am not yet prepared to think this was a delusion. Although I often doubt my having an interest in those blessings which were given Christ's people in him before the world was, still I am assured that; they are there, and there only to be found and it is a signal blessing, my dear brethren, that they are there safely kept in reserve for his needy children kept ready to be dealt out to them in every time of need kept as our everlasting portion to which we have an indemnified title. They were given us in our Father's will confirmed to us by his immutable oath and promise, and ratified and sealed by the blood of our Redeemer. Behold what; manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that

we should be called the sons of God; the heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. How we should rejoice that they, as well as we, are all preserved in our dear Savior, and not committed to our keeping. Were they to be found in us, and committed to our keeping, as the poor arminians think we could soon lose ourselves, blessings and all. It is in HIM we have our life, peace and love for him or our brethren, and it is only by that faith which is his gift that we can know we have passed from death unto life. We are not informed that we can at all times know this fact; but I am persuaded that there are times when all the children of God know that they love the brethren, although we often fear we do not love them as we should. O! that we could all "Let brotherly love continue;" do nothing to mar or hinder it, for I am persuaded that the saints feel no more happy at any time than when their hearts are filled with love to their heavenly Father and his children. When that is the case, they have proof positive that they have passed from death unto life. Such is the cunning of the adversary that he exhibits a counterfeit for almost every privilege and blessing we enjoy, except love, and that he is a stranger to. He uses its counterplot, hatred.

"The devils know and tremble too, But Satan cannot love."

Love is an exotic production. Neither the world, the flesh, or the devil can produce love to God or the brethren. Its very name is melody. "Love is the sweetest bud that blows, Its beauty never dies; Below among the saints it blows, And ripens in the skies.

Pure glowing red and spotless white,
Its, perfect colors are;

In Jesus all its sweets, unite,
And look divinely fair. "

Our natural love, when properly directed to the earthly objects of our affections and duly mutualized, is, perhaps, the most pleasant sensation that we enjoy in this imperfect state. But the love of God shed abroad in his heart, and in full exercise to God and to our brethren, transcend that as the heavens; are higher than the earth. In the exercise of that heaven born principle, all fear is cast out, all doubts banished, and multitudes of sins hidden. Then, "How, happy are they who their Savior obey,
And whose treasures are laid up above:
Tongue can not express the sweet comfort and peace

Of a soul in its earliest love."

O that we could all feel more of that soulsoothing, heart-cheering principle. How happily the moments of the careworn pilgrim pass away when that wonderful love that the Father hath bestowed upon us predominates. Then it is that we "Know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

"He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." I suppose there is such a thing as death to Christians while they live; (see I Tim. 5:6, Rev. 3:1) and this I take to be the demise of their religious enjoyment or comfort. In the absence of love to the brethren we suffer this death. But, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." ther; that is the murder here spoken of: whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. Here again we have the work of the old man exemplified. There is the him that eternal life does not abide in,

Does it seem strange that it is intimated here that one may be a brother in the church and at the same time a murderer? We are not to suppose, however, that the murder alluded to is taking away the natural life. No; it is hatred to a brother; that is the murder here spoken of: whosoever hatheth his brother is a murderer. Here again we have the work of the old man exemplified. There is the him that eternal life does not abide in, for he must die. It is impossible that the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness, should exercise hatred to his brother. It is in relation we bear to Cain, who was of that wicked one, that we exercise hatred to a brother. But this murder, the slaying of the religious comfort and enjoyment of ourselves and brethren, is to be viewed differently from the overt act of taking away the natural life of a fellow-being. Before we poor, short-sighted creatures can detect murder the outward act must be committed, it is not so with the Lord, who knoweth what is in man. He says in Matthew 5:21, 22, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old times, Thou shalt not kill and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." The Lord looks at the thoughts and intents of the heart, and there detects the crime. We cannot; always judge correctly by our acts, for they may be performed from motives that would exonerate the performer from all crime, while the same acts instigated by different motives would be highly criminal. I, as a surgeon, may amputate my fellow's limb when necessary to his benefit, and all

would be right. But if I do it when not necessary, with intent to maim and injure him, it is egregiously wrong. The intent, therefore, may constitute the crime, independent of the overt act. (See Matthew 5:25-23.) We Should remember we are at all times under the immediate inspection of the all-wise God, who scans every thought and scrutinizes every passion that lurks within us, and this should make us careful how we entertain hatred to a brother. In my humble opinion we are murderers, in the sense of the text, when we do so. "And ye know; that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." We should remember that each brother possesses those two natures or two men (the old and new), which are contrary to each other, and those aims and ends are very diverse. I can not imagine how those who so vehemently oppose what they stigmatize as the "two men doctrine" can reconcile their views to this text. Dare they advocate the idea that "that which is born of the Spirit," or "born of God," can be chargeable with murder in any sense? It is said in the preceding part of this chapter that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" But it not be forgotten that hatred is enumerated among the works of the flesh. (Gs. 5:20).

Then it must be the fleshly or old man of sin that has not this eternal life abiding in him. May the Lord enable us, my dear brethren, to put off the old man with his deeds, to put on the new man and realize his fruits. A murderer is a despicable ugly character; let us not deserve the name by exercising hatred to a brother. Wretched and miserable must

be the feeling when our bosom wrankles with hatred to a brother! In its presence the cup of joy is dashed with gall and vinegar, the noblest deeds of Christianity and virtue are paralyzed, and an impetus is given to the vile bickerings of infidelity! the fragrance of the " Rose of Sharon " ceases to regale us with its odorous perfumes, the " Lily of the Valley " droops its beautiful head, and the nauseous, piercing thistle and the pricking thorn thrive and do their work in the presence of hatred. It is calculated to drive from the abode of the saints the sweet angel of peace and inaugurate in its stead the cruel god of war.

How different the effects of love, a preminent fruit of the Spirit! It inspires the possessor with the noblest deeds and virtues and drives the vagrant hatred from the dwellings of the saints. The rose and the lily bloom afresh in its presence; the fragrance of the one and the beauty of the other charm and decorate the garden of God, and the thistle and the thorn wither at its touch

The black demon hatred quails at the approach of love hides its knavish head. They are complete counterplots and can not dwell together. They originate in different sources, dwell in different elements, and are doomed to different destinations. An uncompromising war is going on between them, but it is a war of no doubtful tendency.

Hatred fights in the dark, at a distance; it cannot stand the onward charge of love in the light. But the conflict; will soon be over, the battle cease. Hatred shall be banished forever from the presence of the saints, for they shall dwell forever in the presence of their God, in a "city to come" "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day,

for there shall be no night there," no lurking place for the miscreant hatred to hide his detestable head, but where love shall live, and thrive, and bloom, and bless its subjects, nourished and cherished in the vitalizing beams of the Sun of Righteousness! "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

I know not whether "the reader of the Signs of the Times" will allow me to address him as a brother, (as he has not used the relation) but should he or others be benefited by the thoughts suggested I shall be amply paid for penning them; and remain still, as I humbly trust, a brother and servant to the household of faith.

Elder J. F. Johnson

MEETINGS

THE STAUNTON RIVER UNION



he Staunton River Union will meet, the Lord willing, with Danville Church on the 5th Sunday in December and on Saturday before.

Bernice Marshall, Clerk

THE WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION



he West Country Line Union meeting will be held at Pleasantville Church on the 5th Sunday in December. Song service will begin at 10:00 a.m.

Elder H.W. Wray, Mod.
Sister Rachel Wray, Clerk

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

Pursuant to the request of Bell Spur Primitive Baptist Church Carroll County, Virginia. A Presbytery met Sat. Oct. 19, 1996 at 10 o'clock A.M. for the examination of Brother Alan Terry and if found qualified in accordance with the written word of God at the satisfaction and discretion of their judgment ordain the above mentioned to the full work of the office of Gospel Ministry.

The solemnity was begun with Prayer and Preaching by Brother Alan Terry. All Elders of our faith and order present constituted the presbytery. Those present were: Elders Hale Terry, Carl Terry, Larry Hollandsworth, Clarence Stone, Junior Conner, Marvin Brumfield and Raymond Goad.

All Deacons were asked to sit together: 18 were present.

The presbytery was organized by electing Elder Hale Terry as Moderator and Deacon W.G. Parsons as Clerk. Elders Junior Conner and Clarence Stone were chosen to perform the examination of the candidate. Deacon Tony Horton having been duly appointed by Bell Spur Church in conference Sept. 14, 1996 as Spokesman for the Church delivered Brother Alan Terry to the Presbytery.

Examination was made by Elders Junior Conner and Clarence Stone using scriptural reference: 1st Timothy, 3rd ch. 1v-7v and Titus ch1. The presbytery being satisfied with the examination and answers given by the candidate administered the laying on of hands with the ordination prayer being delivered by Elder Marvin Brumfield. The charge was delivered

to the candidate by Elders Raymond Goad and Larry Hollandsworth using scriptural reference the written word of God. The Moderator asked Bell Spur Church if they were satisfied with the work of the presbytery which was answered in the affirmative.

A certificate of Ordination was presented to Brother Alan Terry and the right hand of fellowship and brotherhood given. The ordained Brother was delivered back to the Church an ordained Minister of the Old School Primitive Baptist Church at Bell Spur. The minutes consisting the work of the presbytery were read and adopted. The presbytery was dismissed with prayer by Elder Carl Terry.

Wm. Hale Terry, Moderator
W.G. Parsons, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR OCTOBER 1996

- Mrs. Nannie Trevathan, NC \$2.00
- Charles Hatchett, OK 2.00
- Mrs. Marcy Burgin, TX 2.00
- Bill & Judy Poindexter, VA 5.00
- Mrs. Anita Hash, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Doris Rowland, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Gertrude Cox, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Opelene Cunningham, AL 10.00
- Homer Pettis, LA 2.00
- Milton Lupton, NC 2.00
- Mrs. Lawrence Holloway, MD 2.00
- A.J. Dowdy, NC 2.00
- Mrs. Ada Campbell, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Sallie Hodges, VA 2.00
- Eld. C.B. Davis, NC 2.00
- Mrs. Vera N. Potter, MS 2.00
- Mr. & Mrs. Alonza Davis, VA 2.00

OBITUARIES

**SISTER MURIEL LEE
LITTLETON MARSHBURN
1-8-21 to 8-14-96**

In special memory: I'll try to write, asking God for guidance, strength and knowledge to do so. Help me to say the right words that I should.

Sister Muriel Lee was born in Onslow County Jan. 8, 1921. Her parents were George Robert and Racheal Brooks Littleton. She was the youngest of five children. Two brothers and sisters. Her sister Julia was a member of North East Church for many years.

Sister Muriel Lee and I grew up together. We were the "Best of Friends," and lived a short distance apart.

We started going to church; with her parents. Continued as we grew older. Her parents were also members of North East Church. Her Father was a deacon and very dedicated to the Church, brothers and sisters.

November 11, 1939 she married Willie Warren Marshburn. The Lord blessed them with one son. Tony was always been loving and kind to his parents.

Sister Muriel was a dedicated member. As long as her health permitted.

Her "Great Hope" was shown in her everyday life. A lovely member Sister Muriel Lee was shut in at home for many years. Six years in Rest Home.

August 14, 1996, The Lord called her home. No more "sickness or pain" and be with the Lord Forever".

She is survived by her husband and one son. Two grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Now:

To the Family I say:

You have suffered a great Loss. I feel your loss is "Heaven's Gain" be patient, press onward to the Mark of the High Calling which is in "our Lord Jesus Christ." My prayers are with you. Amen!

The funeral was conducted by Elder J.T. Prescott. Burial in Onslow Memorial Park.

Written by the order of North East Church: in conference, third Saturday in November 1996.

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

CORRECTION:

Please change line number five on page 287 in the December 1996 issue to read Brother Alan Terry.

ST. MATTHEW 6:19-22.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

" The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon "

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

1012 Bennett Circle, Keeling, Virginia 24566

POEM

*The tender mercies of God
Are such a pleasant thing.
They cause the faintest heart to
shout
And make the angels sing.*

*And though I walk a slippery road,
And death stalks every side.
The Word of God will be my light.
His Spirit be my guide.*

*Jesus, the Shepherd of the flock,
Fulfilled His Father's plan.
He came, He suffered, and He died,
To save poor wretched man.*

*What words can this poor worthless
tongue
Tell forth to show His grace?
Poured out in anger on His Son,
In Adam's sinful place.*

*What glory, joy and ecstasy
Await the child of grace.
In new Jerusalem he'll see
The Saviour's glorious face.*

**12705 Tantara Dr.
Austin, Tx. 78729**

Written by: Elder David Harrell

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Edith Godwin Norman	
Jesse Hubert Towler	

 EDITORIAL

REST



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And in the seventh day God ended

his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

I have been exercised in mind for several days upon the subject I purpose to discuss, and I pray that God will direct my every thought, for I know there are varying views on it. I do not wish to controvert the views of anyone, especially those whom I greatly esteem as brothers in the Lord. My desire is only to set forth what I have been given to believe, and trust in God that I shall be given to rightly divide the word of truth.

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." This is the seventh or sabbath day, and it is to us, the children of God, an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord. Ex. 35:2. The old scriptures are written so that they point to and exemplify the things that are set forth in the new Testament. The old covenant was a covenant of works which the Israelites were commanded to do. They were to do all the works given them in six days, but on the seventh day they were to rest. They were not to even go out of their tents, not to prepare food on the sabbath day under penalty of death. The Lord gave them bread (manna) on the sixth day that was to be enough for two days. For a time the Israelites rested as commanded, as did the Lord,

and the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

The Israelites were given the food of angels and a day of rest, yet they yielded to the lusts of their flesh and kept not the commandments of God. *"The fathers tempted him, proved him, and saw his works forty years, wherefore God was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest."*

Who shall not enter God's rest because of his wrath? Those who had hardened their hearts, provoked his wrath, and believed not. Not all that came out of Egypt did provoke him, but did believe because it was given to them to believe. *"Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Phil. 1:29. Surely this scripture was as true then as it is today.*

Brethren, we are admonished to take heed unto ourselves, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. *"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith (belief) in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest:*

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." God spake of the seventh day on this wise, "And God did rest on the seventh day from all his works. And he said, "If they shall enter into my rest." There is therefore a rest for the Lord's people today. *"Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest. he hath also ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."*

The unbelievers of this world know nothing of the rest that God gives to his believing children. They are not labouring nor heavy laden in the same manner as true believers. They know neither the Father nor the Son, for neither has been revealed unto them. Jesus said, *"All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; and neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."* All men are born dead in trespasses and sin, and we know that the dead can do nothing, but 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." Only those who have been quickened into life can hear. These are called his sheep, and Jesus said of them, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish."* Unto the unbelieving Jews he said, when they said unto him, If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly, *"I told you and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you."* And again he said unto them, *"And ye will not come to me that ye might have life."*

After Christ quickens one into life, that one is made to know that he is a sinner in the eyes of a just and holy God. He becomes burdened by a load of sin that is blacker than any thing he has ever seen. Immediately he begins to seek ways to extricate himself from this unbearable load. He turns to the law, thinking that he might keep the law and thereby justify himself. But he finds that the law only condemns, has no mercy, and gives nothing. He reads the scriptures and finds, *"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them."* He also may find, *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all of our righteousnesses as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have*

taken us away." He may also read the words of Jesus, *"That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."* How can he obtain the righteousness that he seeks? He does not know. He is at his wits end. Now he turns to the Lord in prayer, and his prayer is as that of the publican, who smote upon his breast saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. At first he may not receive an answer. He reaches the end of his strength and is ready to give up in utter despair, saying, There is no hope for such a sinner as I. It is then that the Lord is made manifest unto him, sometimes it is in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, his sins are removed; sometimes it is a gradual awakening, but in each case he is blessed to see that Jesus Christ had already accomplished that for which he had been labouring. He knows not why nor where his sins are gone, but peace and rejoicing floods his ravished soul, and he sings praises unto his Saviour. He feels that he will never again feel the stigma of sin; but oh how little he knows! Doubts and fears soon begin to fill his mind when Satan appears and persuades him that he is deceived. He is greatly tempted to cast aside his hope that he is one for whom Christ has died. He asks himself, "How can a just and holy God be just in saving such a sinner like me?" He feels however that God would be just in casting him into hell. But God is merciful: his mercy endureth forever: and the poor sinner hears these

words from his glorious Saviour, *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."* This is not an invitation, but a commandment, and it must be obeyed, for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords: and where the word of a king is there is power. and there is none as powerful as our holy King. He spake and it was done. and commanded and it stood fast. What his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

How do we come unto him? Jesus said, *"No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."* The Father draws us unto him with his cords of everlasting love and he teaches us all that we need to know. *"It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh to me."* When Jesus calls, we come. We come by faith in prayer, indited by the Holy Spirit that is given unto us, and dwells in us. These prayers are always answered, for the Spirit maketh intercession for us according to the will of God. And God hath said, *"Before they call upon me, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear."*

Brethren, from time to time we are blessed to rest in the love and peace of Jesus Christ, and we are blessed with all spiritual blessings, and made

to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Yet we are also given trials, afflictions, tribulations and persecutions. These things, however, though they may seem to be against us, are all working together for our good. *"And we know that all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* Peter wrote, *"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."* Peter also wrote, *"That the trial of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ,"* Paul tells us that we should not be moved by our afflictions which are appointed unto us, and the persecutions and tribulations which we endure are a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that we may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which we suffer. Jesus has suffered as our High Priest the same things which we suffer. *"Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."* Brethren, it is unto our faithful High

Priest that we approach in our prayers of faith in our time of need, and he is faithful to succor us. He gives us repentance and forgiveness of our sins, he gives us peace, and he gives us rest from our labours.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. ***For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." This we cannot do of ourselves. God does the teaching, as mentioned above, and he places the yoke upon us. As Job said, ***"For he performeth the thing that is appointed unto me: and many such things are with him."*** Jesus makes the burden light, for it is he who carries the load, and without him we can do nothing. Paul warns us not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. ***"Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?"*** If we have been given light from above and a coat of righteousness, then our fellowship and communion should be with the saints and with God. John wrote, ***"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."***

Beloved brethren, Jesus Christ is coming again at that final day of time, and gather his saints, which is his beloved bride, unto himself, and carry them into that blissful region of glory where there will be eternal rest, for there will be nothing there to burden us, and we shall worship and praise him for ever in a perfect manner.

Prayerfully consider what I have written, and if you find it not in accord with the holy scriptures, then cast it aside. I believe I have experienced many, if not all, of these things. Are our experiences in accord? I ask that you remember me when at the throne of grace.

Elder C.C. Wilbanks

ARTICLES

PSALM 111:10, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:

PSALM 19:9, The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever.

PROV. 10:27, The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

With Man, there are different fears; one being, like that, of an attacking lion, or some other wild beast. Then, there is that fear of the Lord; that is with the born again children of God; they who are born of the Holy Spirit; or rather, the Holy Spirit is born in them; which give them a hope, in the glory of God and Lord; Wherefrom, comes that love into their heart for Him; now, that fear has become, a loving fear; which is unlike any other fear, to ever exist within a man. For all other fears; are, of a fleshly nature; that is, man's natural fear, of losing their worldly life. While that fear of the Lord; as spoken of, in the above quoted Scripture; has no connection whatsoever; with that fear, of the loss, of one's natural life. But this loving fear of the Lord; derives from, or as a result

of, having been given that knowledge, of the Lord's almighty power, over all things; and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

This fear, in one; at least in part; derives as a result, of his being limited within, the bounds of his hope; therefore, he is restricted, from saying, with absolute certainty; I know that I am a chosen and redeemed child of God. But, can only feel free to say - I hope I could be one among them. And so, this fear in one; serves, to keep him humble, and at the feet of his Lord; right exactly, where he belongs. For just so sure, as he rises any higher than the feet, of Jesus Christ, in his feelings; not only is he then, upon dangerous quick-sand but is then prepared, to be cut down; and again shown just what he is in his carnal fleshly self; not even fit, to speak His Holy and Righteous name, upon his filthy lips and tongue. It is then, dear child; one will feel to be, nothing and less than nothing; and altogether vanity; not fit to live nor die; he now, has arrived back to his rightful place, at the feet of his Lord; where he no longer is (in his feelings) at such height; but that he now can look up to the Lord; and beg for mercy.

One must of necessity; find himself low; like unto Jonah, in the belly of the fish; before he can in truth say; - I now vow that Salvation is, of the Lord. It is foreign to our fleshly nature; to desire of, or beg to be brought low; and yet still, even that, is a blessing, from our Lord and God. For it is only then we can be lifted up, to the height of His

feet; and realize, He is our All in All things; both in this world, and that world to come; when this time world, is gone forever.

If this time world stands, throughout the remainder of 1996; soon, will arrive that day, man calls Christmas; a day of which, the worldly mis-guided fleshly man; claims, is set aside, for mankind, to worship God: But, just look at the activities, among human-kind, on that day; and see for yourself; if you believe such could be, the true worshiping of, His great and Holy name. Now, I do hope, I would not dare claim; that some one or more, will not truly worship the Lord and God, on that day; but I do say this though; if one or more is blessed, to so worship Him; it did not come about through and by, the appointment of any one of mankind. But did come wholly and only, through and by, the appointment of our Lord and God; who is the one and only Appointer, of any and all things; both natural, and especially Spiritual. Man, in his fleshly nature, devises many things, and makes many, so called appointments; within, his weak and carnal mind, and hard and stony heart; and some of them, may be Let, come into being; but there is one thing sure and certain; whatsoever comes into being; came by His appointment. And NOT man's.

Now I expect there to be, some who read this; will gather; that I feel man's so called Christmas, to be; one more, of mans phony get-ups; for whatever fleshly reason he may have had: Well, I would say to each, who feel that way; you are one-hundred percent correct;

in your opinion. And that is my feelings, of every other hour or day or year; Man has ever, or does ever; attempt to set aside; as being special; or, of any more importance; than any other hour, or day, or year; within all time, God allotted for this world to stand.

For it is my feelings that, with the God; each second, or minute, or hour, or day, or year; are, of the exact same importance; as each and all the others. For it takes them each and all; for to complete the whole process, whereby, His pleasure and purpose, be fulfilled.

Just whensoever He be pleased, to send His Spirit unto us; it matters not, what time of day or night it may be; then and only then; is when we ought consider, as a special time with us; and ignore, as much as be in us; all other times; what fleshly man, may point out, as a special day; of greater importance, than others. May we remember; all times are His. And therefore; He alone; is the Provider, or Allotter; of every second we do have, for our very existence.

Each of us, arrived here in this world; in and at His afore appointed time; and we shall all, leave this world; in that exact like manner; and there shall be no delay, of either.

With, God; there is a space and a place, for all things; and all things, are in their proper and designated space and place, at all times. Therefore; it is an entire impossibility; for anything, to ever move about or stray from that exact place; for which, God did foresee, fore know, foreordain, fix, establish, provide for, purpose, and abso-

lutely Predestinate, that it all shall unhinderedly be.

Well now; what about, all that existing confusion? ANSWER: It lieth entirely within, the weak mind of mankind; by reason of, his lack in understanding; of the Holy truth; as it is, in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; who verily is, the Word of God.

We first of all, must feel and believe that, He is; which belief; can be in one; only, if God and Lord, so be pleased, to give that belief unto, him or her. To in Holy truth, believe that He is; is, to believe, in all His attributes; of which, He does in truth consist and exist. Otherwise, that belief, must be and is; of one or more of the gods many; of which can be no more than; a conjured up imagination; in the weak carnal mind, of fleshly mankind.

To in truth, believe on God; is, to feel it within, the whole mind, heart and soul. And only at such time, and under such condition or circumstances, with one; can all doubts, of His reality; be absent, from one. Now, I would say this to the Elders and Editors, of The Signs of the Times; and to all who may read this; If what I have written here; be in accord with His Holy truths; then, may His great and Holy name be praised; in the name of Christ Jesus, and for His sake AMEN: While on the other hand; whatever misspelled words; whatever other mistakes, or untruths; that is contained therein; lay them all at my door. For just so sure, as I not be led, guided and directed, by His Holy Spirit; I am surely subject to making them all.

In hope, I could be numbered, among
His children,

Troy G. Shepard

VOICES OF THE PAST

**"AND HIS BANNER OVER ME
WAS LOVE." - CANT. 11.4.**



hat portion of the Scriptures which is so appropriately called "The Song of Songs," abounds with a rich variety of the most clear and striking figures for the instruction, comfort and edification of all who hath an ear to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. While from the carnal mind of man the spirituality of this inspired and inspiring sound is altogether concealed, to the saints of the Most High, when opened and appropriated by the heavenly Comforter, it discloses much of the marrow and fatness of the gospel of God our Savior. The manner of the love of God bestowed on the saints, whereby they are called his sons, and the vital and indissoluble union of Christ and his church, are presented in the strongest possible terms. In the conjugal relationship of the Beloved and the spouse, the fitness and force of the song is most pleasingly appropriate. The spouse, whose noblest theme has always been to declare what her Lord has done for her, in the immediate connection of our text, proclaims to all the daughters of Jerusalem, that as an apple tree, he had offered her a shadow from the burning heat of noon,

and supplied her with the rich fruit which he bears for her comfort and support. "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." While he has stayed or supported her with flagons, he had comforted her with apples, for the words of his mouth, the consolations of his words had been to her as apples of gold in pictures of silver. But he had not only seated her under his shadow, and made her to partake of the delicious fruits of the Tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God, but he had made for her a glorious entertainment, a cheering banquet, and had brought her to it. He had not merely made the provision for a banquet and sent her an invitation to attend, or offered her a chance upon condition of her willing or doing something, but she declares, "He brought me to the banqueting-house," and thus she joyfully gives him all the praise. In connection with these testimonials of his sovereign goodness and distinguishing love to her, she adds, "And his banner over me was love."

Every regular army, every state and civilized nation, has its peculiar banner or standard, and distinguished from all others by some peculiar device or color, by which it may be readily known by those whose honor, interest or protection, it represents. As the church of Christ is a peculiar people, she requires a peculiar banner, distinct from every other banner; as a holy nation she requires a national standard, and as a marshaled host she must be identified by the unmis-

takable peculiarities of her flowing ensign. Hence the inspired psalmist says, "Thou hast given a banner to them that feared thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." - Psalm xlv. 4, and in Psalm xx. 5, he says, "We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners." Thus shall the church of God appear in distinction from, and defiance of all her enemies, "Terrible as an army with banners." - Songs vi. 4. Four important considerations are presented for our instruction and comfort in the contemplation of the banner which our God has given us.

First. The distinct character and militant state of the church of God as she exists in the world.

Second. The identity and peculiarity of her banner.

Third. That it is to be displayed, and for what cause.

Fourth. That all her battles must be fought, and all her conquests achieved under it.

1. That the church of God is a distinct and separate people from all the rest of mankind, is abundantly testified throughout the Scriptures, and if this were not the case, she would not require a separate or distinct ensign or banner. To rally under any other than the legitimate banner of the government to which the citizens of any nation belongs, is treason, and subjects the offender not only to a forfeiture of the protection of such government, but to the dishonor and retribution in such cases provided for traitors. God had ordained that his church, or Israel, shall dwell safely alone, and

that she shall not be reckoned with other nations; and the Captain of our salvation has declared, that his kingdom is not of this world, and by the mouth of his apostle hath told us that flesh and blood cannot inherit it. He said to a ruler of the Jews, Except a man be born again, he cannot see it, and except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into it. The Holy Ghost, by the prophet Daniel, declares this kingdom differs from all other kingdoms, and that it shall break them in pieces, and consume them, and it shall stand forever. And that this kingdom is in a militant state, that she is in a state of warfare, is equally certain from the record of truth. Her members are chosen in a furnace of affliction, and they are called to be soldiers of the cross, to fight the good fight, until her course shall be finished, all her conflicts over, the last of which to be subdued is death. The marshaled host of sin, and death, and hell, are in the field against her; the world, the flesh and the devil are to be encountered, and although ultimate triumph awaits her, and more than conquering laurels are already treasured up for her, in Christ her Lord, her conflicts, so far as relate to the personal experience of her members, which are here in the flesh, will not cease until the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and the voice of the Archangel shall announce their triumph, and their ransomed bodies rise in the image of Christ's glorious and immortal body. Now she is, "As the lily among thorns." Like the bush in the devouring ele-

ment, and yet unconcerned, and like the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. Until the war is ended, until the clash of arms, the smoke and carnage of the war shall cease, her banner must continue to wave, and all her valiant men to rally round it, having on the whole armor of God.

2. The identity and peculiarity of the banner is expressed in the word of our text. It is, "Love." This is his banner, and it differs from all other banners. No human force was ever marshaled for a deadly conflict under such an ensign as this. Hatred, which is the very opposite to this banner, is displayed in all the hostile movements of the sons of men. Hatred, instead of love, brought Cain into the field to slay his righteous brother; and hatred, instead of love, has characterized all scenes of slaughter which have drenched the earth with human gore, from the days of Cain to the present day. Hatred, instead of love, makes the feet of men swift to shed blood, because there is no fear of God before their eyes, and the way of peace they have not known. How striking then is the contrast between the banner of Christ, which waves in righteousness over the Lord's host, and that of the enemies of the Lord. All the opposition of men and devils against God and truth, and against his people, is instigated by hatred to God, to holiness, to truth and righteousness, and therefore the banner over the church is the more clearly identified, and the more readily known by those unto whom it is given, and over whom it is unfurled. His banner over them is love.

3. This banner must be displayed. It is not to be concealed, furled, or laid

aside. None but pirates on the high seas, or lawless banditti upon the land, will fight without displaying the banner under which they fight. It must be displayed, because God has authorized and commanded it; therefore we cannot without disobeying him, conceal it. It must be displayed, because the armies of Israel can neither be identified by friends or foes, unless they display the love of God, which is over them, as well in the field of conflict, as in the banqueting festivities of the bride, the Lamb's wife. How is an individual to be recognized as a child of God, and an heir of glory, if he gives no evidence that the love of God dwells in him, being shed abroad in his heart, as influencing his walk and conversation? How, in the absence of the love of God, which centers in Christ, fixes upon his doctrine, ordinances and the order and provisions of his house, to be distinguished from the world? How shall it be said of them, Behold how they love one another, if they display not this banner? How can they love one another with a pure heart fervently, if love, which is the banner, be unseen among them? It must be displayed because of the truth. Only by this banner can we show our relish for, or attachment to, the truth as it is in Jesus. This being his banner, or his love, it differs from the carnal passions of the flesh, human affections are fickle, wavering and transient, God's love is immutable, eternal, and he rests in it. The creature's love has its element in this world, and if it predominates in us, the love of the Father dwells not in us. His banner, or

his love, has its origin in God, it is the banner he has given, the love which he has bestowed, the greater love wherewith he has loved us, and as it came from God, so it will center in him, and it will rest on the same objects on which it rested before it was communicated to us, it will, in us continue to "love the thing our Father loves, and hate the work he hates." We cannot possess it and hate God, his people, his doctrine, his authority or his government, for love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God.

4. Under the banner of his love we are to fight the good fight, finish our course, and keep the faith. Paul says, "And if a man also strives for masteries, yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully." - 2 Tim. ii. 5. Although the saints are not to strive for mastery over each other, or to be lords over God's heritage, yet they are to strive against sin, and for mastery over all the lusts of their flesh, and to keep their bodies under and to contend earnestly for the faith and order of the gospel. In all this strife they are required not only to strive, but to strive lawfully, or they fight as one that beateth air. - 1 Cor. ix. 26. The law of the kingdom to which we belong, as the disciples of our Redeemer, is written, not on tables of stone, but on the tables of the heart, and in the inward parts of his subjects, and this law directs that all our fightings shall be performed under his banner, which is love. We have already hinted that to fight in any case, without a display of the love of God in and over us, is piracy, consequently unlawful and in-

effectual. If called to resist unto blood, striving against sin, let it be clearly seen that the love of God, of truth and righteousness, instead of vain ambition, or the gratification of our carnal lusts, is what stimulates us. They who hold the truth in unrighteousness, may feel a vain ambition to carry their points, when their own fame and selfish pride, rather than a zeal for the honor of God, and a regard for the banner of his love, predominates in them. The truth of God requires no unlawful defense; better by far, that the ark of the Lord jostle on the new cart, than that we attempt to steady it by unlawful interference. When the disciples proposed to call for the fire from heaven to consume their enemies, Jesus rebuked them. Their impatience and contemplated vengeance, made no display of the banner of God's love. And when Peter proposed to shield his Lord from the assaults of his enemies, by the use of carnal weapons, he savored of the things which be of men, and not the things which be of God; and he was sharply rebuked, and informed that he that shall resort to the force of arms, even in defense of Christ and his cause, shall perish by the sword. When we stand up to preach Christ, and him crucified, all our orthodoxy, eloquence and zeal, will be ineffectual, if the banner of the love of God be not displayed as that which moves us to action. A selfish ambition to carry our points, that we may exult over a vanquished opposer, that we may be regarded as the more expert or talented, is an unworthy and unlawful motive,

and offers an insult to our glorious banner. Love, which is the lawful standard, worketh no ill to our neighbors, hence we cannot, under the banner of love, call for fire to burn them, nor for fines, or imprisonments, to punish them for their assaults on us, or on the cause; for vengeance belongs to God, and not to us; he will administer it at the proper time and in a righteous manner. Proscription, persecution, the infliction of personal injuries, are the armor of the powers of darkness, but they cannot be under the banner of God's love. The love of God will constrain all the soldiers of the cross to fight manfully, and to die rather than sacrifice one principle of truth, or make any liege with the common enemy; but it will never lead us to fight for personal renown, or self-aggrandizement. It being then unlawful for us to fight the powers of earth and hell, from any other impulse than that inspired by the banner of love, how much more unbecoming for us to contend with our brethren, who are of the household of God. Can we love God supremely, and hate our brother? What if we have seen in our brother, defection, infirmity or departure from the gospel, should this enkindle our wrath, or be made a pretext for violence? Truly we are called on to protest against this sin, and to strive to reclaim him, but it must be in love, or it cannot display our banner. If we can know what spirit we are of, it will be easy to determine whether we are prompted by the love of God, or by some fleshly feeling, when we labor with an offending brother or sister.

When they offend, or trespass against us, if we ourselves be under the banner of his love, we shall be grieved, and feel disposed to labor to restore the offender, in the spirit of meekness; but if not actuated by love, our carnal passions will be aroused, the old man offended, or made angry, and we shall feel inclined to deal in retribution, for the injury which we suppose we have received. In our pilgrimage of more than forty years, we have witnessed cases where brethren have labored most perseveringly to prove the guilt of an offending brother, and with a seeming diligence to fortify themselves with scriptural authority for every movement, and yet instead of displaying the banner of love, in a kind brotherly desire of all his brethren, and finally to have him excluded from the fellowship and society of the church, is far more prominently displayed, than in the banner of God's love. Can this be strivingly lawful? Can such as strive in this manner, be crowned? Brethren in the ministry have sometimes become disaffected towards each other, sometimes having a just cause, and sometimes from jealousy, or envy, and instead of displaying the banner of love, a disposition to bite and devour has been betrayed. Carnal nature has shown its teeth, and claws; hard speeches, sly hints, cruel and ungenerous insinuations, have been thrown out, the brother's character assailed, his reputation stained, much private and confidential whispering, but not to the accused, and with great seeming cautiousness, for the ostensible object of

having counsel and advice on the subject, but in reality to get brethren committed, while a settled determination is fixed, to make the suffering brother appear in the worst possible light. His words are scrutinized, perverted, and made to imply what we all know he never intended, and all this to gratify some carnal propensity, or passion of the old man. How dwells the love of God in such, while thus proceeding? Where is the banner of divine love under which they have enlisted? The banner under which the great Captain of salvation grappled with the powers of darkness, encountered sin, death and hell, for our redemption, was the banner of his love. Are we his followers? Does his love dwell in our hearts, and wave over our heads? Then let us display this banner in all our conflicts. The little personal injuries we sustain, are but for a short season, the storm will soon be over, and they shall only ripen us for that glory which God has laid up in heaven for us, and for that crown which the righteous Judge shall put upon us in that day. Unto us it is given, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. If then we be reviled, let us remember that we are not to revile again. If we would win the misguided brother, who has injured us in our persons, property, reputation or feelings, let us display to him the banner of love. If anything will reclaim him; if anything is calculated to subdue his heart, and lead him to reflect profitably on the error of his cause, it will be a sight of the banner; a conviction that his blows are leveled

against one who sincerely and tenderly loves him. If under this banner we cannot reclaim him by a first, and second step, of faithful labor, we must tell the matter to the church, and submit quietly to its righteous decision.

Having considered the love of God, as the true banner under which the saints are to rally for the defense of the truth, under which all their battles must be fought, and by which they are destined to triumph over all the powers of the darkness of this world, the corruptions of the flesh, and the temptations of Satan, and the certainty of victory through him that had loved them, and spread this glorious banner over them, and also of the delightful privilege allowed them, while in their militant state, from time to time, of banqueting with their Lord under the protection of this banner of love, we will now offer a few remarks by way of admonition to the children of God, to beware of all other standards, especially of the counterfeits of this banner of our Redeemer.

It is important that soldiers should be well acquainted with their own banner, in order that they may easily distinguish it from all others; otherwise in the time of battle, they may haply be found fighting against their brethren, and weakening the hands of those whom they in reality love, and in whose defense they would cheerfully lay down their lives. One of the wily tricks of the adversary has often been to decoy the inexperienced soldier of the cross, by exhibiting a counterfeit banner of love; which, although easily detected by the practiced eye of the

veteran soldier, who is not ignorant of Satan's devices, is calculated to deceive some of the new recruits; for, although the false standard is composed of love, yet it is not the love of God. How often have even christians been temporarily deceived by a display of human, instead of divine love. The Captain of salvation has pointed out to his soldiers the difference; and to his admonitions we would do well to take heed, lest at any time we should let them slip. "He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The affections, as well as all the other lusts of the old man, are to be crucified; for we cannot possibly retain them, and enjoy the love of God dwelling in us.

Men who profess to be ministers of Jesus, and soldiers of the cross, often tell how much they love souls; how ardently they desire the salvation of every body. They love all the various orders, sects and denominations of religionists, with perhaps the single exception of that sect which is everywhere spoken against. They love all kinds of doctrine that will gain proselytes, and produce excitement of the natural or fleshly passions of the multitude; they love all the humanly invented religious societies of the age, and consider them eminently calculated to save sinners; and they love the wages of unrighteousness, and, like Balaam, they run greedily after it. A banner of this kind of love has strong attractions, not only to the unregenerated of mankind, but the carnal sympathies of the flesh in christians are strongly attracted by it. They are too

prone to forget that the love of the creature is only a stream from a corrupt fountain, which is poisoned with the corruption of the fountain from which it proceeds; while the love of God is pure and holy, and as far transcending all earthly love, as the heavens are higher than the earth. A standard, or banner, composed of human love, may be splendidly painted, with very many attractive devices; and such is truly the case with all the false ensigns, which the enemy has set up for signs; but through all their coloring, those who are taught of God, will be enabled to see that they savor of the things which be of men, and not the things which be of God. Not only in the general conflict with the consolidated powers of darkness, are the children of God called to guard against this universal charity, but also in their intercourse with those who are of the household of faith, and even in their communion with their own hearts. The fellowship of the saints, one with another, is not to be regulated by carnal feelings of personal attachment; but by the infallible rule laid down for their government in the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ. If under the banner of our Savior, whatever may be our fleshly predilection in favor of brethren, we will not suffer sin to rest on them. The influence of that banner on us will inspire faithfulness in laboring according to the rule, to reclaim offenders, in the spirit of meekness; and if not successful, from every brother that walketh disorderly, it will dictate to us to turn away. But if we set about the work while we are our-

selves under the wrong banner, we shall make wretched work. We would be poorly qualified to pull the mote from a brother's eye, while a beam is in our own eye. If we are not governed by the love of God dwelling in, and waving over us, all our efforts at discipline will be worse than nothing. If in our labor to reclaim our offending brother, we are influenced by the banner of God's love, the honor of God, the peace and purity of the church, and good of the brother with whom we are called to labor, will predominate in our hearts. But if under a banner of fleshly feelings, we will be apt to lose sight of these incentives, and strive for the mastery, with vain ambition to secure some credit to ourselves, or at least to lay our plans so as to carry them out, and head off the brother at every point. Or, on the other hand, if swayed by an undue fleshly attachment to the offending party, we may flatter ourselves that we are exercising a christian virtue, by saying to our Lord's debtor, who owes an hundred measures of oil, take the bill and write fourscore. A fleshly feeling in us predominating, disqualifies us for the faithful discharge of our duty to our brethren; it will either lead us to exact more, or to be satisfied with less, than the word dictates. One brother is made an offender for a word; that is, for not using the same word or form of expression to express a similar idea, when there is no essential difference involved, and another is held in fellowship, who has departed from the faith and order of the gospel of Christ, because of some personal attachment.

In communion with our own hearts, let us not be deceived. We have within us, as it were the company of two armies. Each of these has its own banner; the one has the banner of God's love, the other the vile affections and lusts of the flesh, which war against the spirit. And these are contrary the one to the other. Hence we are admonished to deny ourselves, and take our cross and follow our Lord and Master. Human love is always on the alert to supplant the new man. The old man becomes wounded, and we think the new man is grieved. The old man meditates revenge, and we mistake it for christian diligence in contending against sin. Thus we sometimes think the new man is grieved, when only the old man is mad.

The minister of the gospel of the Lord Jesus, is in trouble, his mind is shrouded in darkness, he is called to preach; an assembly is before him; but he has no subject; he feels depressed and in bitterness. He worries, frets and murmurs. He says, "My Lord is requiring me to preach without affording his presence, gathers where he has not strewed, and reaps where he has not sown." He concludes like Jonah, that he does well to be angry even unto death. What is the matter now? Poor man, his carnal pride and vain ambition is on the rack, and must be crucified with its affections and lusts, and in the end he is astonished to find that his deep anxiety to preach well, was more for the gratification of

his own fleshly ambition, than from a desire to glorify God, and edify the saints. We essay to bow in prayer before the throne of God, and we have certain desires which we wish to present in prayer and supplication; but by what spirit are these desires inspired within us? If they are fleshly desires, we may detect something selfish in them, inclining us to ask for something to consume upon our carnal lusts. How gracious is our God in withholding these things from us. But when his banner over us is love, the preacher is as ready to stand in silence before his congregation, if God wills it, as to speak with the tongues of men or of angels; and the humble christian in his closet, inspired by the flowing banner of his Redeemer's love, is all submission to the will of God. His language is copied from his Savior's lips, "Not my will, but thy will be done."

Finally, may it be our happy privilege to fight all our battles under the triumphant banner of the love of God, and may it be spread over us when we are permitted to enjoy our banqueting seasons with the King. And may he preserve us by his grace, from dishonoring, deserting, or failing to display the banner of his love, in all our walk and conversation. Then shall we look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

Middletown, N.Y., March 1, 1855

Elder Gilbert Beebe

JOSEPH'S CUP.

If not asking too much, will Elder Chick give his views upon Joseph's cup? What is meant by its being put into the mouth of Benjamin's sack, and why was Benjamin's mess five times as much as the others? Joseph seemed to love Benjamin better than the others; why was this?

Laura A. Wilson.

Potter, Ark., May 30, 1907.



According to the promise made in the SIGNS for August 1st we will try to comply with this request. At best, however, we can only give such thoughts as occur to us as being in harmony with the word of God. No direct explanation is given of this subject in the Scriptures in its application spiritually to the people of God under the gospel; but we believe that this, as well as all other Old Testament Scriptures, was written for our learning, because the apostle has so said. Some of the types recorded in the Old Testament are fully explained by the inspired writers in the New Testament, but not all. These first we know are as explained in the Scriptures, but the many, of which nothing is directly said by the New Testament writers, we have come to feel very careful in handling. At best we can but give our judgment concerning any of them, and feel like speaking very carefully. Of one thing we have come to feel very sure, viz., that types and shadows all ceased when the blessed Savior died, for he was the true answer to them all. When the substance

came there was no more need of shadows and types. There are emblems to be observed by the church now, such as baptism and the supper, but these are not to be regarded as types, because they relate to a Savior already come, and living now in and with his people. Also in the New Testament there are parables setting forth the various matters relating to that kingdom which has already come. Narratives are also given in the New Testament which set forth how God under the gospel deals with the children of men who are called by his grace, but these are not to be called types or shadows. These dealings of God are then spiritual realities, and show just what God's dealings with men will continue to be to the end of times. The kingdom of heaven was not on earth until Jesus came, therefore what was set forth concerning the kingdom of heaven could have no application to anything that was under the old covenant; but the things set forth in the Old Testament did point forward to the coming kingdom of heaven.

In all ages of the gospel church, so far as we have been able to read, Joseph has been regarded as a lively type of the blessed Lord in his incarnation. Many writers have delighted to trace out points of resemblance between Joseph and Him who is greater than Joseph, but we cannot here speak of all these things. We also believe that it is right to speak of Joseph as a type of the blessed Savior. This is true in a general way, we do not doubt, of all that he did and suffered.

Concerning the questions propounded by sister Wilson, it seems manifest that what is recorded of Joseph in that immediate connection would, as it related to the literal events of time, be only natural for him to do. Joseph's cup was that out of which he drank, and it was silver, and no doubt very costly and beautiful. It may represent to us the cup of salvation, which is in the hand of the blessed Lord and which he bestows upon his people. Out of it he bestows upon them that wine and milk which makes their heart glad, and which nourishes them in all heavenly graces. It is said that by it Joseph "divined" or, literally, "made trial." Such things were common among all the ancient heathen nations, and especially were such cups used in Egypt. It is not likely that Joseph, who worshiped the living God with prayer and praise, would be guilty of such heathenish practices. The steward said this concerning the cup, and not Joseph. The steward saw that he prized it highly, and no doubt concluded that it must be that Joseph did so because he found mysterious power in it. Joseph indeed did use it to divine what was in the hearts of his brethren toward each other, and especially toward Benjamin; by it he made trial of their state of mind, to see whether it remained the same as when they had sold him into bondage. By the cup of salvation our spiritual Joseph makes trial of his people; by it he discerns their very thoughts, not for his own information, but for theirs, that they may know how evil they are in thought, word and deed. This cup is

that word which discerns the thoughts and intents of the hearts, and divides asunder the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow. As the hearts of the brethren of Joseph were probed and revealed in their trial by the cup, so in the work of salvation all the children of God are made to know themselves, and stand revealed to themselves as guilty sinners before God and in the sight of their own consciences. As the cup was costly and beautiful, so salvation through Christ is most costly, and the robe of this salvation is most beautiful. It is beautiful within. The King's daughter is all beautiful within. The cup belonged to no one save Joseph; it was his own peculiar treasure. Likewise salvation is all of the blessed Lord.

What is meant by its being put in Benjamin's sack? Regarding the narrative simply as a narrative, as said before, there is no doubt in our mind that the reason which actuated Joseph was that the real feeling of his brethren toward their half-brother might be made to appear clearly. They had sacrificed all natural affection in their eagerness to get rid of this dreamer, their brother Joseph, and he would now test them to see whether there had been any change in their hardness of heart. The money was also placed in the sacks of them all, as had been the case before. Had the cup alone been put into the mouth of Benjamin's sack, and no money found in the sacks of them all, there might have been room for them to censure their brother as alone guilty; but now this could not be, seeing that all found

that which did not belong to them in their sacks. This would be true, if we regard the natural event alone. We have no reason to think that Joseph had any knowledge of the fact that God, who was overruling all this series of events, intended to set these things forth as types of the true heavenly things to be revealed under the gospel dispensation. It was not in his mind that all this was a type of the dealings of the Lord with his people; but we know that what Joseph did not then know is the truth. That the cup was found in Benjamin's sack would be a type of that experience of soul which led Paul to count himself the chief of sinners, even as Benjamin would appear to be the chief sinner among them all, and yet the thoughts of Joseph were those of peculiar tenderness and love toward Benjamin. Thus Paul was made to count himself the chief of sinners, that the love and mercy and favor of God might be all the more gloriously made manifest in him. That the cup was found in the sack of Benjamin was to the brethren of Joseph an evidence of peculiar disfavor, so that they would fear the worst, but in reality it was the evidence of the especial love and tenderness of Joseph toward his brother. God's thoughts and ways are not our thoughts and ways. Men judge, when one wounds another, that it is a mark of enmity, but whom Jesus wounds is the subject of his own peculiar love above all others. Thus, that the cup was found, by Joseph's order, in the sack of Benjamin, was a mark of that love that was stronger than death.

Every soul toward whom the Lord will make known his grace and mercy finds the evidence of his own guilt and of the disfavor of the Lord brought home to himself personally. At that hour he cannot believe in the favor of the King, but rather that he must suffer for his sins. No doubt Benjamin expected nothing but wrath from Joseph, but how soon all this is changed and he stands forth as the object of Joseph's especial regard and favor.

Why was the mess of Benjamin five times as much as the others? First, Benjamin was Joseph's own brother, while the others were but half-brothers. Then the others had been concerned in his banishment from his father's home and in his captivity as a slave in Egypt. Benjamin had had no part in all this series of crimes against him. It was but natural for these reasons that he should be dearer to Joseph than the rest. We would not be understood as saying that Benjamin was a type of the disciple John, for he was not, if we consider John as an individual, but still of John, as was of Benjamin, it is said that he was that "disciple whom Jesus loved." It was not meant that Jesus did not love all the rest of the disciples, but it was true that toward John was made manifest peculiar love and regard from the Master. Joseph manifested love to all his brethren, but there was a dearer regard to Benjamin in his heart; he yearned over them, but longed that Benjamin should be in his arms the most. He forgave all his brethren all their sins against him, but, in the sense of which we are speaking, Benjamin

had not sinned against him at all. There was special favor to the obedient now. The sins of the others had separated between them and Joseph. Their sorrows and repentance and confession brought them near to him and blotted out the past transgression from his mind. Upon them all he bestowed favor, but to Benjamin five times more than to the rest was given. They were all brethren, sons of the same father, but they did not all treat him alike. The children of God are all sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and brethren to the Lord Jesus Christ, still the disobedient are beaten with many stripes, their sins come in between them and joy of salvation. It was so with David when he prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit." David's sin had come in between him and the joy of the Lord, and he beheld the hidings of the face of the Lord, yet when repentance was given David this joy was restored unto him, and once more he could walk in the light of God's countenance. Something of this seems to us to be involved in this type. Joseph loved Benjamin more than the others; this sets forth, does it not, that which the blessed Master said in the parable of the vine and branches: "If ye keep my commandments, and abide in his love"? The disobedient are the children of God indeed as well as the others; but transgression results in the hidings of the Father's face. It was so in this lively type, as it appears to us. There is no difference in the love of God at any time, but the difference is

in our own selves. The clouds that hide the face of the sun are from this earth of ours; the sins that hide the face of the Father are from our own hearts and lives; and how often the earth itself gets in between us and the sun and we walk in midnight darkness. The sin of Joseph's brethren had come in between them and their brother; it was in their minds, and was as a barrier between them. It was true that their sins were more of a barrier against their coming to him than they were against the outflowings of his love to them; long after his heart had burned with love to them as though they had never sinned, their hearts would recall all their bitter hatred, and there would be mourning on account of it. Our God forgives us all our sins, but we can never forgive ourselves; if we could do so, then there would be small evidence that He had forgiven us. Those whom the Lord loves, cannot love themselves; those whom the Lord does not love are full of self-love. Joseph's brethren remembered in their distress and perplexity how their brother had pleaded with them in vain to spare him, and they felt that they had no right to ask for mercy, even at the hands of him whom they thought was a stranger; from this stranger they could expect no consideration. Had they known it was their brother before whom they stood they must have trembled still more, and this because it was against him that they had sinned. O what a mercy it was that their sin had been against a brother! They could not have thought it, but it was so after all. When he had revealed

himself to them, they still greatly feared and were troubled, but the words of Joseph were gracious and merciful. They indeed intended evil, but the Lord intended good, and by their wickedness much people were saved alive. Their guilt was the same, but there were large purposes of mercy in it all. This did not make their sin any the less, nor did it decrease their repentance and sorrow; but Joseph could, out of this his faith, find room for forgiveness. If our brothers sins against us how much it will help us to forgive if faith assures us that to us, and to all who love God, their transgression shall work out good. A view of the largeness of the mercy of God, and of the greatness of his wisdom, and of the unchangeableness of his purposes, will put down within us all hardness against puny man, and we shall feel, as did Joseph, that God meant it all for good. If a warfare between us and our fellow results to our great advantage even natural men will find it in their hearts to be forbearing and forgiving after the manner of men; and since we know that all things work together for good to them who love God, ought it not to be easy to forgive even very bitter wrongs against us?

Elder F.A. Chick

ST. MATTHEW 3:13-17.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

MEETINGS

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

At the request of Pleasant Hill Primitive Baptist Church, Edgecombe County, North Carolina, a presbytery met November 24, 1996 at the church for the examination of Brother Donnie Ray Arrington. If found, in their judgment, to be qualified in accordance with the written word of God the church requests the ordination of Brother Arrington to the full work of the office of a Deacon.

The conference was opened with hymn and prayer by Elder Henry Jones, after which Elder Jones was called to sit as moderator. At the request of Brother Arrington the church called Elders Henry Jones and Joseph Sawyer to compose the presbytery.

The candidate was presented to the presbytery by the clerk, who requested he be examined and upon their satisfaction, ordained to the office of a Deacon and returned to the church.

After feeling satisfied with the candidate the charge was delivered by Elder Joe Sawyer, after which the laying on of hands was administered by the presbytery.

After being returned to the church, the brethren came forward to extend the right hand of fellowship.

It was agreed that a copy of these minutes be kept for the church records and a copy sent to the Signs of the Times for publication.

Conference was adjourned with hymn and prayer by Elder Joe Sawyer.

Elder Henry Jones, Moderator
J. Carroll Williams, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR NOVEMBER 1996

Buford Thompson, VA	\$2.00
Mrs. G.B. McAdams, MS	7.00
Mrs. Ablene McBride, TX	2.00
Mrs. Leola Meador, NC	2.00
Jamie E. Cooper, VA	2.00
Kenneth I. Evans, AL	2.00
Mrs. Grace Locke, KY	5.00
Mrs. Allyne Page, TX	7.00
James W. Huber, MD	2.00
Mrs. Eva E. Harlow, TX	6.00
Mrs. Dadelene Shipman, TX	2.00
W.W. Stutts, TX	2.00
Mrs. Anna Savage, KY In memory of Husband Gleen Savage	10.00
Ms. Lula Holley, VA	2.00
J.J. Merrill, AL	7.00
Mrs. Meta Mills, AR	2.00
Vance Duncan, VA	2.00
B.K. Smith, CA	2.00

OBITUARIES

OBITUARY OF NOLIE GOAD

I was asked would I like to write the obituary of our Dear Sister and my Aunt, Nolie Goad, and I did want to, hoping that God would give me strength and the ability to do so.

Aunt Nolie was born November 29, 1900, in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, to Albert S. Goad and Ida Dalton Goad and passed away April 30, 1996, making her stay on this earth 95 years and 5 months. She was the last member of her immediate family. She leaves a number of nieces and nephews. Although she was never married, she was a mother to her family. Her mother died when they were all young.

She and my Granddaddy, Albert Goad, united with Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church the same day, August 22, 1943. I was at that meeting and I remember it very well. In the old Weatherford Church if it was there today, I could almost tell you where they were sitting when they stood up and started talking to the church. This is something that has never left me. She loved the church and was always faithful to attend and support the church until her health failed. She believed in Salvation by the Grace of God and would often time talk on the scripture.

She passed away in Gretna Health Care Center where she had lived for the last four years. She was never

happy there, and I grieved much over her being there.

Her funeral was conducted by Elders Raymond Goad and Marvin Brumfield at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church, and she was laid to rest in the church cemetery. May God grant her eternal peace.

Written by one who loved her and cared for her,

Mabel Hedrick

PSALM 116:15.

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

**OBITUARY OF SISTER
EDITH GODWIN NORMAN**

We at Oakgrove Primitive Baptist church bow our heads in humble submission as our Heavenly Father has seen fit to remove from our midst our dearly beloved sister Edith Godwin Norman whom we love and miss so much. We believe the Lord knows best and even though our hearts are broken and it is loss for us, that it is gain for her and glory for the Lord.

Sister Edith united with Oakgrove Primitive Baptist church March 5, 1949 and was baptised by Elder P.H. Jacobs and given the right hand of Christian fellowship March 6, 1949.

Sister Edith was born to Dave and Delma Godwin March 4, 1915 and passed from this life September 30, 1996 making her stay here 81 years, 6 months and 26 days.

Sister Edith was faithful to her church and the doctrine of her belief as long as she lived. She believed in the absolute faith of the predestinarian order and stood for it as long as she lived. She loved to hear our ministers preach on the little eagle falling as each stick was removed from beneath him, but as the last stick was removed the little eagle was lifted up to the peace it sought for so long.

Sister Edith suffered many troubles, trials and temptations both natural and spiritual but she felt to suffer with her Lord was hope that she would also reign with him. She was both my natural sister and I hope my spiritual sister. I do not feel worthy to be her spiritual sister but have hope that I am one.

Sister Edith was survived by two sons Ray Allen Norman and Arnold Dale Norman both of Shreveport, LA. One daughter Maxine Edwards of Bossier City LA. two sisters Kate Mathews of Shreveport, LA. and Hildridge Burch of Springhill, LA. one brother Elder David Godwin of Goldona LA. nine Grandchildren and nineteen Great Grandchildren.

Services for sister Edith were held at 10 a.m Wednesday October 2, 1996 at Roseneath South Chapel Shreveport, LA. with Rev. Jeff Segner officiating who brought a sweet and comforting message to the family.

Sister Edith was laid to rest beside her husband Garlan Norman in the Oakgrove cemetery to await the coming of her Lord.

Elder David Godwin, Moderator
Kate Mathews, Clerk

JESSE HUBERT TOWLER

Jesse Hubert Towler departed this life on Wednesday, November 20, 1996, at the Franklin Healthcare Center in Rocky Mount, Virginia. He was born on October 22, 1914, in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, the son of the late Joab Washington Towler and the late Nannie Wade Pickrel Towler.

Jesse received his education in the public school system of Pittsylvania County. He was retired from the Pittsylvania County School System where he worked as the Audio-Visual Librarian for many years. He was a member of the Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church in Gretna, Virginia. He was united in Holy Matrimony to the former Ruby Shelton on December 23, 1939. He was preceded in death by one brother, Raymond E. Towler, and one sister, Lorene Towler Reynolds.

He is survived by: his wife, Ruby Shelton Towler of the residence in Gretna, Virginia; one son, John Richard Shelton Towler of the residence; two brothers, G. Wilson Towler of Blairs, Virginia, and William Russell Towler of Crozet, Virginia; two sisters, Emma Towler Hammack of Danville, Virginia, and Louise Towler Giles of Mechanicsville, Virginia; six sisters-in-law; and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

PROVERBS 4:18.

But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

1012 Bennett Circle, Keeling, Virginia 24566

POEM

BEAR ME UP ON EAGLES WINGS

*Sorrows and afflictions abide me at every turn;
Despair is my closest companion;
The valley of the shadow of death surrounds me;
Bear me up on eagles wings.*

*I go forward, but He is not there;
Backward, but cannot perceive Him;
I look to the side but cannot behold Him;
Bear me up on eagles wings.*

*O for a glimpse of my heavenly friend
Who raised me from a fallen state;
He promised never to leave me;
Bear me up on eagles wings.*

*May I soar from this wilderness of woe
On the wings of Grace and Truth;
To leave behind all troubles and cares;
Bear me up on eagles wings.*

*In that eternal land of bliss,
O may I there be carried;
To see my Lord face to face;
Bear me up on eagles wings.*

*Nevermore to hope for that I see not,
But to worship my Lord, Priest and King
In the presence of the Great I am;
No more to be borne away on eagles wings.*

Elder Cleo D. Robertson

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 EDITORIAL



ELDER J.R. WILLIAMS

From time to time I'm asked to write something for publication in the Signs. Each time feeling unable to bring you anything worth

while, yet hoping some thought may be edifying to some poor soul, searching as I hope I have at times, for an explanation of some scripture I hadn't seen before.

The following scripture I'll present as what I see in it, you may agree or disagree. Rev. 21 vs. 1-4 *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."*

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

The book of revelation has always seemed hidden to me and truly it must be revealed to any and all that see it in the right sight.

John was on the isle of Patmos and Jesus Christ sent his angel to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass. Notwithstanding a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day with the Lord. Then John as he wrote to the seven churches did not necessarily have each chapter as he saw it or as it was revealed to him. It seems I can't see a new heaven and a new earth meaning as we read it and our minds being in a natural frame. Do you believe a new natural earth will shortly come, or a new atmosphere filled with heavenly bodies, moons or stars. I believe when this earth is finished that we live on, that will be the lost earth, as it will be with all of nature.

In my thoughts this was the coming of the Lord's Christ, a new earth, a new heaven, never before seen or

imagined any thing comparable, a day the world of believers had longed for, looked for and hoped to see. John saw a new earth and a new heaven, not another earth or another heaven, but new - for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.

I believe this refers to that day when Christ came to earth. Surely never a day like it before, a new day. No more sea, no more dividing, nothing to separate His people no more Jew or Gentile all to know Him from the least to the greatest of them. No more laws to be kept that was impossible with man to keep, all fulfilled to a jot and a tittle. All sins that separated his people from God erased forever. Then there is no more sea, there is no more of the old things to ponder crossing, no more work to find the grace of God, all one in him forever.

John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. A vision I believe of Christ the husband awaiting His bride, the church that he came to claim out of a world of woe. A new Jerusalem, a spiritual awakening, a gospel era, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Clearly cleansed from all sin forever, Christ the Savior was come. The bride in Christ and Christ in her, for Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them. There is no worship apart from him, all in the tabernacle together, if we worship Him, there can be no worship without.

"And he will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God

himself shall be with them, and be their God." Do we not see God coming down from heaven to dwell with his people, would he come down to dwell with them, if this is the day when he comes with the shout of the arch-angel to raise his people from the dust, will there be need to dwell with them.

This next verse may mean in that heavenly city beyond the realm of nature, or at the experience of God coming to his elect and teaching them there is now no more condemnation to those that live after the spirit. Then tears turn to joy, at such news, Christ has wiped away all tears from their eyes. Is there any more fear of death or can there be, if born of that incorruptible spirit that liveth and abideth forever. If this is speaking of a day before the second coming of the Lord. We can see it a beautiful picture of a travel here on earth that the angel of the Lord gave John to see and write about. Also gives us that hope that with an eye of faith we have seen him come to his people in a new earthly experience, new from anything we have seen or heard before. A new earth, a new heaven, former things have passed away.

I hope you will judge for yourself, for in my weakness I believe this could be speaking of the day Christ came, but surely there is nothing new with God. *"For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."*

If we see spiritual things
He is our eyes,
Elder J.R. Williams

QUERIES & ANSWERS

QUERY:

Do the Primitive Baptists believe in Missionaries?

First of all, let's define what we mean by missionaries. It is generally accepted by most people, whether a church member or not and regardless of denomination affiliation, that missionaries are prepared in schools of divinity or theology; chosen, financed and sent by a board, organization or some society; and given the objective of winning souls for Christ. To these missionaries, we do object.

If we do not believe in these missionaries, we must have a sound basis for not doing so. First, we do not believe these missionaries are scriptural. Those who support the idea of missionaries base their belief on Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18 and Luke 24:47-49. But, let's examine these scriptures closely and may God grant us understanding.

First of all, who is speaking? None other than Christ in whom all fullness dwells. The fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily. He who said *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"* did not delegate this power to any board, organization or society. Christ had just risen from the grave and had not yet ascended to His father. In His death, burial and resurrection, 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. He tore down the middle wall of petition separating Jews and Gentiles. The way was now open to the Gentile and that is what He meant by "all the world." He has a people in every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. He spoke to his apostles whom He himself had chosen. He commanded them to "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." In Acts 1:8 just before ascending into heaven, Christ told His apostles, *"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 all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."* So we see the authority to call, qualify and send one is vested only in Christ. Next, we see that the commission to *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"* was exclusively to His chosen apostles. Why? Because He had previously commanded them, *"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not."* Now, it was necessary to include the Gentiles and Samaritans. Hence, *"Go ye into all the world."* Was the command carried out? Yes. In Romans 10:18, the Apostle Paul says, *"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world."* Do we believe that God has commissioned or called, qualified and sent forth men as missionaries into all the world since

the apostles? No. There were only twelve apostles and there will never be any more. Christ said, *"I have chosen you. You have not chosen me."*

Hebrews 8:10-11, *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother saying, know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest."* From this scripture, we see that it is not up to man to introduce others to the Lord. In fact, puny man does not have the power to impute the knowledge of Christ into another human being. Paul said in Galatians 1: 12, *"But I certify you brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."* In the scripture from Hebrews, God said that we shall not teach another person to know the Lord, for all of His people shall know Him.

Today, God calls ministers, qualifies them with certain gifts that will edify His people and sends them without scrip, bread, money or coats to His elect children. God has prepared His children to receive His ministers. The ministers are sent not to provide eternal salvation nor to lead anyone to Christ. But, they are sent to preach the gospel which is the power of God unto

salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. So, we see that only believers hear the gospel. In the third chapter of Acts, Phillip was sent to the eunuch who was in the desert of Gaza reading the scriptures and desiring understanding of Christ. Phillip preached Jesus to this man and baptized him. No big congregation. Just one poor soul hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

In summary, Christ has not commanded or commissioned men to *"go ye into all the world...etc."* since the apostles. He has and does yet command men to *"feed my lambs. Feed my sheep."* He does yet send his ministers to His little flock scattered about in the local churches. Christ will make himself known to His people and He has already saved them when He said *"it is finished"* and died on the cross for their sins and rose the third day for their justification.

There were no names of Primitive or Missionary Baptists prior to 1800, only Baptist. Generally, all Baptists believed alike. Then, in the late 1700s and early 1800s, missions, tract societies, Sunday schools and other new inventions made their advent. In 1827, the Kehukee Association of eastern North Carolina took a stand against all of these new ideas and other associations soon followed. In 1832, several northern churches met at Black Rock Church near Baltimore, Maryland, and took a stand against these new things also. They published their position in what is known as the "Black Rock Address." After this time, those who

supported the old way were known as Old School Baptists, Hard Shell Baptists, Particular Baptists, Strict Baptists and Primitive Baptists. Those who supported the new ways were known as New School Baptists and Missionary Baptists.

Love in Christ,
Elder Cleo D. Robertson

ARTICLES

Iwould like to write the Lord willing, a little about the 13th Ch. of Rev.

13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

John saw this beast rise up out of the sea, when we think of this beast, let us not think of it as being the devil, I believe the dragon spoken of in v. 2 is the devil. This beast I believe looked or appeared to John just as it is pictured here, I believe John actually saw a beast of this description, but it is symbolic. We today don't think of it as a beast, we think of what it means or what it represents. The Roman monarchy is called a beast, I believe it is one of the beasts spoken of in Dan. 7: 2 & 4 Rome Pagan had as this beast has, seven heads and ten horns, and had power over all nations, sometimes called the whole world, and exercised great cruelty upon the Chris-

tians. This is signified by the red dragon itself in the preceeding chapter, and besides he had risen up before the times of John. This beast is one of the things shown to him which was to be hereafter, as this beast at this time was not, but was to come, I mean of course the thing represented by the vision of this beast. This beast was said to rise up out of the sea, which means out of the sea of this world, and the wicked in it, who are like a troubled sea and cannot rest, I believe waters in this book means or represents nations, peoples and tongues. So this beast rose up from among the people. Having seven heads, number 7 in the scripture is the number of perfection, so these seven heads may refer to these boastful treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which anti-christ boasts of having, as being the interpreter of the Scriptures, and the judge of different controversies, or else the seven heads may represent the seven mountains on which Rome was built.

And ten horns, the ten kingdoms into which the empire was divided, and the ten kings who reigned with the beast and gave him their kingdom, so these ten horns represent ten kingdoms. And upon his horns ten crowns, which distinguished Rome Papal from Rome Pagan, these crowns represent either the ten kings in Rome Pagan or the ten rulers in Rome Papacy, which would be the high men or important men in the church.

V 2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard - I believe the

likeness of a leopard, is representing the speed this beast had when he arose and got power, it very quickly and in a short time extended it over all emperors, kings, princes, bishops, kingdoms and churches. And his feet were as the feet of a bear, this may picture the strength and stability of the kingdom of antichrist.

V2. And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat and great authority. The coming of antichrist is after the working of Satan, he gave him his cunning, and subilty as the old serpent, and taught him his arts and tricks to deceive mankind, and gave him power to do signs and lying wonders, and a army of his ministers II Cor. 11: 14 & 15 and great authority over the Roman Empire and kings and kingdoms in it, he gave him his authority as God of this world. What Christ refused at the hands or offer of Satan, this pretested vicar took, even the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them. Assumed to himself all this power in earth and hell, but instead of being a vicar of Christ, he is a vicar of Satan, and not the successor of Peter, but the successor of Satan. P.S. I got most of this material of the catholic church out of the encyclopedia - World Book.

The middle ages bought a struggle between the Roman Catholic church and various European rulers. At the height of Papal supremacy, Pope Boniface VIII issued a order or Papal decree, called Unam Santum. This controversial decree declared that the pope should have a voice in civil as well as religious affairs. This decree

became known as the Doctrine of Two Swords. This decree angered the King of France, he forced the next pope to move the Papal court to France, this was known as the 70 yr. exile, this rule became known as the Doctrine of Two Swords, this exile helped cause the Great Schism in the church. This exile and this Doctrine of Two Swords is the wounded head spoken of in Rev. 13:3, later spoken of in V.14, wounded by the sword.

Then in the Reformation Period there was many changes which resulted in a better period and the wound was healed.

V4. And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast, and they worshiped the beast.

They worshiped this beast not only in a civil way, which they gave homage, obedience and tribute, but also in a religious way, for antichrist sits in the temple to be worshiped as God, showing himself that he is God, and receives praise from his creatures, cardinals priests and others. He had control and power over most everyone, and ruled with absolute power. His subjects believe that the pope is infallible in matters of faith and morals, which means that the pope cannot possibly commit a error when he speaks on matters of faith and morals. He claims divine assistance as the successor of St. Peter when he speaks on these subjects. (Any wonder God pictured him here as a beast).

V 7. It was given unto him to make war with the saints. This is a terrible thing to think about, just think of all the wars that have been fought known

or called the christian wars, for example look at the fighting between Britain and the IR Army. The remnant which God has set apart for himself, which Christ has cleansed from sin by his blood, and the Holy Spirit has sanctified by his grace, who by and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, live holy lives and conversations (1 Peter 1:14) against such Satan has always had a enmity (to sift as wheat). All this is permitted by God for the trial and faith of his people. This war of antichrist with the saints may be understood as not only spiritually but literally of his drawing the sword among them, fighting pitched battles. I could name many, murders, massacres and punishments of all kinds. Just one more here will be sufficient, the terrible slaying & suffering of the Jewish people at the holocaust. Still to come is the war with the two witnesses. Rev. 11:7

V8. All shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life.

The people of the world, the idolatrous part of it, they who came into the world and are of the earth, earthy, and who seek only after earthly pleasures and profits, these are they who admire and adore this beast, the ones whose names are not written in the book of life. By which book is meant God's predestination of men to eternal life, or his act of election. This is called the book of life and these names being written there from the foundation of the world, all this means is that God's election is eternal, it is not a act of time, nor is it depending on any act

done in time, and it is of particular persons and not groups of men, of nations or churches. And still less of people who consider themselves wise and prudent among men. It is perfectly known of God, sure and certain in its effect, it is unchangeable and not liable to be revoked. For what is written in it, is written and will always stand. I feel I could just keep on writing on this subject, but not to be too lengthy I will say just one more thing. This is the Lamb's book, the election was made for him and given unto him from the very beginning. He gave His life to redeem all those from sin, the beast antichrist or anyone, or anything will never be victorious over one of these. The antichrist may take some of their natural lives but their souls salvation and eternal life is safe with the almighty God.

As we think of the things happening with the antichrist it seems terrible. But the sure promises of God is faith to the believers, both sure and steadfast.

VII. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. This is really the same as the first, the same antichrist only in another form, the first beast is the Pope of Rome, at the head of the ten kingdoms, of which the Roman empire consisted, this other beast is the same Pope of Rome, with his clergy, cardinals, archbishop, bishops, priests etc. before he was pictured as a tempered monarch, now as a spiritual lord, as having the seat, power and authority of the dragon, of Rome Papacy, hav-

ing the attention and wonder of the whole world, putting fear into many, making war with the saints, ruling over all nations and tongues. Here in his saintly character, pretending great humility and holiness, showing signs and lying wonders, exercising tyranny and cruelty on all that will not profess his religion. That this is the same beast with the first in substance, though not in appearance, is seen from him exercising the same power, causing all to worship the first beast, or himself as a temporal lord, and by mention being made only of one beast at the close of this chapter, and his mark name and number being but one, nor is there any other but one hereafter spoken of in this book, either as ruling, or conquered as going into perdition or as cast into the lake of fire. This beast was seen as coming up out of the earth, out of a low place, a poor crawling earth worm. The history of the popes, cardinals and their religious orders have been very cruel, all led I believe by this man of sin who was rising up even at the apostles time, and has gradually rose on up to the power and authority he is here said to have.

These two horns extend the two parts of the empire, eastern and western, into which it was divided when this beast arose, and by which the Papacy was raised to its power, and the two supreme pontiffs, the bishop of Rome, and the bishop of Constantople. And he spoke as the dragon, like the denial himself, affirming as he did that the power of disposing of the kingdoms of this world, and

the glory of them was given unto him, he spoke arrogantly as if he was above all that was called God, and as if he was God himself, he spake like the devil who was a murderer from the beginning, breathing out slaughter, and threatening against the saints, and he spoke lies in hypocrisy, blasphemies, and doctrines of devils. V.12 caused the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Sitting in the same seat having the same power and authority from the dragon, making war with the saints by preaching and writings against them, by communications and rules, so overcome them or silenced them, or delivered them over to the secular body or government to be put to death, ruling over the conscience of men in a tyrannical way, in all nations, kindred and tongues in the empire, all this was done in the presence, and under the influence of the power of the Papacy, signified by the first beast and with his approval, credit and support, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein, the Roman empire, and its inhabitants of it, especially the carnal minded to worship the first beast, to be subject to the power of the Papacy, or to submit to the pope as a temporal lord, give homage and tribute to him, to support his worldly power and grandeur, this was bought about by his emissaries, his legates, cardinals priests etc. by their persuasions and commands.

Whose deadly wound was healed, this wound was given the Roman empire, when it was divided by the

Schism started by the Doctrines of the Two Swords, and the Papal head (pope) was moved to France. This beast has given all these powers v.12 back to the Papacy head, therefore the wound is now healed. I would like to write more about the next few verses but this letter is too long now. I don't want to be worrisome. Just one thing about the mark in v.16, in their right hands or in their foreheads. I have no idea what these marks will be, but there are some marks spoken of which might be similar. There was a custom among the Romans of imprinting marks upon their servants and soldiers, by which they may be known to whom they belonged, servants had them in their foreheads, and soldiers in their hands, or the usage of the Jews in binding their phylacteries upon their arms and foreheads, to put them in mind of the law of God.

To sum up all I have written, this letter shows the wicked, sinful and awful mind and acts of the whole human race Jer. 17:9, the heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it?

Secondly - It shows the power and cruelty of the antichrist, and the many schemes and ways he uses to accomplish his plan or scheme.

Third - It shows above all else that God is still reigning in heaven and earth, He has declared the end from the beginning, and His counsel shall stand. Not one soul of the number he died to redeem will be lost to the scheming power and cruelty of the antichrist. Remember, faith is the anchor of the soul, both sure and stead-

fast. So may we be given to praise God, from whom all blessings flow.

Frank C. Hunt

VOICES OF THE PAST

GOD GLORIFIED

Sermon preached by

John E. Hazelton (1853-1924).

Text: "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him" (John 13: 31, 32.)



ur subject this morning is the triple glorification which comes through the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. First of all, let us speak of the Son of Man glorified in and by His own sufferings; secondly, God glorified in the Son of Man thus suffering; and thirdly, the Son of Man glorified by God on account of His sufferings.

Heaven is here, the whole gospel is here, amighty ocean is here, and at the best our tongues, as it were, are dumb before so great and glorious a subject. The Person of Christ is the living and divine centre round which the Holy Ghost carries on all His operations. Let slip *this truth*, and you will be like a vessel driven from its moorings, carried out into the watery waste without rudder or compass and, God in His mercy preventing not, destined to make shipwreck concerning the

faith. The Person of Christ is that on which we need to have light cast and power applied by God the Holy Ghost.

Let us speak just for a moment, in commencing, about the time or the hour when our blessed Lord uttered these words. They were spoken in the upper room at Jerusalem. The sun had gone down upon His public ministry for the last time; before the next day's sunset. His holy body would be resting in the new sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, which he had hewn in his own garden out of the rock. Less than twenty-four hours were to elapse, but how much was to be accomplished during the less than twenty-four hours-between these words and the solemn end! Gethsemane was to be entered into; Calvary was to be endured. Sin was to be put away, an end was to be made of transgression, everlasting righteousness was to be brought in, and a Triune God glorified through all eternity - less than twenty-four hours to suffice for the working out of these great and glorious- issues! O what a mighty Saviour we must have! How glorious the dignity of His Person! May we get a glimpse of it this morning that we may each say, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely."

Judas had received the sop and had gone out into the night. His chill and polluting presence had been removed; a great and oppressive weight was taken from the hearts of that little company, and now our blessed Redeemer began to pour out His heart before His disciples. That upper room in Jerusalem, though the disciples so

feebly apprehended it, was more glorious than the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle in the wilderness. There was the apartment, gold encased; there was the ark of the covenant and the mercy-seat; there was the Skekinah cloud raying forth its glory, and in the temple at least - taking possession of the whole building, so that the priests could not stand therein to minister. Here in this humble upper room, the perfection of beauty was shining. Here Jehovah the Son was raying forth His glory through the Manhood of our dear Redeemer.

And now, in the midst of His disciples, He begins to speak these great and wondrous words concerning His glorification. When Judas had departed, Jesus, said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." This is a name which He alone applies unto Himself. No one else called Him the Son of Man. Ezekiel, during his ministry, was called by God "son of man," but our Lord speaks of Himself as the Son of Man, declaring thereby that He was not only the Man, not only the Son of Man, but that in a very special and peculiar way He stood apart from all other men, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and He declares here, "Now is the Son of Man glorified."

We should have thought these words would have been more appropriate at the time of His baptism, when the Father in heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" But the assertion of glorification was not made then. We might have thought on the summit of the Mount of Transfiguration, when the

voice from heaven was heard, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him "that the utterance concerning glorification would have been made. But no, on the verge of Gethsemane, on the verge of Pilate's judgment hall, on the verge of the hearing before the high priest, on the verge of Calvary, the Lord declares the Son of Man is glorified.

What are we to understand by the glorification of the Son of Man? We will just touch upon our blessed Lord as the perfect Man glorified, as the representative Man glorified, as the God-Man glorified, as the predicted Man glorified. "Now as the Son glorified." I pray that here and now I may not preach to you about Christ, but that I may preach a precious Christ to you, and that everyone here, if it be the Lord's will, might be so occupied with the Person of Christ as to forget the wretched self which can only drag us down and keep us back.

The Lord calls Himself the Son of man because He is and was the perfect Man. Now you say, "Who is and what is the perfect man?" I should simply confuse your minds and darken counsel by words without knowledge if I spoke of successive qualifications or manifestations of character which prove our Lord to be the perfect Man. Here is the scriptural definition of the perfect man, and only the Son of Man answers unto it. The perfect man is the man who is in entire conformity to the mind and will of God. Everything is wrapped up here - entire conformity to the mind and the will of God. Where can you find the perfect man excepting the Son of Man, the Man Christ

Jesus? The perfection of our blessed Lord's Manhood shone more resplendently as the portentous clouds of God's wrath and judgment rolled in upon Him. Yes, as those portentous clouds rolled in, the perfection of the Son of Man shone most resplendently. In the course of His previous ministry, He had said thy meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." But now He is going down swiftly into the valley of the shadow of death; He is going down to Gethsemane, and to Calvary, and we see the most absolute conformity to the mind and to the will of God in the sufferings and death of our most blessed Lord.

The perfect Man! Here is the portrait of the perfect Man given by our blessed Lord Himself: "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 neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." The perfect Man is revealed to us here loving His Father with all His heart, mind and soul. The perfect-Man is revealed to us loving His neighbour as Himself fulfilling the first and second tables of the law. "Greater love," said our lord, hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But our Lord laid down His life for His enemies. *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."*

See Him prostrate in Gethsemane's garden! "Father!" is the cry. Hear Him in the thick darkness over Calvary's

cross: "My God! , "My God!" is the solemn cry. Hear Him, ere His blessed soul wings its way to Paradise; "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit." Here is and hereby is the Son of man as the perfect Man glorified. God demanded perfection, and the Christ of God, the Son of Man, made and satisfied the perfection which God demanded.

The Son of Man! Not only is this title given to our Lord by Himself because of His perfection, but because He is and was the representative Man. The Son of Man! - now He is glorified. He came to be made liable to the penalty which was due to the guilt of His people. He came to be the Head of the church the Surety of those who were infinitely in debt unto God. He came to be the Substitute, the Perfect for the ruined; the Just for the unjust; God for the ungodly; O what a mighty, what a glorious salvation is this! "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He came in accordance with the divine counsels. He came in and by the "covenant ordered in all things and sure." He came as the representative of His church, charged with the salvation of the souls of men. The Son of Man as the representative Man is glorified. No stain upon His honour, no shadow upon his Person, no question with regard to the perfection of His work in its minutest details.

The God-Man is glorified. He is the Son of Man because He is the God-man. His human nature never existed apart from the divine. When His human nature was brought into being, at

that very same instant it was united to the divine, never, never more to be sundered. The soul of our blessed Lord was the soul of the God-Man when He went to heaven. The body of our blessed Lord sleeping in the tomb was the body of the God-Man, waiting the season when He should rise triumphant from the dead.

The God-Man! O, was not His power manifested in the closing scenes of His life? See that armed band meeting Him in Gethsemane! "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth." "I am He," and they went backward and fell to the ground. See Him looking at poor mistaken Peter when he, with his carnal zeal, cut of the ear of a servant of the high priest. The Lord touched the place and immediately Malchus, the high priest's servant, was healed.

The God-Man! When He gave up the ghost, the rocks rent, and the graves were opened. The Son of Man as the God-Man is glorified. Yet, if I may speak for myself, I think and conceive so inadequately concerning the glorious Person of the Christ of God.

The Son of Man is glorified as the predicted Man, predicted from Genesis to the last words of Malachi. Every prediction relating to the Son of Man in His ministry, in His birth, and in His sin-atoning death, He gloriously fulfilled. It is, to my mind, one of the most wonderful utterances of our blessed Lord upon the cross, when He said, "I thirst" Why did He not keep that feeling unexpressed? "That the Scripture might be fulfilled." The predicted Man is glorified. Have you seen Him? Consider that dying thief

with his heaven-opened eye beholding in the central sufferer the Son of Man glorified. "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of (his) faith."

But I must not tarry. Next our Lord says, "God is glorified in Me." God glorified in the sufferings of the Christ of God. Now would not we naturally have said, God is glorified by the mighty angelic intelligences which He created in the day of their appearance; God is glorified in His calling into existence the visible universe? That is true; God is glorified in That. God is glorified in this sin-wasted world by the beauties of creation in the heavens and in the earth. Can we say, God is glorified in peopling the heavens with sinners who deserve hell, but who are raised to the very heights of bliss? Can we not say that God is glorified when here on earth little assemblies of His purchased people meet together; to praise and to pray? But our Lord speaks here entirely of His cross, of His sufferings, and of His death. Think of it! "God is glorified in Him" At the time, and at the place, when devils and men exerted all their power of inflicting suffering upon the Son of Man, God was glorified. At the very moment when the taunt of blasphemy was flung at Him, and the yell of infuriated malignity rose around the cross, God was glorified.

Why, we should say, apart from divine enlightenment, that at the cross there was the total eclipse of the glory of God. And yet the Lord says "God is glorified in Him." And the glorification exceeded the dishonour as the ocean exceeds a drop. The glorification of

God in Christ at Calvary is immeasurable, infinite, and in accord with the dignity of the Person of Him who suffered bled, and died thereon.

Now let us ask how and why we come to this cardinal truth as the very foundation, that all the sufferings of the Son of Man, as glorifying to His Father, must have been expiatory; they must; have been vicarious and substitutionary. His sufferings were the sufferings of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; His sufferings in the human nature which He took by His own voluntary choice, as well as by the divine appointment of the Holy Trinity. On Calvary, in the glorification of His Father, there was the completion of His perfect obedience. But how did He glorify God? he glorified Him in His power, His wisdom, His righteousness, His faithfulness, and His benignity.

Think of the power of the divine anger against sin. When it streamed forth, Sodom and Gomorrah sank into the depths of the earth and are now covered by the Dead Sea! When God's anger against Sin streamed forth, the whole world was covered by a waste of waters, and all mankind - excepting those in the ark - perished from off the face of the earth. And here, focused upon the Person of the Christ of God, was all the guilt and all the sin of innumerable millions, and think you that He bore a weight to which in any degree could be compared the solemn judgments of God, even on Sodom and Gomorrah and the Flood? Behold in the Christ of God suffering in Gethsemane and at Calvary the

lighting down of God's own right arm upon our Surety and Substitute in the garden and upon the cross. Thus I see here the power of almighty God was glorified in what our Lord bore in Gethsemane and at Calvary by the Lord Jesus Christ, had He been merely a man, He could not have borne that which was laid upon Him from the manger to the cross. It is to me a wonderful truth that, that which pressed down the Lord in Gethsemane which caused Him to cry out at Calvary, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" that, that weight would have destroyed the universe, because it was the weight of the whole of God's wrath and curse against the whole of the sin that was laid upon our blessed Redeemer. It would have shattered and destroyed the whole universe, just as God destroyed the face of the earth in the flood of waters in, Noah's day. But behold the power of God! Joseph Hart, with his usual insight and spiritual accuracy, says He

***"Bore all incarnate God could bear,
With strength enough, and none to spare."***

Look at Isaiah 50: "The Lord God will help Me"; the divine power was glorified in the sin-bearing of the Christ of God. His divine nature, His Father's divine power, upheld Him in that scene of solemn and transcendent suffering. He glorified the divine wisdom. Suffering adequate to the great need of salvation was secured and ex-

pressed by our great and blessed Lord. He honoured and glorified the righteousness and justice of God; hence Watts sings:

***"Our thoughts are lost in reverent awe,
We love and we adore;
The first archangel never saw
So much of God before."***

At the cross, whilst from one point of view darkness enveloped it, at the cross we dwell in the noontide of everlasting love where all the perfections of God were glorified - His power, His wisdom, His faithfulness, His benignity, His everlasting kindness. God is glorified in Him.

Lastly, the Son of Man glorified by God on account of His sufferings. Here is the third point. "If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway (immediately) glorify Him." Was not this the case when our blessed Lord said, "Father, into Thy hand I commit My spirit," and straightway the spirit of our Lord was in Paradise, taking with Him that of the dying? "Straightway shall He glorify Him," when early in the morning, on the first day of the week, our blessed Lord arose from the dead. Immediately, as the result and the reward of His sufferings.

We are not to take the word "if" as significant of any doubt. It stands for "since": "Since God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself." He hath passed into the heavens, He hath become the first fruits of them that sleep, He hath taken with

Him a sheaf of the first fruit in the bodies of those of His saints who were raised from the dead, and who came out of their graves - I believe - to accompany our Lord to heaven. All power is lodged in His hands, and the sovereignty and dominion of the whole universe shall yet be manifestly declared as that of the Christ of God. All fulness dwells in our precious Christ eternal life is in and from Him, and in the glory which the Lord has given to Him all His people shall share. There is a fulfillment of that blessed principle of divine covenant in perfection in our Lord's history, Him that honoureth Me I will honour, Jehovah-Jesus honoured Jehovah the Father and glorified every perfection, and now the Father saith, I'll have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion," and have committed all power and authority into His hands.

I close with this: the ground of a poor sinner's hope is alone the finished work of Christ. May God make this a comfort to some of you who are so hesitant and so full of doubt: He who sustained the weight of the divine glory may well sustain the weight of my poor soul. The Person and the finished work of Christ sustained and magnified the divine glory, and is there room for my poor soul on this foundation? There is room there for every willing soul. If you are a willing sinner, God has made you willing.

"Come and welcome, sinner, come!"

He who glorified God, He in whom God is glorified, He who has been

lifted up on high can save me. That which satisfied God's justice can quiet all my fears.

*"Love's redeeming work is done,
Come and welcome, sinner,
come!"*

Is the desire of your heart that you may glorify our precious Christ in the fires of affliction? O it is well to have the desire that God may be glorified in the means of His grace, in my life by my death! Time is hastening onward; Jesus having overcome the sharpness of death, has "opened the Kingdom of heaven to all believers."

*"O glorious hour, O blest abode.
We shall be near and like our God!
And flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasures of the soul."*

*"O wretched man that I am!"—
ROMANS vii. 24.*

Now, these feelings which the 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 condemnation 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

"For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. — JOB xxxiv. 21.

The Christian has to prove that nothing escapes the eye of a just and holy God; that he lays bare every secret thought, searches every hidden purpose, and scrutinizes every desire and every movement of the mind. He thus discovers and brings

to light all the secret sins of the heart. Men in general take no notice of heart sins; if they can keep from sins in life, from open acts of immorality, they are satisfied. What passes in the chambers of imagery they neither see nor feel. Not so with the child of grace; he knows the experience described in Psalm cxxxix. He carries about with him the secret conviction that the eye of God reads every thought. Every inward movement of pride and self-righteousness, rebellion, discontent, peevishness, fretfulness, lust, and wantonness, he inwardly feels that the eye of God reads all, marks all, condemns by his righteous law all, and because he is so intrinsically pure, hates and abhors all. Thus he proves, amongst the "all things" which are weighed up and measured in the inward court of conscience by the unerring standard of the word of truth, the light of the Spirit's teaching, and the workings of godly fear, that he is a sinner before God, and that of a deeper dye and more crimson hue than any other transgressor, for he sees and knows his own heart, which nobody else can see or know. He is indeed aware that many may have sinned more deeply and grossly as regards outward acts; but he feels that no one can have sinned inwardly more foully and continually than he; and this makes him say with Job, "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" (Job xlii. 5, 6).

J.C. Philpot

VIRTUAL UNION VS. ACTUAL UNION

We have read some very labored articles which have been written against the doctrine of eternal, vital union of our Lord Jesus Christ and his mystical body, the church, in which the writers have attempted to draw a line between what they call a virtual eternal, and an actual eternal union, admitting the former, but denying the latter. Some of the less discerning of the saints have become perplexed, and we have been frequently called on to define the difference.

Before attempting to do so, we will remark, that every expression of Bible truth by which the church of the living God, which is the ground and pillar of the truth, is or ever has been distinguished from the world or anti-Christ has been assailed in the same sly and insidious manner. Predestination, election, special redemption, regeneration, final preservation of the saints in grace to glory, the resurrection of the dead, and ultimate glory of the heirs of salvation, have shared the same fate. Read to the Arminian, "Whom he (God) did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." &c. "Having predestinated us to the adoption of children," &c. "Him being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Ah says he, I believe in predestination; but not in absolute

predestination! Well, let us see: What kind of predestination can that be which is not absolute? Something like this. The Lord had a design, a purpose of a will to do certain things if men or devils would allow him to do so; but nothing in reality made certain by the counsel or predestination of God. This is in reality a flat denial of predestination into, yet is what predestination must be if it be not absolute.

We believe in election. O yes, says the self-conceited freewiller, certainly, I believe in election, but not eternal, sovereign, personal election. But that God chose to save all who would comply with certain terms, perform certain conditions, and make use of certain means. A man must be lamentably stupid who cannot perceive that this is a full denial of election altogether. Special redemption, yes, says Andrew Fuller, and all his motley echoes, we believe it is special in its design and in its effect, but general in its nature, so general that all sinners, if they are so disposed, can avail themselves of its full benefit. Thus professing to believe it to be special, deny its specialty, and rest its efficacy on the will of the creature, and thereby disallow the saving virtue of the blood of Christ. Regeneration. With one voice all the work-mongrel tribes of the earth agree, the sinner must be born again, but at the same time deny that the new birth brings forth anything that the sinner did not possess before the birth; no seminal preexistence of the life which the birth brings forth: no

begetting by the heavenly parent, but a mere change of purpose and pursuit, a new modeling of the carnal mind, and a new formation of the old man. Perhaps this may be a virtual, but not actual regeneration. All who are thus virtually born again, if such a thing could be, would present a race of fatherless children; bastards, and not sons. Perseverance is admitted, if they may be allowed to supply the conditions, if they hold out faithful, &c. Anything that will strip the crown from the head of Christ, and crown the sinner as his own savior, they seem very willing to admit. The resurrection is only admitted with such qualifications as either, it is past already, or that it does not mean what the Scriptures affirm, that "He that raised up Jesus from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you.

We come now to our subject, and will inquire, What is meant by Eternal Vital Union?

2. Does such a Union Exist? And if so,

3. Is it Actual or Virtual?

By the term eternal, we mean that which was before all time. The word vital means life, and union is oneness identity as a unit.

What kind of life does God give to his people? Is it eternal, or is it only time-life? John says, "This is the record that God hath given us eternal life." 1 John v; and Jesus says, "I give to them eternal life," Many other express declarations of Scripture prove that the life given to the children of God is eternal, and consequently did

as fully exist before they individually and experimentally received it, as afterwards. If it did not exist before it was implanted in us or communicated to us by the new birth, then why is it called eternal? The eternity of it is attested by the declaration that it was with the Father and was manifested. 1 John 1. This life is hid in God, those who receive it, receive by being begotten of his own will, and born of God. Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. This vitality then is eternal vitality, or eternal life, which was with God, the Father, before it was manifested.

Having then settled by Scripture testimony the two points, namely, the life and its eternal character, we come to the word union in its connection with the term eternal, vital.

2. Did such an union exist. It seems almost like insulting the intelligence of the reader to ask, was this life a plurality, was it legions, or was it one life as it was with the Father before all worlds? Was it more than a unit, when given to us in Christ Jesus, according as we were chosen in him before the foundation of the world? If it was more than one life, perhaps some one can tell us how many lives it was, but if it was one and the self-same life as it originated in God the Father, and is hid in him, if it was but one and the same life as given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began, then the controversy on the subject or eternal vital union may cease for one of the two propositions must be admitted or the Bible rejected. To deny that a vital union, or a union of spiritual

vitality did so exist in eternity before all time, is rank infidelity, for God has so declared it. This life was and is and forever shall continue to be that which makes us one with Christ, as Christ is one with the Father, and that Christ and the church are identified in, is positively asserted by Christ himself. He is in them, they are in him. He also is in the Father, and the Father is in him, and so completely so that he that hath seen him, hath seen the Father also. And we ask, who has ever seen the Son, who hath not seen the church also? seeing that he is in the church, and the church is in him. He is the head, the church is his body; and does a head and its body make more than one man or person? "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." 1 Cor. xii. 12. Then Christ the head, and his church with all her legitimate members, being many in membership, are but one unit in life or vitality. Christ says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." If it be admitted that Christ is truly the life of the church, the true God and eternal life, then that same life which unites him the church as his body, unites his body, the church, to him as her head. If it be admitted that Christ is now today the head of the church, will they presume to say that he was not the head of his church yesterday? Dare any one deny the announcement of the Holy Ghost? "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and forever." Of course, when we speak of Christ in

his oneness with and headship of the church as his body, we speak of him in his mediatorial character as the Son of God, and so revealed with power.

3. Is this union of oneness of life in Jesus Christ actual or only virtual? As neither of these words are used in the inspired writings in connection with the union of Christ and the church, we must depend upon our lexicons for their signification; Webster's Dictionary is the recognized standard of our language in the principal colleges of our country. His definition is: Actual 1. real or effective, or that exists in act; real; in opposition to speculative.

Virtually: In efficacy or effect only; by means of some other influence, or the instrumentality of something else.

According therefore to the established and acknowledged laws of our language, those who hold the doctrine of eternal, actual, vital union, believe that the life of the church of God is one life, and that it really, effectively, truly and absolutely did exist in eternity, before the world began, in a sense opposite to that of mere speculation.

While those who deny that it was actual, deny that it was real, or that it existed truly and absolutely, in a sense opposed to that which is only speculative. And those who deny that this union was actual before the world began, but admit that it was virtually existing in eternity, deny that it was really, truly or absolutely so, but in efficacy or effect only; and that efficacy or effect could only be developed or produced by the means or instrumentality of something else.

Now which of these positions, if either, do the Scriptures and the teaching of the Spirit in our experience establish? To us it is very clear that if this union of the life of the church in Jesus Christ existed in him before the world began, it was more than a speculation; than it was a reality. If it was not then a reality, a fact, what is there in the communication of that eternal life to us experimentally in the new birth, that can make the life what it was not before we were made to feel its power? But one will say, the word actual signifies an act or action. This Webster admits in a secondary sense, not in its primary signification. Well, be it so; are we not told that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord? Does not the giving of a thing imply an act or an action? Certainly it does. Well, when was the act or action of giving us eternal life in Jesus Christ performed? We are told that God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. Is eternal life a spiritual blessing? It certainly is not a mere temporal blessing, then it was actually given us in him before the foundation of the world. God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. The gift, not gifts of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is given us in him, and through him it is in due time communicated to all the members of his body, when they pass from death unto life, are born again, and brought into the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God. If the work of

the Spirit in the new birth is the action which makes this union actual, then we set aside the reality of grace given us in Christ before the world began, and instead of the gift of God is eternal life, we should read it, the gifts of God, there are as many distinct gifts as there are members in the body. And as the relationship of nearest of kin could not exist in reality before the life union existed, the consequence must be that when the Lord Jesus died for his members on the cross, we, who now live upon the earth, were not really, truly and absolutely so united with and related to him, as to allow us any part or lot in the atonement.

Much confusion prevails where brethren confound this vital union with our individual experience of it when brought into it. The union, spiritually, was as perfect before we were brought experimentally into the enjoyment of it, as it is now, or ever will be. But in our earthly, carnal, sinful nature, we had no union with Christ, but were children of wrath even as others; nay, we were dead in sins, and enmity against God, and enemies to him by wicked works. But although the holy law of God cursed us in the earthly Adam, yet for the great love wherewith he loved us in Christ Jesus, even when we were in ourselves, that is in our earthly nature, dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in him, and thus by grace are we saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, 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 therein.

We all know that our earthly nature is estranged from God, and in it we are strangers and foreigners, requiring to be redeemed from the earth, called by grace, quickened by the Spirit and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. This gift of God, which is eternal life, was not given us in the earthly Adam, neither was our earthly, carnal and corrupt nature given to us in Christ. The first Adam is of the earth, earthy and as is the earthy, such also are they that are earthy. But it was given us in the Son of God, which is the Lord from heaven: as is the heavenly, such also are they that are heavenly. Our natural birth develops us in the one life in which we were created in the earthly Adam, and a spiritual, new and heavenly birth, develops or makes manifest in us, experimentally that one life which was hid in God, and which is now made manifest by the appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, we do not regard either the words actual or virtual as necessary, or they would have been supplied in the divine volume, but when men deny the reality of this eternal, vital union, or oneness of life, and say it is only virtual, or that it is not so in fact or in truth, we are compelled to resist them, and contend that it is an eternal reality.

Middletown, N.Y., March 1860.

MEETINGS

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION



The West Country Line Union meeting will meet at Dan River Church, the Lord willing, the 5th Sunday in March. Song service will begin at 10 a.m. and preaching at 10:30. All lovers of the truth are invited to meet with us. We especially appreciate any ministers of our faith and order who have a mind to meet with us.

Elder Kenneth Key, Moderator
Brother Allen Carroll, Clerk

STAUNTON RIVER UNION



The Lord willing the Staunton River Union will be held at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in March. The song service will begin at 10:00 a.m.

Directions: Turn off route 29 business onto Music Street (beside Amos Fine Foods in Gretna, VA) the church is approximately five miles at the intersection of Weatherford Road and Music Street.

We welcome all lovers of the truth to come and be with us .

Elder Raymond Goad - Moderator
Pam Betterton - Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR DECEMBER 1996

Mrs. Mae Hudson, VA	\$5.00
Mrs. Mammie Ferfuson, VA	2.00
Mrs. Elizabeth T. Helms, VA	7.00
Mrs. Ruby Hawley, VA	5.00
Mrs. Hazel A. Garland, MD	25.00
Lavene N. Pullig, LA	2.00
Walter Hill, NC	5.00
Mrs. Jane Carroll, AR.....	2.00
Mrs. Charles M. Lovell, VA	2.00
Tommy C. Wall, VA	7.00
Mrs. Walter Carr, Jr., AR.....	10.00
Mrs. Emmie L. Grayson, AL	2.00
Charles Alders, TX	12.00
Mrs. Garlon Vick, NC	7.00
Marvin Curnutt, TX.....	2.00
Mrs. Nellie M. Dalton, VA.....	2.00
Kenneth R. Adams, GA	12.00
Ms. Brenda Wright, NC	2.00
Cleo Underwood, VA	6.00

OBITUARIES

MRS. PAULINE KING HUTCHISON

It is with sorrow and a great feeling of loss as I write this obituary of Sister Pauline Hutchison, who was a faithful member of Durham Primitive Baptist Church. She loved the doctrine and enjoyed the fellowship of her brothers and sisters in the Church; often entertaining them in her home.

Sister Hutchison was born on November 19, 1920 in Franklin County of Virginia. She was the daughter of the late Thomas and Dorothy Jones King, and the widow of the late William (Tex) Hutchison Sr. She was preceded in death by a brother, Chester King.

She served in the Women's Army Corp in World War II and was later employed by Veteran Hospitals in Durham, North Carolina and in Florida.

The Lord called her home October 1, 1996. She is survived by one daughter, Phyllis Hutchison Andrews of Durham, North Carolina and one son Carl William Hutchison Jr. of Stockbridge, Georgia. Other survivors include six sisters Hattie Cannady of Bassett, Virginia; Ena Farrow of Callaway, Virginia; Edith De Hart of Rocky Mount, Virginia; Lula Holley of Floyd, Virginia; Mary Toler of Stewart, Virginia, Alpha Ramsey of Collinsville, Virginia and two brothers: Thomas Aaron King, of Climax, Virginia and Arthur Douglass King of Midlothian Virginia, four grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

Memorial services were held at Hudson Funeral Home in Durham, North Carolina by Elders Cleo Robertson and Lane Carter. She was laid to rest in Oak Grove Memorial Gardens. We shall miss her but we feel she had a true hope in the Lord Jesus Christ and that our loss is her eternal gain.

**An Unworthy Sister
Frances Brinkley**

THE OBITUARY OF SISTER MARGARET MILLS PICKRAL

It is with a sad heart, but sweet memories that I attempt to write the obituary of Sister Margaret Mills Pickral. She was born August 3, 1905 - the daughter of James Mills and Martha Ragland Mills. She was married to Harry Edgar Pickral Sr. who predeceased her.

Sister Margaret was a member of Springfield Primitive Baptist Church. She was received by Experience and Baptism - September 14, 1952. She was a faithful member and attended services as long as her health permitted.

Sister Margaret passed from this life November 18, 1996. Those left to mourn her include; seven sons - H. Edgar Pickral Jr., Oscar Pickral, Judson Pickral and Charlie Pickral, all of Gretna, Va. Gerald Pickral, Bobby Pickral, and Reuben Pickral, all of Gretna, Va.; Three daughters Betty Rowles and Shirley Shelton of Gretna and Rebecca Shelton of Concord, Va.; thirty-three grandchildren, forty great-grandchildren; three step-great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild. She was predeceased by one child and two grandchildren.

Sister Margaret's funeral was conducted from Springfield Primitive Baptist Church by her pastor, Elder Marvin Brumfield. Her body was laid to rest in the Gretna Burial Park.

Sister Margaret will be sadly missed by all of us that loved her; but we feel that our loss is her eternal gain. May God reconcile each and every heart to say, "Thy will be done."

Written in love and hope by
Carol R. Pickral

Moderator- Elder Marvin Brumfield
Clerk- Oscar D. Pickral

JOHN 6:28-35.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God; that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

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1012 Bennett Circle, Keeling, Virginia 24566

A SONG OF PRAISE.

*"Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,
Thou great Jehovah, great I AM,
We love to hear of thee, dear Lord,
And listen to thy sacred word.*

*No music's like thy charming name—
It puts us in ecstatic frame;
Not half so sweet can aught else be;
O let us ever hear of thee.*

*O let us ever hear thy voice,
And in our hearts we will rejoice;
In mercy let us hear thee speak,
And thy dear face we then shall seek.*

*And in our Priest we will rejoice,
When we shall hear his glorious voice.
Thou great Melchisedec, to thee
Let all our adoration be.*

*Our Jesus shall be still our theme—
'Tis he that wrought salvation's scheme;
While in this sinful world we stay,
We'll praise our Jesus every day.*

*We'll sing our Jesus' lovely name,
By whom our great salvation came,
And when all other things decay,
Thy glorious name shall be our stay.*

*When we appear in yonder cloud,
And trumpet sounds both long and loud,
We'll join with all thy favored throng,
And sing the everlasting song.*

*There we shall sing both loud and sweet,
When we shall our Redeemer meet;
We'll join with all the blood-bought
throng,
And Jesus Christ shall be our song."*

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EDITORIAL



ELDER R.H. CAMPBELL

So God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, and all the hosts of them, he created man in his own image and gave him dominion over every living thing that moved upon the face of the earth. He told man to go forth and multiply and replenish the earth and

subdue it. This was done in the sixth day of Creation, after everything else was created. The days of creation were very special days, there have been none like them since, for they encompassed everything that would happen here in time. God created one man, Adam, in his own image and likeness, and that one man embodied every man and woman that will ever exist; there have been none created since and so it was with everything that was created. The things created in the beginning either still exist as they were created (sun, moon, stars, land, sea, heavens etc.) and still fulfill the commands given them at that time, in the world today; or the originals procreate according to God's command (plants, animals, fishes, creeping things, fowls of the air and man). All men came through and from Adam, even Eve, for she was formed from a rib taken from him. Since that time, in the days of formation according to the normal plan of God, each succeeding generation is born into the world to file their allotted place in the plan of God: the sun, moon, stars etc are still functioning per that plan today, but, nothing else has been created; all are but a continuation of the original creation.

Now the question arises, are all men in the image of God, and if so, in what way; what characteristics and qualities must they possess to be in the image of God. God is not flesh and bone as Adam was so, in what sense is he in the image of God. God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth: so

if God is a spirit, then to be in his image they must be spiritual also. Were they created this way, and if so, when and how were they changed into man as he is in the world today.

With God, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years are as one day, because with him it is one eternal now: the day of our birth and the day of our death are ever present before him. The things created in the days of Creation were not in the same chronological order as they were manifested in the days of formation. All things that were created in the six days of creation and God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good: remember this encompassed everything: they were there in the things created but had not as of that time been made manifest. God rested the seventh day and there was none of his creation physically in existence: they were manifest in the world in the days of formation and this was not in the same order of their creation. The man was created on the sixth day of creation, after everything else, and yet in the days of formation man was created first: then was planted the garden with the trees herbs, grasses etc. And man was put in the garden to dress it and keep it. God then commanded the man saying of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. God then said it is not good that man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him; and then out of the ground God formed every

beast of the field, and every fowl of the air and brought them to Adam and he named them. Still there was not found an help meet for Adam. The Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he took a rib from his side and made woman. And brought here to Adam as his help meet. In the days of creation it states Gen. 1 vs. 27, "*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.*" As though it was one action and yet many things occurred between the formation of Adam and Eve physically. The point being made here is that all things were not formed in the same sequence as created, so, again we come to the question of: were all men created in the image of God, and if so, how and when did it happen in the days of formation.

In the fall of man in the garden of Eden judgement was passed upon Adam, Eve and the serpent for their involvement in the sin that occurred when man, Adam and Eve, partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God had told Adam that he should not eat of this tree, for in the day that he did that he would surely die, and die he did. God created man in his image and likeness and when he viewed all of his creation he pronounced that it was very good, so man was created in the image of God and knew nothing but good, peace and harmony: he walked and talked with God and had a world created for him to enjoy the fruits of; had no sin, sickness, sorrows or trials such as so common to the natural man in the

world today. When evil entered into the garden of Eden it brought death to Adam and Eve and the world as they had known. They died to the innocence they knew and dwelling in the presence of God. They were alienated from this world of peace and driven from the garden of Eden: no longer in the image and likeness of God, but rather given coats of skin, their earthly garb, more in the image of the serpent into whose kingdom they were consigned to dwell. They were marred as the vessel in the hands of the potter who wrought a work on the wheel.

The judgement that was pronounced on the serpent was that he was cursed above every beast of the field, upon his belly he would go and dust should he eat all the days of his life. His kingdom would be the earth, earthy and his dominion would be over the flesh and the natural world into which he was to dwell with the man, driven from the garden of Eden. Enmity was placed between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, his seed would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman and her seed would bruise the head of the seed of the serpent: the seed of the woman being those promised by God in the sixth day of Creation, and the seed of the serpent being those who were brought into existence when the sorrows and conception of the woman were greatly multiplied because of her succumbing to the lies of satan and not obeying the command of God. They are of their father the devil and never had any portion in the heritage of the seed of the woman, who is the mother of all

living. This establishes the bounds of habitation of men on the earth, separates the elect from the non elect, and although they share many characteristics, features and similarities they can no more change their classification than a leopard can change his spots. They were designed to fill a certain requirement in the plan of God, and they shall fulfil their calling, the same as all the rest of God's creation.

The Lord said, *"My spirit shall not always strive with man, for he also is flesh,"* that characteristic which was given man when driven from the garden of Eden to dwell on the earth; those qualities that he did not possess in the garden of Eden and dwelt in the presence of God and talked with him. God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually, and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. Surely, man in this state is not in the image of God.

The Lord said he would destroy the man he had created, both beast, creeping thing and the fowl of the air, but, because of his promise to the seed of the woman, that they would bruise the head of the seed of the serpent, Noah, a representative of that seed found grace in the eyes of the Lord and a remnant was spared to continue the human race and bring to reality the fulfillment of the promise. Although God did not destroy all men, the wickedness that was characteristic of the man in the flesh continued and he was

still alienated from God, could not commune with God as in the garden of Eden and the cherubim and the flaming sword still kept the way of the tree of life. The man in this estate did not know God and was not aware of him except as he revealed himself to him or spoke to him through the prophets; chosen of God for this purpose. Man in nature is still in this same condition today and must wait on the Lord to extend grace and mercy to him before he can know him, and make manifest his goodly heritage.

God has always had, in every age of the world a few scattered people among the nations of the world that he chose before time began to be a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a peculiar people that they should show forth the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. Abraham Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and many others down through time were representatives of this people and a manifestation that God was remembering his promises and preserving a remnant to show forth his praise in the earth. God gave them a law to govern and control their lives and to judge them regarding their obedience and their allegiance to him as their guide and their God; a standard to be used to measure and make manifest the hearts of the children of Israel regarding their faith and love for him. They have always been an afflicted and poor people in the eyes of the world, but, they are the reason for all things; the world was created for their sake, to manifest the omnipotence, omni-

science, omnipresence, grace, love and mercy of God for them, that they should worship him in spirit and in truth for his indescribable gift of salvation in the sacrifice of his only begotten Son. The reason that God gives unto Israel is, Deut. 7 vs. 6,7,8. *"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 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; But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he hath sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."* This applies to all of God's people in all ages of time, he formed them for himself and called them by name, not just an open invitation to whom it may concern, as the world teaches.

The prophets down through the corridor of time have been given to write and prophecy of a time in the latter days when a prophet liken unto them, God would raise up and to him would the people be gathered, and to him they should hearken. God said he would put his words in his mouth, and he would speak unto the people all that he had commanded him. He would bear their sins, be afflicted in all their afflictions and the Angel of his presence would save them; in his love and

in his pity he would redeem them and bare them and carry them all their days. This was cause for great hope, to look to a time in which a sacrifice would be made one time that would put away their sins forever, not just a remembrance again of their sinful and undone condition. They were told of a day in which God would make with them a new covenant, not like the one under which they were living; a covenant whereby God would put his law in their inward parts and write it in their heart. No longer would man teach man, but God would put in each one's heart to know him, from the least of them unto the greatest of them; getting back to the way it was in the beginning where they communed with God without an earthly priest and their sins and their iniquities would not separate them from God and they would partake of the tree of life freely.

Dan. 12 vs. 1 *"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."* This refers to the prophet that is to come, the one to whom the people are to be gathered and to whom God said they were to hearken. This is the Lord Jesus Christ; man in the image of God. A man to whom God gave his spirit without measure: the Father loveth

the Son and hath given all things into his hand. A man whose mother is a woman in the flesh but whose father is the Holy Ghost: in the image of God and equal with God, who gives eternal life unto all that the Father had given him.

The Apostle Paul writing of the Jews under the law II Cor. 3 vs. 14-18 *"But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament: which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart."* This is the condition of man in the flesh, and he is certainly not in the image of God: he cannot see and understand the law and cannot keep it because of the weakness of the flesh. This is, always has been and will continue to be the condition of the natural man, he is an alien from God and anything godly or spiritual: they are foolishness to him neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned. *"Nevertheless when they shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed unto the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord."*

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of

sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh and gave to the heirs of promise a portion of that Spirit which is the image of God. In as much as they receive of the Spirit of God in the new birth that new, creature in Christ, is in the image of God. The way of the tree of life has not been violated because it is reserved for the godly and this vain fleshly creature does not have access to it; only the new man which is renewed, after the image of him that created him, can partake of the tree of life. The Cherub and flaming sword were placed there to keep the way of the tree of life for those for whom it was created, only those who are in the image of God: and not as the man who was driven from the garden in the image of the gods of this world whose heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: 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. All of these things happened here in this time world and the world knew it not: Eyes they have but cannot see, ears but cannot hear and hearts but cannot understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God. For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. The world has the inspired word of God, but not the inspiration by which it must be translated:

this is a gift from God, given only to those chosen few who were ordained to eternal life before the foundation of the world. They are the only ones who are able to understand the mystery of the kingdom and the only ones to whom the knowledge of the mystery is revealed.

When you greet a brother with a handshake or an embrace and your heart leaps for joy at the love and fellowship that you have for one another, you are beholding Christ in them the hope of glory: you are seeing in them the image of God. You behold that inner man which is your brother and you are raised up and blessed together in heavenly places. Have you ever looked at a brother who you love very dearly, the natural man, that is, and just thought that is not what I see when we meet and enjoy such sweet communion together in the Spirit; that's where and when man is in the image of God, in eyes and hearts of the believer.

In bonds of love,
Richard H. Campbell

PROVERBS 7:1-3.

My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.

Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.

QUERIES & ANSWERS

QUERY:

"Why are there no Sunday schools or activities for children?"

ANSWER:

Sunday schools were begun about 1781 by Robert Raikes in Glochester, England, for the purpose of teaching children of poor parents in manufacturing towns to read. Since that time, Sunday schools evolved into religious schools with the purpose of saving souls or teaching young people about Christ. We have no objection to education. In fact, we encourage it. However, we do object to the efforts to educate young people to know Christ. Hebrews 8:10-11, *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."*

There is no scriptural basis for schools to teach people, young or old, to know the Lord. There were children in the time of Christ and the apostles, but no where does the scripture set forth any schools. Christ said, *"Suffer the little children to come unto me."*

Sunday schools make no allowance for the Holy Ghost. St. John 14:26, *"But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I said unto you."*

Paul was highly educated; and before his conversion on the road to Damascus, he was taught "religion" by Gamaliel. What did it profit him? He went about binding and casting into prison the saints of God thinking he was doing the service of God. Then, he was brought down and thoroughly taught by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit showed Paul that he was a sinner by nature and by practice. It showed him what he must be by the grace of God.

We provide no entertainment or activity to entice people to come to our church. We believe the Lord will give his people a desire to come to hear the gospel and to worship him. We welcome the very young as well as the very old. Some of my fondest memories are sitting upon my mother's lap in church. I never forgot the old elders who preached and a lot of the people. I did not understand the preaching, but it made a lasting impression. I appreciate the parents who bring their young children to church and hope they feel welcome to do so.

Love in Christ,
Cleo D. Robertson
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ARTICLES

TO: Brethren of Hope in Christ:

Correspondence has been received in recent weeks at this address concerning controversies among Primitive Baptist brethren. Upon examining the content of the letters it appears that serious errors in doctrine and practice together with personal offences of the kind that have been observed elsewhere before have now arisen again. Let us acknowledge that TRUTH when stated with clarity does not sow discord among God's children. As I attempt this writing I pray that God will grant me the prayer recorded in Psalms 19, verses 13 and 14, which I commend for all.

The controversy has spilled beyond the case of a brother against brother offence to include errors among multiple churches of sister associations. Thus one is compelled to question whether compliance with the rule of Matthew 18 can possibly bring a satisfactory resolution, pleasing to God, with the required unity of the Spirit, with peace, and with heartfelt love continuing among all of God's children among the associations and full denomination.

The correspondence was needed for "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it--". As secrets belong to God and not to men, all churches of our denomination whose believers we hope have a place in the mystical body of Christ should

all have knowledge of the suffering. But woe to any who would deal treacherously or witness falsely.

Issues of doctrine, of decorum and of church government are seen in the controversy. Reference is seen in the letters to belief in "the Primitive Baptist Doctrine." We hope the writer means belief rather than doctrine. There is but one God, one gospel, and one doctrine - that of our Lord and Saviour, the Christ. For many years, even generations, members, pastors, and entire churches and associations have stood divided on certain doctrinal issues including those seen in this case. Tragically, ancient landmarks have been cast to the wayside through intent or neglect so that today the denomination does not publish or adhere to a universally accepted confession of faith. Primitive Baptists have no written form in detail of the governments required by God, (I Cor. 12:28). Contrary to the cries of the guilty opposing the rules of men, a body of such rules is essential not, God forbid, for doctrine but for decency and order in the administration of the churches and associations; indeed for the full denomination.

In our experience we have observed that when trouble erupts, some will say "It is your problem--I will not get involved" or they may say "We must not judge;" but some may still proclaim their love. Associations refuse, when in session, to reveal the controversy or seat the messengers sent by the afflicted church or corresponding association. Such a course is proper if the transgression is one of a

personal nature as the rule of Matthew 18 applies. However, if the error is one of fundamental doctrine or basic to the order and practice of the denomination such an attitude is hardly in keeping with the spirit of the Good Samaritan. Should brethren pass by to the other side to avoid the tribulations that we are promised? There is a solemn church covenant for members and churches. Candidates that reject or violate the solemn covenant should not be accepted or retained in church membership.

Saints shall judge the world and matters that pertain to this life (note: the word is shall, not may, or maybe, nor suit yourself I Cor. 6:2-5). Dear Reader, please read Chapter 59 of Isaiah and note in particular that in verse 15 that it displeased the Lord "that there was no judgment." Also it may be profitable to again re-read the Book of Lamentations. At Chapter 5, verse 14 one finds that the ruling "*elders have ceased from the gate*" where judgments were normally rendered.

So, how is judgment rendered? Simply stated, from the scriptures, judge righteous judgment, decently and in an orderly way, without respect to Persons! For issues of doctrine and church practice where shall judgment take place and who shall judge? The entire denomination cannot assemble at one place therefore some fewer persons (but a sufficient number to be a "multitude for safety") must assemble at an appropriate location.

"If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set

them to judge who are least esteemed in the church" I Cor. 6:4. Remembering from the scriptures that things lawful may not be expedient, let us consider who are the least esteemed? Are the least esteemed pastors, deacons, or some class of members? We submit for your consideration that in the minds of men the least esteemed was and is Jesus, who was spit upon and crucified, but he is at the right hand of the Father though residing in the hearts of every child of God. Thus judgment must be from the depths of the hearts of born again new men and not from the minds of the old carnal man. Avoid novices. Seek wise members knowledgeable of the gospel, firm and faithful.

How shall Primitive Baptists proceed toward a judgment? For a pastor, a deacon, or any member to "*do what seems right in his own eyes*" is unacceptable for it is written that "*the way of a fool is right in his own eyes,*" *Prov. 12:15* and if we know anything "*we know only in part,*" *I Cor. 13:9-13 and 8:2.* Many profitable expressions of wisdom are in the Book of Proverbs. Some examples for Primitive Baptists are:

- "*Where there is no vision, the people perish —.*"

- "*Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.*"

- "*Every purpose is established by counsel —.*"

- "*Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety,*" and

- "For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in a multitude of counsellors there is safety."
 Can Old Baptists survive without continuing deliberations of wise counselors?

In the Providence of God, no doubt, He will provide counsellors according to His purpose - not our purpose. The scripture provides examples for our instruction and guidance. The council of the great Sanhedrin was necessary to condemn Jesus that He be crucified and shed blood without which there can be no remission of sins or salvation. Another council, more appropriate for current consideration, is recorded in Acts 15. That council was necessary for rendering judgment of the dispute raging at Antioch, a dispute that was of a doctrinal nature. It was antagonistic to the gospel of our Lord Jesus. Brethren, the scripture does provide the needful procedure for judgment of the disputes that are not unique as they appear elsewhere and have caused tribulation and destruction to the Primitive churches and denomination in the past.

The procedure of Acts 15 requires some further understanding which we pray the Lord will supply. The church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas as messengers with the question to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. The apostles and elders, assembled in one accord, after much disputing and consideration of the matter by counseling together obtained a judgment that was prepared in written form of "letters" addressed to brethren of the

Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Dear Reader - why Syria and Cilicia? The record does not show that the matter was disputed in Syria or in Cilicia. After the epistle (judgment) was delivered by return messengers to Antioch, the reading thereof was received with rejoicing. Later Paul went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches, to establish doctrine and unity of belief.

Of course, the council at Jerusalem cannot be precisely duplicated in this the last times. The unique authority and work of the apostles is over as is evident from The Revelation, Chapter 22, verses 18 and 19. St. John the Divine was the apostle set in God's Church who was the last to die. The task is left to "elders" of the denomination. But "elders" is not a precise designation for there are brethren who are elders by virtue of advanced age, there are elders who are pastors, there are elders who are ordained in the church, there are appointed elders; and evidently there are ruling elders as well as ministerial or teaching elders, for the scripture saith "*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine,*" so that all elders do not labour in the ministry but some have gifts for ruling which was practiced in the Old Testament. (Ruth 4, Num. 11:16-17, Deut. 16:18, Is. 1:26, Rom. 12:6-8, I Cor. 12:4-6.)

Why has God forsaken Old School and Primitive Baptist churches that there should be so many divisions, that the cords of brotherly love have

been and are so easily broken with so much apathy displayed when members and pastors behave irrationally or stupidly? Should anyone wonder that the flock should be scattered and not prosper (see Jer. Chap. 10) or that there should be destruction and desolation across the land, (Book of Lamentations)?

(Dear Readers, please do not attribute this commentary to sarcasm or malice for the writer is deeply concerned. You may examine the catalog of associations, churches, and membership as recorded in Church History by C.B. and S. Hassel with the state of our Baptist denomination today to see the dramatic departure and desolation. Here in the Northeast of our nation, in this century, final destruction has come to seven once prominent and prosperous associations. In our personal experience we have observed the final destruction of three associations where the very same errors and controversies of this case were contributing factors then.)

God's purpose is not for us to challenge or take issue with, for He is God and we are mere creatures of the dust lacking any merit for His consideration or notice. His specific purpose in this case is beyond our discovery; yet, if we are blessed with wisdom and understanding, we should find our every need supplied for our instruction in His written Word. The apostles have commanded us to search the scriptures, prove all things, quench not the Spirit, and pray without ceasing.

A portion of God's people that we believe to be the elect family will through Jesus glorify God's grace - the remainder will finally glorify His justice, wrath, and vengeance. Let us pray that our churches and denomination glorify His grace.

God sends the good - should He not also send evil? He has created the wicked for the day of evil and a waster to destroy. He grants mercy to whom He will and He will have vengeance on whom He will. The blessings and mercies that He has given to David do not entitle any person professing religion to sin likewise, for all are guilty and deserve God's wrath. God forbid that any Old Baptist would dare to cite David's sins as an excuse for their own, expecting forgiveness.

As Christ dwells by faith in the heart of each and every child of God and as all of God's children, collectively, dwell in the body of Christ there is a most intimate union, bond, and communion with God. God does hear the cries of His children. The Word of God reveals in many passages of scripture that there are specific things, persons, deeds and doctrines that the Lord hates and that they are an abomination to Him. We find that thou shall not bring an abomination into thy house lest thou shall be a cursed thing like it, but that thou shall utterly detest and abhor it. Dear Reader, how can this sacred union and communion with God exist if a member, a pastor, or a church assembly adopts, encourages, or continues that which God hates? Shall we declare evil

good? (Deut. 7:26; Jer. 7:30-35; Rev. 21:27.)

How, dear Reader, can it be that a congregation believed, in the minds of men, to be a true militant church of God fall into a state of error and apostasy? God does not manifest His Spirit continually in our hearts, indeed, according to His purpose and time, He leaves us to our own lust (even whole nations are left to their lust)--to the temptations of the flesh and Satan. "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh!"

(Luke 17:1-2.) "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." (I Cor. 11:18-19.)

If it please the Lord let us critically examine that which the Spirit revealed to the churches in The Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, concerning error:

1. To Ephesus:

- Men were taking the honour of the ministry unto themselves falsely claiming to be apostles when they had not been called or sent by God.

- The first love, i.e., the love of God with all of the heart, soul, and mind had declined.

- The church failed to do the first works which is to use the keys of the kingdom to establish an organized assembly and an orderly church in accord with Matt. 16:19, I Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11-12.

- False practice has entered the church with "deeds" hated by God.

2. To Smyrna:

- Persons of the congregation falsely claiming to be Jews seek a return to the ceremonial sacrifices as performed by a high priest (today a pope for a denomination or little popes as "lords" over local churches). The practice of Judaism was abolished under the gospel as the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. The gifts of individual priesthood and ministry as witnesses of God's grace were bestowed upon every child of God to permit direct access to God by personal prayer. (Matt. 27:51, I Pet. 2:5,9, Rev. 1:6.

- Denial of the Trinity. The Messiah is yet to come.

3. To Pergamos:

- Here the congregation, still claiming the name of the Lord, has been conformed to the world in the form of national religions sanctioned by civil authority, men and Satan being glorified in ceremonies of the heathen, great buildings and art.

- False doctrines hated by God now follow the "deeds" of false pastors also hated by God. The doctrine of Balaam and the (Arminian) doctrine of men's equity in works for salvation are false.

4. To Thyatira:

- Toleration is advocated by the denomination and its allied churches for acceptance of fornication, adultery, and the teaching of idolatry.

5. To Sardis:

- The full counsel of God that the ministry had received and heard is no longer taught to edify and strengthen the weak brethren although the church

claims the name of God. Ancient landmarks have fallen out of use.

6. To Philadelphia:

- Some persons of the congregation lie, claiming to be Jews. They would deny God's grace and love for His elect among the Gentiles and the lost tribes of Israel. All Israel is not of Israel.

7. To Laodicea:

- Religious zeal has departed from the congregation of the church - the lukewarm membership has become passive and apathetic; they are blind and cannot see that they are spiritually naked; they have rejected knowledge and have no knowledge of God. God has given them pastors that are like themselves, thus the assembly through self-righteousness is made at ease believing they are rich in grace and have no need of anything; therefore why pray or sacrifice praise and thanksgiving to God? (Hos., chap 4) The fear of the Lord is absent at Laodicea.

The counsel of the Lord to the seven churches was to buy of Him gold (which I believe to be the grace of faith tried in the furnace of affliction), white raiment for clothing to hide their spiritual nakedness (which I believe is the righteousness of Jesus), and eyesalve for opening the eyes to see (which I believe is the work of the Holy Spirit). The purchase price is paid from the depths of the heart given in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving - all to the glory of God. In the counsel of the Lord each of the seven churches were commanded to repent and overcome the errors among them. God knows

the need of His adopted children. He will give strength and power to His children in churches that He has planted. He will supply enough to fit their allotted burdens and tribulations so that they shall overcome. But woe be to any that go down to Egypt (to the world) for help.

In the counsel of the Lord, (Rev. 3:19) "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.."

The Holy Spirit has revealed the "deeds" that the Lord hates in many verses and chapters of the Bible. Seven of the abominations that the Lord hates are recorded in Proverbs 6:16-19, in such clear language that no interpretation is needed. They should be firmly bound in every heart for they offer wise guidance for judgment of every aspect of human conduct.

Most often we think of marriage as the union of a man and a woman. But there are other marriages. There is the Marriage of the Church Triumphant to Jesus, the Son of God in glory, a marriage of eternal union before time "when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy!" (Job 38:7) There are marriages of children of God to militant churches here in the low ground of sin and sorrow. There is a solemn covenant of sacred vows in all of these marriages. I fear we rarely see a display or a reading of the Church Covenant as adopted by the brethren. Do candidates for church membership accept the Covenant?

“Where thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for He hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou has vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow; than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.” (Eccl. 5:4-5) Men and women who would contemplate violating their sacred vows would do well to heed Prov. 5, 15-23. Any who would deal treacherously with their covenant vows or their spouse would do well to heed Malachi, chapter 2, for the Lord, the God of Israel, hateth putting away.

Saints of God, you who worship under the names of Old School or Primitive Baptists, awake. Heed the words of Jesus recorded in Mark, chapter 3 (also see Matthew, chapter 12:25). If a kingdom (a denomination) be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house (a church of militant denomination) be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. Be aware, dear Saints, of the prophecy of Amos, chapter 8, that:

“—the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.”

Dear Reader, this commentary, like our prior writings on divisions, published in the Signs of Sept. 1994, is not the product of multiple counsellors. My desire to stir the pure minds of brethren (to seek, to judge, and to

reach a unity of purpose for our churches and denomination) may be presumptive of me.

I would prefer to read the writings of unified brethren. As I may have despitely used a brother by errors among these writings, pray for me. ***“Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.”***

Cry unto the Lord for help in days of trouble. Praise God, Him alone, for every blessing!!

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ST. JOHN 6:51-58.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

VOICES OF THE PAST

REMARKS ON REVELATION 13:8

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

With much fear and trembling, we venture to write such views as we have on the subject proposed for our consideration; not however, because we must necessarily cross and controvert the expositions which have been given by the learned and the great who have been admired by the literary and religious world, nor yet because we are conscious that our views will subject us to the reproach and ridicule of ungodly men; but because the subject is deep and mysterious, as well as grand and sublime. We have never attempted to explain the dark imagery presented in the visions of John upon the Isle of Patmos without feeling an unusual sense of our littleness, while amazed at the awful grandeur therein embodied. No amount of study, no application of the intellectual powers of the human mind can ever approximate a solution of the things set forth in the vision, any farther than they are opened to our understanding by him who alone of all in heaven or on earth was able to take the book, and open the seals thereof.

Before entering upon the immediate subject of the text, we call the

attention of our readers to the demonstration in this book of the Omniscient wisdom and irrevocable purposes of Almighty God, both of which we are compelled to admit, or failing to admit, we must reject the whole book of Revelation as a heaven-inspired record of the truth of God. Were it possible that any event in the future, however distant or complicated, was hidden from the Omniscience of Jehovah, this vision could not be relied on as setting forth things which should certainly come to pass in the precise and exact order indicated by the striking figures which John saw, and interpretations given him by the angel of the Lord. And were not the whole chain of events foreshadowed in this book, absolutely ordained by him who has declared the end from the beginning, saying, *“My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,”* it could not have been with certainty declared hundreds of years in advance, what should, or what should not come to pass.

Let the reader then decide at once whether he will reject this book as a revelation from God -- as its name and title claims -- or admit that God has settled in his purpose and decrees, unalterably and forever, all the events which are here declared should be fulfilled both in the history of the church and people of God, and in the development of the man of sin, the son of perdition, that wicked one, whose coming is after the working of Satan -- with all signs and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.

The exact limits set to every development of anti-christ, whether, as the great red dragon; the beast that rose out of the sea; the beast that rose out of the earth; the image of the beast; the scarlet colored beast; the mistress of abominations on whose forehead is indelibly written, *Mystery, Babylon the great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth*, assigning to each of these characters their exact rise, career, duration, and final overthrow. Showing with the minutest accuracy exactly when and to what extent they should annoy, worry, persecute, or slaughter the saints of God; and by what signal displays of Almighty power God would preserve his church in the face of all the combined powers of wicked men and devils, and curb, restrain, and finally destroy all the elements of opposition, and finally bring his bride elect in triumph to the skies. How exceedingly limited are the views of those who hold that God's purpose and decrees, his wisdom, government and ordination, embrace only the good actions of men; when it is expressly written, *"There is none that doeth good; no, not one."* How truly it is written, *"The fool hath said, There is no God."* We cannot admit his being and deny that he reigns in the armies of heaven and over all the inhabitants of earth. If his government and foreordination does not set bounds to the wicked actions of men and devils -- how shall we read our text? Almost two thousand years ago God gave this very revelation to Jesus Christ, as Head of the church, to show unto his servants, and he sent and signified it by his angel

unto his servant John; and commanded John to write it in a book for the use of his churches. The text does not read as though the things declared were unsettled, unfixed, or uncertain. The immutable God by his angel signifies to John, (see Chapter 1:1,2) *"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."* Is it possible to deny the foreordination of God and admit the truth of the text? Or is it possible to deny the truth of this text without making him a liar who sent and signified it to John?

First--In offering some remarks on the text we propose to notice briefly the character or thing that shall be worshiped.

Second -- The people and their locality who shall worship him.

Third -- The clearly implied reservation of a remnant according to the election of grace, who shall not worship him.

Fourth -- The obvious reason why they shall not worship him; their names being written in the Book of Life, etc.

Fifth--Some testimony of the Lamb-his Book of Life, and in what sense the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.

First -- The character or thing that shall be worshiped. To it the personal pronoun him is applied in our text. The antecedent to this pronoun is unmistakably given in the context, as the beast which John saw rise up

out of the sea, when he stood upon the sand of the sea, and which he describes as having seven heads, and ten horns. Thus far his description is similar to that of the great red dragon mentioned in the preceding chapter, and which gave to this sea-monster his seat and power and great authority. The dragon, however, had his seven crowns upon his heads, but the beast wears them upon his ten horns. And this beast which John saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were like as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. What an ugly looking monster to be worshiped! Who would suppose his admirers would be so numerous that devotion to him would ever become so popular in the world? But so it was ordained. They should not only worship him but the same class of worshipers should also worship the dragon which gave power to the beast; and they worshiped the beast saying, *"Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given him mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindred, and tongues, and nations."* Here the words of our text follow: *"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him."* Him who had

seven heads and ten horns, who was like the leopard, the bear, and whose mouth was like that of a lion, him whose lion-like mouth blasphemed God, his Name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. Him who made war with and overcame the saints, him whose time was limited to forty and two months. This complicated monster, this amalgamation of all that is brutal, savage, ravenous, carnivorous, and terrible, is the deified idol at whose shrine nations should bow down, and all the tribes of the earth with the exception only of those mentioned in our text shall worship. This mystic beast was used to signify to John one of the multiform phases of the man of sin.

It is supposed that in the classification of the various organized forms of anti-christian power, the dragon is used to denote the Pagan, and this beast to represent the Papal form of organized and legal persecution brought to bear against the church and kingdom of our God and his Christ; and that numerous other striking figures are used in the apocalypse to denote the Mohammedan, the Protestant, and all other prominent forms of opposition to be encountered by the people of the saints of the Most High God. We shall not be able in this article, nor will we be expected to trace out the full analogy of these figures; but we shall adopt the application of the figure of the beast which is to be worshiped so very extensively -- as signifying the Papal anti-christ, which succeeded the Pagan dragon, and was inaugurated at Rome, in the

seat formerly occupied by the dragon under the Pagan government of that vast empire, and installed in the great power and imperial authority of the dragon, when the first Papal Pontif was elevated as Universal Bishop at or about the year A.D. 606, having forty and two months, according to our context, to continue. These forty and two months agree with the thousand, two hundred and three score days, in which God's two witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth, according to Rev. 11:3. Allowing thirty days to a month, the forty and two months amount to one thousand two hundred and three score days. And this according to the computation of time signified by Daniel's seventy weeks, and other like figures, give each day to signify one year; and allowing this application of time, and the correctness of historical data that the Papal anti-christ was organized and its forty and two months began at A.D. 606, its termination, together with the slaying of the two witnesses, may be expected by A.D. 1866, as 1260 added to 606 will amount to that term. Truly the time seems to be at hand, and the general upheaving of the nations of the earth and more especially the recent stripping of the Pope of his secular power over many mighty nations, favors the conclusion that the Papal supremacy will expire by the end of the next four years. And if we do not greatly mistake current indications, the Civil War now raging in our own beloved country is preparing the way for the slaying of the two witnesses, simultaneously with the down-

fall of the Papacy in the old world. But Secondly -- Who are to worship this beast? All who dwell upon the earth, whose names are not written in the Book of Life, etc. From the Roman Empire Papal missionaries were sent forth into all the nations, tribes, and kindred of the earth and the world wondered after the beast. "*All that dwell upon the earth,*" not only expresses the general spread of Popery into all the nations and tribes of men; but according to the context, those of all classes of the children of men. In the sixteenth verse, we are told that the image of the beast, when it received life, causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, and in their foreheads. And in verse twelve, "*He causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed.*" The first beast is the one which is spoken of in our text, and is called the first in distinction from the beast which John beheld coming up out of the earth, with two horns like a lamb, which spake as a dragon. But there seems to be something peculiarly expressive in regard to their locality; they dwell upon the earth. The true church of God is throughout this vision represented as dwelling in heaven. Their life, or spiritual vitality is hid with Christ in God. Their conversation is in heaven; for they are risen with Christ. And in the verse immediately preceding our text, they are said to dwell in heaven. But all religionists, whose religion is earthly, sensual, and devil-

ish, are appropriately said to dwell, not in heaven, but on the earth. They are themselves of the earth, earthly, and all the religion originating from their resolutions, wills, and works, has its source or fountain in the earth; and as they live religiously on their earthly doctrines, rites, ceremonies, and performances, they dwell upon the earth. They are not built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles of the Lord, but upon the earth which is to be consumed. And their dwelling is defended by earthly power, force, and authority. Instead of trusting in the Lord they confide in armies and navies, emperors and kings. And instead of the armor of God and the salvation which God has appointed for walls and bulwarks for his Zion, the weapons of their warfare are carnal. Their munitions are oppression, disfranchisement, confiscation, prisons, dungeons, racks, tortures, gibbets, stakes, flames, and fagots. Their arguments are edicts and decrees, thundered from the thrones of monarchs or from the Sea of Rome. Their dwelling is in every sense upon the earth, and all such dwellers on the earth, whether they be small or great, rich or poor, bond or free, must worship the beast by acknowledging his assumed supremacy, looking to him for pardon of sin, by applying to him his blasphemous titles -- His Holiness -- Head of the Church -- Christ's Vicar, and by according to him the right to represent by his triple crown, that the power of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is vested in him, together with all power on earth, eccle-

siastic and civil, and that he is divinely commissioned to reign over the kings of the earth, and to lord it over the heritage of the Lord. But it must not be understood that all who worship this beast are members of the Roman Catholic commission -- for this chapter shows conclusively that all who belong to the organization of the second beast, and all embraced in the image of the beast are included as dwelling upon the earth, as having the mark of this beast, and the number of his name. If the beast that rose up out of the sea was Popery, the beast coming up out of the earth must signify the Protestant anti-christ; and the image of the beast which rose out of the sea is set up by Protestantism and presents a facsimile of the original, which we have in striking exactness in the numerous unscriptural religious organizations set up by the various Protestant branches of modern anti-christ for the evangelization of the world, and which claim the right to supervise the constituted governments of the world, and in its insatiable thirst for human blood. Rev. 14:9-11 -- *The third angel proclaimed the dreadful doom of all the worshipers of the beast, "Saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the*

Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Thirdly -- We were to notice the reservation of those whose names are written in the book of life. In the next chapter we are told that these, instead of dwelling upon the earth, stood with the Lamb upon Mount Sion. That the number of them was an hundred and forty and four thousand, and beside these, as we are elsewhere told was an innumerable company which no man can number which were redeemed out of every kindred and tribe and nation. These have the seal of God the Father written in their foreheads. These all sang the new song, which no man could learn but those which were redeemed from the earth. That is, from where they once dwelt with others on the earth; but they are redeemed from the earth and then they learn to sing the new song before the throne. We have a copy of this song in Rev. 15:3. It is called the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, "***Saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints,***" etc. While all the worshipers of the beast sing great and marvelous are the works of men, the powers of men, the agency of men, and the efficiency of the institutions of men for the redemption of the world; while they worship the beast, the works of their own hands, and glory in their shame,

they cry, "***Who is like unto the beast: who is able to make war with the beast.***" But they can never learn to appreciate the great and marvelous works of the Lord God Almighty, nor to acknowledge the justice and truth of the ways of the King of saints. Those whom God has redeemed from the earth, who are taught of God thus to sing and ascribe all power and majesty to God, are further described by, "***These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: These were redeemed from among men,***" etc. We cannot sustain this character, and yet worship the beast and carry his mark. If we follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, we shall not run ahead and ask him to follow with his approbation and blessing what we have devised, invented or done. These are they that follow him in the regeneration; he going before them in that work, and they following after him. When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and they follow him; but a stranger they will not follow for they know not the voice of strangers. They follow him in the baptismal grave, into the wilderness, in sore temptations and deliverances; they follow him into the sheepfold, by the door, without trying to climb up some other way. They take his yoke on them and learn of him, for he is meek and lowly. They bear his image -- imitate his examples -- obey his precepts, and depend on him alone as their only Savior, their Prophet, Priest, and King. And as they

follow, he leadeth them into green pastures and unto living fountains of water. He leads them in a way they know not, and in paths they have not known; but they have the assurance that all the way he leads them is the right way; for they have learned to sing most sweetly -- *"Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."* They are preserved from worshiping the beast, as the Lord's hidden ones were from bowing to Baal in the days of Elijah. *"I have reserved seven thousand who have not bowed the knee unto Baal."* And Paul, after referring to this reservation, adds, *"Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works,"* etc. (Rom. 11:5,6) The sovereignty of God is vindicated while he is righteousness discriminates, choosing the delusions of the ungodly, and leaving them in their madness to believe a lie that they all may be damned who have pleasure in unrighteousness and believe not the truth. *"But we are bound to give thanks unto God, for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because he hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation, through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth."* (II Thess. 2:11-12) This people the Lord says he has formed for himself, and they shall shew forth his praise. He will put his fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from him; and he will not turn away from them, to do them

good. He will never leave them, nor forsake them.

Fourthly -- The obvious reason why they shall not worship the beast is that God has chosen them from the beginning unto salvation. He has chosen them in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love. *"And the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his."* Jesus says, *"I know my sheep, and am known of mine."* And they are registered in the book of life. They are written among the living in Jerusalem. Their walls are continually before the Lord, for he has engraven their name upon the palm of his hands: and lest any hurt them he will keep them night and day. For the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the wicked unto the day of judgment to be punished. The reason why they do not worship the beast, nor wonder after him, nor look to him for salvation, or ascribe any saving power to him, is that God has taught them better. And every one that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto Christ, and him that cometh unto Christ he will in no wise cast out. He will raise them up at the last day. They are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time. In thy Book all my members were written. And none can erase the names of Jesus' members from the book of life of the Lamb. God has predestinated them to be conformed to the

image of his Son; and in that image they shall be raised up at the last day. As for them, they shall behold his face in righteousness, and be satisfied when they awake with his likeness.

Lastly -- We proposed to offer some further remarks concerning the Lamb -- his book of life, and attempt to show in what sense he was slain from the foundation of the world. A most ample and precious cluster of names and titles have been chosen and employed by the Holy Ghost to set forth the person, offices, work, and relations which our Lord Jesus Christ bears towards his people. Perhaps of them all, none is more interesting to the saints than that of the Lamb, the Lamb of God, the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne, the Lamb that stands upon Mount Sion, etc. As a figure, the lamb is the most harmless, innocent, and meek of all the animal creation. Hence they were frequently used under the Old Testament dispensation to prefigure our divine Redeemer who is holy, harmless, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens. But in the types, the lambs to be so used must be the firstlings of the flock, for Jesus was in all things to have the preeminence. They must be without blemish, for they were used to point to him who knew no sin; to him who was spotless, innocent, pure, and immaculate. They were used in sacrifice to signify that the Lamb of God was to be offered for the sins of his people. Abraham said unto Isaac that God would provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So Jesus is called the Lamb of God, the Lamb which God has pro-

vided, and on whom he has laid the iniquity of all his people. His book of life is not a book composed of paper or parchment, which might be consumed by fire, or its records effaced by passing ages, but it is figurative language. As when we wish to make a matter certain, record it; so in the archives of eternity, in the volume of God's book it is written, or in other words, made certain by the irrevocable choice, purpose, promise and decree of the unchangeable God, all the members of Christ's body, his substance, which was not hidden from the eyes of God. The book of life of the Lamb, in the sense in which the words are used in our text, are probably to be understood the same as where they are used in Rev. 22, as a record of those who have been brought into the fellowship of his organized church, in its gospel form. As in the old Jerusalem, a registry was kept, of the names of the living inhabitants of that city, so in the New Jerusalem, or the gospel church, those who are received into fellowship on profession of faith are enrolled among the living in the anti-typical Jerusalem.

As a Lamb, he is spoken of as having been slain from the foundation of the world; that his goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. And all his sufferings, and death, were summed up in the divine mind from everlasting. There is no room to doubt; but we understand the expression here used to mean more particularly that he was set forth in the types and figures used from the foundation of the world, by the figure of the slain

Lamb. At the early dawn of the creation Abel saw, by faith, the bleeding, dying Lamb of God, through the figure of the innocent firstling of his flock, which he offered, and which provoked the wrath of Cain. And from that period forth until the crucifixion of Christ, lambs were used by the patriarchs, and by the Levitical priesthood, to set forth the crucified Redeemer. A remarkable instance is given in the redemption of Israel from the house of bondage, when the Passover was instituted in Egypt; its blood sprinkled upon lintels and door posts of their dwellings, and its flesh roasted with fire and eaten with bitter herbs, only by the Hebrews, on the night of their deliverance. But we will not extend this already lengthy article by referring to all the lambs which were sacrificed from the foundation of the world; but barely remark that in them all the Savior, the Lamb of God, was evidently set forth crucified among them.

John was enabled to identify and bear record, or testimony, of Christ as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world; which all the blood of victims slain before could not do. By one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified. In this case there is remembrance of sin made against them no more; for his blood cleanseth us from all guilt, from all pollution and sin. And Peter admonishes the redeemed saints thus, *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of*

Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God." (I Peter 1:18-21)

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Middletown, N.Y.
February 15, 1862.

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FOR MY FRIENDS

*Once I was a young spoiled girl
I didn't know much about the world
Mama read the Bible to me
She meant well, but I couldn't see*

*All this I thought, was for later
years*

*It wasn't for my young ears
Yet when I reached the year twenty-
one*

I saw my sins, which I had done

*I asked God, to forgive, which I hope
I received*

*And Oh was my heart relieved
When I look back over many years
I remember my pillow wet with tears*

*Now I am old, wrinkled and gray
It is hard for me, to find my way
Struggling on, trying to hang on
Here today, tomorrow I may be gone*

*When I am gone my body resting on
a stand*

*Place a little white Bible in my
hand*

*Don't cry, when they close the lid
Look up to Jesus and smile instead.*

Minnie Foley

(See obituary this issue)

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EDITORIAL

FAITH



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Eph 2:8.

Not just a gift, but "the" gift of God, which is none other than His holy Son Jesus Christ. What a glorious gift to poor, helpless, condemned sinners who were dead in trespasses and sins! "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when

we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,(by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ." In Christ; no where else. If we are in him it is because we were chosen in him before the foundation of the world. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." Acts 17:28. Our being is a spiritual, eternal life which the Holy Ghost makes manifest unto us in the new birth at the appointed time of God: as Jesus said, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Jn 10:20. In the flesh we are of the earth, earthy; Adam being our progenitor. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Jn 3:6. This is a mystery, "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but is now made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col 1:26-26. This mystery is revealed unto babes (his saints) only, and is hidden from the wise and prudent. Matt 11:25. Jesus said to his disciples, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them it is not given." Matt 13:11. All of the holy scriptures are a mystery to

any to whom God does not reveal them: *"and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."* Matt 11:27. When Peter had said to Jesus, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus said, *"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven."* In John 17:2: *"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*

The above scriptures should be sufficient proof, (if proof is needed,) that the only ones saved by grace through faith are the chosen sons of God. *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* How can one diligently seek him if they do not know him? The unregenerate world will tell us that all we have to do is believe; but how do we believe when we know him not. Jesus said, *"It is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."* Jn 6:29. Paul said to the Philippians, *"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 have a great cloud of witnesses to the faith given them of God, but

these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Heb 12:1 & 11:13. There are many witnesses named in chapter 11 of Hebrews who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, etc.. These are too numerous to mention here, but I would like to observe the faith of Abraham, if God be willing, for God had said that he would multiply him exceedingly, that his covenant would be with him, and he should be the father of many nations. And God said unto him, *"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."* Gen 17:7. Is it not wonderful to hope that we are under that covenant? It is too much to copy here, but I suggest that you read the entire chapter.

Abraham was a man of strong, God given faith. All of the scriptures concerning the dealings and promises of God to Abraham are written for our learning and profit: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."* 2 Tim 3:16-17. Three times it is written, *"Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righ-*

teousness.” And James added this, “And he was called the Friend of God.” Rom 4:3-Gal 3:6-James 2:23. In Romans 4:23-25: “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it (righteousness) was imputed unto him: but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead: who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our Justification.”

Abraham was about an hundred years old, and Sarah about ninety, when God promised him a son by Sarah. **“He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” Rom 4:21-22.** Do not we also glorify God when we believe in him and his holy Son Jesus, whom he hath sent to redeem us from the curse of the law?

All of the promises of God are sure, and at the set time Sarah bare the promised son Isaac unto Abraham. This was the son, of whom God had said, **“For in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Gen. 21:12.** Sarah had previously given her maid Hagar unto Abraham to wife, and Hagar had bare a son called Ishmael. And when Hagar had conceived, she despised Sarah. On the day Isaac was weaned Sarah saw Ishmael mocking, and said unto Abraham, **“Cast out the bond woman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.”** This was grievous to Abraham, but

God said unto him, **“Let it not be grievous, but harken unto Sarah: for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.”** Abraham sent away Hagar and her son, and they wandered in the wilderness until the bottle of water which Abraham had given was spent, and then Hagar cast Ishmael under a bush to die. But God heard the voice of the lad, and the angel of God spake to her out of heaven saying, **“Fear not: for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine arms; for I will make him a great nation.” Gen 21:17-18.** God made Ishmael a great nation, and the Ismaelites were the ones who sold Joseph, the son of Israel, into bondage and who today are mocking the children of God and attempting to deliver them also into bondage. In Gal 4:23-26: **“But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.”** And in verses 28-31 we read, **“Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born of the flesh persecuted him that was born after Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scrip-**

ture? *Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*" There were Jews, however, who claimed to be the seed of Abraham and were never in bondage. They also claimed him as their father, and again that God was their Father: but Jesus refuted their claims, saying, *"I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you."* And, *"But ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham."* And, *"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."* Again, *"If God were your Father, ye would love me."* To those Jews who believed in him he said, *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* Having paraphrased the above scriptures from the 8th chapter of John, I trust that I have not done any violence to them. I leave it for you to judge.

Are we believers or non-believers? Do we know the truth? If we know the truth we know Jesus Christ, for he is the way, the truth and the life. To have life we must be born again; for until that birth by the Holy Spirit we were dead in trespasses and sins. *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins,*

hath quickened us together with Christ." Jesus said to those who have been quickened, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."* Jn 14:15-17.

Jesus fulfilled the law to a jot and to a tittle, and by his death and resurrection we are justified; we are no longer under the law of sin and death, but under the law of Jesus Christ through his righteousness for the remission of sins. This is through faith in his blood and righteousness. Through the blood and righteousness of Christ he is just and the justifier of him which believeth in him. We know that Abraham lived and died before the advent of Jesus Christ into the world, yet he believed, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. By the eye of faith Abraham saw him which was to come. He had received the promises of God, but having not received them he saw them afar off and believed. Jesus said unto the unbelieving Jews, *"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."* Those Jews did not believe this and said, *"Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?"* Jesus said unto them, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am."* Then they took up stones, and

would have killed him if it had been possible: but his time was not yet. They could not believe him, for they had received no faith: faith being the gift of God. In another place Jesus said, *"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."* Jn 6:29.

Most of the world does not believe that Christ existed before he was born in the flesh, but in Proverbs 8:29-32 we read, *"When he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was one by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. Now therefore harken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways."* Only his children are admonished to harken unto him and keep his ways; and he knew them before the world was spoken into existence. *"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 imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."* Ps 139:15-16. These members are the members of the body of Christ, which is his church. Eph 5:30. In Heb 2:14 we read, *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same; that through death he might de-*

stroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." In his Godhead he could not die, therefore he must become incarnate. *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."* Gal 4:4-6. *"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham."* God had promised Abraham, saying, *"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."* Gen 22:18. *"He saith not, And to thy seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."* Gal 3:16. *"Wherefore it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people."* The word behoved means, of necessity; and a high priest must have something to offer for a sacrifice: therefore he offered himself: and by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Heb 10:14.

Now let us return to Abraham and Isaac. Isaac was the promised son given to Abraham, and God said, *"I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."* Gen 17:19. And it came to pass that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto

him, *"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him for a burnt offering."* Abraham rose up early in the morning and went for to do that which God had said. He was strong in faith, believing all the promises of God. Isaac asked, *"Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"* Abraham said. *"My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering."* He bound Isaac on the altar and would have slain him had not the angel forbade him, *"for he accounted that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."* Gen 22:1-3 & Heb 11:19. And the ram that was caught in the thicket by his horns was a figure of Jesus Christ, who stood as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Now James said, *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed."* James 1:13-14. At a glance we have two scriptures that seem to conflict, but we know there are no holy scriptures that oppose each other. Therefore let us search for a right conclusion. According to Webster's dictionary the word tempt has two meanings. Originally it was, to test or try. Secondly, it is to induce, entice, allure, or provoke to something that is immoral or evil. In Hebrews (Heb. 11:17), we read, *"By faith Abraham, when he was "tried", offered up Isaac."* There-

fore should we not conclude rightly that when God did tempt Abraham he was trying his faith? for we know he was not tempting him to do evil. In James 1:12 we read, *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is "tried", he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."* Would any be so bold as to say that Abraham did not love God, and shall not receive the crown of life?

Jesus was tempted by the devil forty days, but he rebuked the devil, and sinned not. *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."* Heb 4:15-16. It is only when we are made to see our need of grace and mercy that we approach unto the throne of God. Though we be greatly tempted by the lusts of the flesh, and enticed, we are told by Paul, *"There hath no temptation taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* 1 Cor 10:13. Therefore, brethren, let us approach the throne of grace in our time of need. We do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which

cannot be uttered, and this intercession for us is according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. Rom 8:26-28.

Jesus Christ himself, *"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."* Heb 5:8. Jesus did not pray for his own will to be done, but the will of the Father. We should offer our prayers and supplications unto God in like manner; with filial, not slavish, fear. If we ask according to the lusts of our flesh, we ask amiss, and receive not, for we ask that we may consume it upon our lusts. If we do not ask in faith, not wavering, we need not think we shall receive any thing of the Lord. James 1:6-7.

If we live, and have faith, it is because Jesus lives within us. He has quickened us out of our dead alienated state: and Paul said, *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* Gal 2;20.

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Righteousness

does not come by the law, for the law worketh wrath, therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be to all the seed. Rom 4th chapter. If the promise is to us by grace, then we are the children of God. *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."* Rom 8:16-17.

Brethren, let us be exceeding happy when we are made to suffer with Christ. For as Paul said, *"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."* Rom 8:18.

Brethren I realize that I have barely touched the surface of this vast text, but I have written in love, as I hope. May God bless it to his glory, and to your comfort and edification. May he pardon all my errors. I ask that you remember me when you approach unto the throne of grace and mercy in faith.

Eld. C.C. Wilbanks

SAMUEL 12:22-24.

For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.

Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

CORRESPONDENCE

March 3, 1997

Dear Elder Williams,

Please find enclosed check for \$25.00 dollars. A donation to "Signs of the Times" - would also like to thank all the precious ministers who write articles for the Signs - I feel they are richly blessed of God for articles are outstanding, and especially want to thank Elder Key for all his effort in obtaining for me a copy of the book written by the Late Elder Spangler, "Amazing Grace."

In bonds of love,
Anne Pearson

March 8, 1997

Dear Editors,

I am late as usual with my subscription. I do appreciate your patience so much. I look forward each month to receiving the Signs of the Times. There is so much good spiritual reading contained in each number. I love to read the articles from the past, as well as those written by the brethren today. The truth never changes with time. In like manner we can read the words in *Malachi 3:6*, "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Not because of their righ-

teousness, but because He changes not. Also in *Hebrew 13:8*, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." I seem to detect many changes in myself, indeed this "outward man" seems to perish day by day. Sickness and aging is an on-going process. In fact, all these changes continue according to the fore-ordained purpose of God.

May it please our Lord to bless each and everyone that carries on the work of getting the Signs out each month. I pray. Please remember me in your prayers.

In hope,
Bill Slack

QUERIES

Are memberships in social or civic groups such as the Elks, Moose, Masons, etc., acceptable? Many of these social or civic groups are secret societies. That is, the meetings are not open to anyone but the members. Whatever takes place in these meetings is secret. No one but the members are to know. Some groups perform various rituals, even "religious" ceremonies. Christ said He did nothing in secret. *Psalm 98:2*, "The Lord hath made known his salvation: His righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the heathen." *St. John 18:20*, "Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said

nothing." Paul said in Ephesians 5:11-12, *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."* Primitive Baptists have always stood firmly against membership in any secret society and would exclude from fellowship, after taking scriptural steps, anyone found belonging to such an organization.

What about community groups or clubs that are not secret societies and that make an effort to help others? Primitive Baptists feel that many of these organizations provide assistance to various members of a community and there is nothing wrong in that. In fact, these acts of kindness and assistance are commendable. The organizations involved receive full credit for these acts. However, we feel that members of the church should help others because of a heart of love and compassion given them by God. Their acts of kindness and assistance are as members and believers in Christ and His church rather than as members of a worldly organization. His people do not need a club or organization of the world to motivate them and direct them in these acts of assistance and helpfulness. *Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* We, as followers of Christ and members of the militant church are to care for one another as He does for His little ones and we are to help

those round about us if there is a need.

Matthew 25:31-46, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no

meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

His people are created unto good works and are ordained to do them. The Lord only is to receive the praise and honor for we are His workmanship.

What about clubs that are strictly social? Obviously, these are solely for the enjoyment of the flesh--our carnal nature. These organizations or groups provide a setting for temptations and a fulfilling of the lusts of the flesh. We are instructed in Thessalonians to *"Abstain from all appearance of evil."* Also, Paul counseled Timothy that *"this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."* Paul, in writing to the Corinthian brethren, brings to their attention the example of the Israelites after God delivered

them from Egypt. *"Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for examples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."*

Peculiar people, aren't we? But His people are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. They indeed are very different from all other people upon the face of the earth. A difference that is because of Christ. Because of His love shed abroad in our hearts, we have no desire to be a part of any worldly club or society. Our desire is to Him as our husband, our lord, our priest, and our king. May we be found following Him though the way be narrow and beset with severe trials.

May the God of all Grace keep you,

Cleo D. Robertson
111 Livingstone Drive
Cary, North Carolina 27513

 ARTICLES

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds and casting down of imaginations and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and against the rulers of darkness of this world and against spiritual wickedness in high places.

The child of God in this world is in a life and death struggle. He is born of the Spirit and is also walking about in a body of flesh. The Spirit and the flesh have never agreed and never will. The one is from heaven and immortal glory and the other is of the earth earthy. The Spirit is holy and without *sin* while the flesh is full of sin and utterly corrupt. The Spirit loves and desires heavenly things but the flesh minds the things of the world. The Spiritual man hungers and thirsts after righteousness while the flesh man lusts after the things of nature. The spiritual man sets his affections on things above while the natural man tries to store up treasure for himself upon the earth.

How is this possible? How can one person be so divided and still be a single person? According to the scriptures, we have this treasure (the Holy Spirit) in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly but by

reason of Him who hath subjected the same *in* hope that the creature might also be delivered from the bondage of corruption to the glorious liberty of the children of God. God has made it so. His people whom He loved with an everlasting love have been given to walk by faith and not by sight. Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen. His people are pilgrims and strangers in this world and seek a City which has foundations whose builder and maker is God.

This warfare if fought without and within but I sometimes think it is mostly within. There is a battle raging inside. Satan has desired to have the children of God that he might sift them as wheat. They are taken captive by him at his will. But thanks be unto God, Christ has prayed for them that their faith fail not. Evil thoughts and imaginations appear within the child of God unbidden. Every thought and imagination of the heart of man is only evil continually. But God has not forsaken them. He is bringing them through the furnace of affliction that when they are tried they may come forth as gold. His grace is sufficient for them.

God is pulling down the stronghold of Satan and casting down those evil imaginations and is bringing every evil thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ. He is binding that strong man Satan and spoiling his house. He is mortified of putting to death the old man that we might walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh

The weapons of our warfare are wrought of God. He is mighty to save.

According to God's word, no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper. Why not? It is because our God is greater than all. He is the great I Am. He made the heavens and the earth and sustains all things by the word of His power and we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time. He found Jacob in the waste howling wilderness and led him about and instructed him and kept him as the apple of His eye. He made him to ride upon the high places of the earth. He loves His people with an everlasting love and He will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able to bear but with the temptation will make a way of escape. It is he that is with them until the end of the world. It is He that upholds them and will make them to be faithful unto death that He might give unto them the crown of life.

Written in love I hope,
Elder J.B. Farmer
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Grayson, Ky. 41143

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 me foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

VOICES OF THE PAST

REVELATION 20:14

It would afford us much pleasure to be able to explain satisfactorily all the scriptures which are presented by our readers, who ask for our views on them. Frequently, however, the subjects on which we are requested to enlighten others prove to be the same on which we feel sensible that we are also in the dark. We, however, sometimes attempt to give some views on passages in the scriptures under an embarrassing consciousness of our utter inability to do justice to the subject; but hoping that what we write may be carefully and prayerfully compared with the standard of truth; and only received so far as it is clearly sustained by the word and spirit of our divine Lord and Master. We feel that a weighty responsibility rests on us. What we write is read by thousands--some of whom are very babes in the kingdom--some are weak, but confiding, and may, perhaps, be misguided, and led to form wrong conclusions from what we write; and a sense of our own liability to err in these important matters would deter us from writing at all, if it were not a settled truth that God has used the weak things of this world for the comfort and edification of his children; and that frequently a word spoken in fear and much trembling has been directed by the gracious Spirit of truth to the comfort of the little ones of the spiritual household.

There is much expressed in this chapter on which we would not dare at this time to offer any comments; and on the verses named by our sister we will not attempt to give a full explanation. What we may be enabled to write, we wish to have regarded only as general remarks, showing just what is asked for, namely, *Our views on the text*. Whether our views are right or wrong, the text can not be wrong. The scriptures are inspired by the Holy Ghost, and are the infallible truth of God. What we may think of them, though we greatly desire to entertain only correct views, is liable to be incorrect. Just so far, but no further, as we are taught their meaning by the Spirit that inspired them, we are right; and God will himself vindicate and sustain his own truth as taught by his Spirit.

The language of our text is awfully grand and sublime. *"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away: and there was found no place for them."* This throne is undoubtedly the one of which our Redeemer spake when he said, *"When the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory,"* he would put his sheep on his right hand, and say unto them, *"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."* It was mentioned in Old Testament prophecy as a glorious high throne from the beginning, and the place of the sanctuary of the saints of God. In the second Psalm God has said, *"Yet*

have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." And again unto the Son he saith, *"Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever."* It is here presented to the vision of John as a *great throne*, signifying its boundless power in heaven and in earth; power over all flesh, and power over sin, death, hell and the grave; power to do all his pleasure in all the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth. A special allusion may here be intended to his having taken to him his great power and had reigned in the destruction of the beast and of the false prophet, and all the powers of darkness. This throne is not only great, but it is *white*, which is emblematic of immaculate purity. The King presiding upon it *"reigns in righteousness."* The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre. He loves righteousness and he hates iniquity, and therefore, he is crowned with the oil of gladness above his fellows. Justice and judgment are the habitation of this throne, and, therefore, righteousness and truth goes before the face of its august occupant. Could all the records of time and eternity be searched with an omniscient scrutiny, not a spot of wrong, not a blemish of injustice could be fastened upon this great white throne. This throne, or power, is the almighty power of God, and it has always been a great white throne; but perhaps never before so fully manifested to men in the flesh as when John, on this occasion, saw it. He saw not a vacant throne, or a throne unoccupied; but he saw him that sat upon it: the King Eternal, Immortal, Invis-

ible, the Only wise God our Savior. He saw the only and blessed Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, who only hath immortality dwelling in the light; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; whom no man can approach unto, to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen. (I Tim. 6:16)

“From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.” How Supremely gloriously must he be, from whose presence earth and heaven recedes, and vanishes away! What must be the transcendent glory, which at once puts out the sun, the moon, the stars, and wipes out at once the glory of the earth and skies. When he appears, what little things these worlds become; they seem as less than nothing and vanity. The fleeing away of the earth and heaven may be considered in a three-fold application.

First--In relation to the figurative elements, or rather the terms as figuratively used throughout this vision of John in which the earth has been so generally used to signify all religious, and religious institutions which have not their origin in God; and the heaven is used to denote the militant church, where Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and from which the dragon was vanquished, drawing with his tail the third part of the stars of this heaven, which were with him cast into earth. The scene presented here to John shows the consummation of the militant, (or warfare state of the church). She comes up out of all her great tribulations, and appears now as a bride adorned and fully prepared for her husband. At his appear

ance all the jarring elements of the old man and the new man, flesh and spirit, church and world, truth and error, at once are driven away, like shades of night when the rising sun appears.

Second--Whenever and wherever a revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ is made, experimentally, on his great white throne, the earth and heaven recedes from our view, and there is no place found for them. When he was transfigured on the mount the disciples were so fully enraptured that they had no room in their full hearts for any thing more. They were unconscious of any thing more than what they saw. They were cut loose from the world and the elements thereof, and so totally eclipsed by the surpassing glory of his presence, they fled away. So Paul, when caught up to the paradise of God, and saw the splendor of the eternal throne, was released for the time being from a consciousness of the elements of this world. So Stephen, when to his faith the heavens were opened, seemed totally indifferent to the tortures inflicted upon his body, lost sight of personal injuries so madly heaped on him, and in an ecstasy cried, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And so in the experience of all the saints, just in proportions as Jesus is clearly revealed to our faith, and we are enabled to gaze upon the great white throne, and him that sits thereon, we are absorbed in the vision, and dismiss the world with its vanities, having no place for them under such happy circumstances. But, *Lastly* -- This language is used in connection with the doctrine of the

resurrection of the dead, and shall be fully realized when our God shall come in the glory of his majesty to raise the dead and judge the world, at the last day. The awful grandeur of that scene, who shall describe? The heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll--the elements of nature shall melt with fervent heat, and like a vesture shall they be folded and laid aside--the earth and sea shall be consumed, and there shall no place be found for them. If it were possible for the saints to take this world to heaven with them, it would only be in their way; it is in their way now; but Glory to God, in the highest, there shall no place be found for it in that bright world to which we go.

Christ will be all in all, and not a saint in glory shall find in him a vacant place where he could store away the world, or room to set up a single idol.

"Had I a view of thee, my God!
Kingdoms and men would vanish soon;
Vanish as though I saw them not,
As a dim candle dies at noon."

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." This seems to indicate a general resurrection of all mankind. The sea and death, and hell, or the grave, as the word *hell* in this place evidently means, delivered up the dead that were in them; so that without discrimination, the small and the great, alike are amenable to God, and all shall come forth at this call, obey his summons just as John saw them. In reality the dead and all

the living always were before God, that is, they were always in his presence, or where he had a perfect knowledge of them; but this subject seems to manifest them as brought before his judgment throne, without distinction of grace or position, the small as well as the great; none so great as to claim exemption, none so small as to be overlooked.

"And the books were opened, and another book, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works." Finite beings require books and records to preserve a testimony of facts, because we are liable to forget; but God is infinite, and all things are naked and open to the view of him with whom we have to do; consequently we understand the books to be figuratively used in this subject. The purpose and fore-ordination of God is spoken of as a book in a figurative sense. *"Lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God."* The Book mentioned in the tenth chapter which was sealed, and none could unseal it or look upon it until the Lion of the tribe of Juda prevailed, was evidently metaphorical; and the unsealing of it signified the development of those things which are presented in this Book of Revelation. The books which are mentioned in our text seem to signify that God has an accurate and exact knowledge of all things. The secrets of all hearts are perfectly known to him, and when

he shall disclose them, it will be like the opening of volumes in which all secrets of all ages are recorded. As the poet sings--

“Chain’d to his throne a volume lies, With all the fates of men; With every angel’s form and size Drawn by the eternal pen.”

Again, the books may signify the books of the scriptures, the book of the law which we have transgressed, and the judgments and decisions which are recorded in all the scriptures, in which we are told that *“He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him .”* Paul says, *“God will judge the world according to my gospel;”* or as we understand him to mean, according to the testimony which Paul and other inspired men had before testified. So we may rest assured that however blind men may be as to the bearing of the divine testimony on this matter, in the final development which shall ultimately be made, the books shall be opened. The dead shall be judged out of those things, or according to those things, which are written in the books. We think no intelligent christians will dispute that the final and everlasting destiny of all men, both saints and sinners, will be in exact accordance with the testimony already written in the books of the inspired scriptures. No sinner will be doomed to hell but such as the scriptures already testify shall perish; nor will any be permitted to the blissful mansions of eternal day

but those who are born again. Who all these are, none can tell, until the eternal Judge shall open the books, only so far as the saints have, by revelation of the spirit, been sealed, and have received the earnest of their incorruptible inheritance above. The judgment disclosed by the opening of the books of the Eternal Judge will be according to their works. The works of all unregenerate men are works of darkness, works of iniquity, works of the flesh, and by these works they now show that they are dead in sins, under the curse of the divine law, and unless the opening of the gospel book shall disclose some works which are wrought in Christ for them and in them, they must certainly perish. If the tree is made good the fruits thereof will be good, and so witness the quality of the tree. But if the tree be evil, as all of us are by nature, if not made good by the cleansing blood of Jesus, and the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, the fruits will show that they are nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. And when the sea shall deliver up its dead, and death and the grave shall deliver up their dead, they shall be judged, every man according to his works. Those who work for life, being dead, their works also are dead works, and they are called workers of iniquity. No man can bring a clean thing out of an unclean. It will not be denied that they have worked, but it shall assuredly be said to them, *“Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.”* And all the saints whose works are wrought in God, and in whose hearts God has worked, both to will

and to do of his own good pleasure, it shall as certainly be said, *"Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

"And death and hell (or the grave) were cast into the lake of fire." The last enemy to Christ and his people that shall be destroyed is death. Christ has destroyed death, and him that had the power of death; that is, the devil. O! death, I will be thy plague! O! grave (or hell), I will be thy destruction! Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes! He shall swallow up death in victory, and the resurrected saints shall put on immortality, and sing, *"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 unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* The lake of fire into which death and the grave shall be cast, signify by strong figurative words their utter destruction. As fire is the most destructive element in nature, it is used to signify this final destruction.

"This is the second death." According to what is written in this chapter, in the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses, there is a first *death*, in which the just as well as the unjust participate; the death of our mortal bodies is alike. But the saints are, by participation in the first resurrection, delivered from the effects of the first death; that is, they have secured to them a happy resurrection, in immortal and spiri-

tual bodies on which the second death can have no power.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." This book of life is the same which in the former part of our text is called *"Another book, which is the book of life."* It is also called the Lamb's book of life, written from the foundation of the world. And again it is called the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It is an ancient record; and all who on the opening of the books shall be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life are secure from the power of the second death. But all whose names are not so written in the Lamb's Book of Life, whatever else they may have relied upon for acceptance before the great white throne and before him who sits thereon, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, shall, with death and hell, be cast into the lake of fire; that is, they shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

We do not assume that this text has no allusion in its figurative design, to things which shall transpire before the final consummation of all earthly things; but we have given such views as we have, and pray that God may give us all that bright and more perfect understanding that we need, in due time.

Elder Gilbert Beebe
 Middletown, N.Y.,
 February 15, 1862

NOTICE

The Signs Of The Times:

Dear Eld. J. R. Williams;

I am writing in regard to a book that I have written, compiling both my Dad's (Eld. Harvey J. Bird, dec.) and my writings, titled "Thou Art Graced With Beauty So Fair". Dad was a member and the Pastor of the Providence Primitive Baptist Church, Putnam County, W.V., which was associated with the Pocatalico Association. I have a limited number of the books left. I have them for sale at \$13.50 each, inc. postage. Dad had many friends all over the country, and some may not know about the book, and might enjoy reading it.

The sub. to be mailed to - Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Cottrell, 2560 U.S. Rt. 60, Hurricane, W.V. 25526.

Sincerely your;
Lois L. Cottrell.

NOTICE

WANTED

A book by Elder Silas Durand called **MEDITATIONS**. Anyone who will sell or lend this book, please contact Elder C.C. Wilbanks.

217 Bagstrop Drive
Monroe, La. 71203
Phone 1-318-343-5473

MEETINGS

Glenwood Church, Princeton, W. VA., announces a 5th Saturday meeting June 28, 1997 starting at 10:00. those coming by way of I-77 take exit 9. Turn left onto 460W.

Go 5 miles, turn right onto 19N. Then immediately left onto Glenwood Park Road, 1 1/2 miles to the church on left. Those coming by way of 460, follow the same directions from the I-77 / 460 intersection..

Elder Larry Hollandsworth, Mod.
Sister Marilyn Shaw, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR FEBRUARY 1997

- Steve Lee, NC - In memory of
- Mr. & Mrs. J.R. Somers \$40.00
- Lloyd C. Spikes, OR 10.00
- Mrs. W.L. Adams, VA 2.00
- Eld. Noel Conner, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Bonnie Meyers, TN 2.00
- Mrs. Alice Johnson, TX 7.00
- Mrs. Inex Gearer, TX 2.00
- Steve A. Everett, VA 7.00
- Mrs. Rebecca S. Smith, FL 2.00
- Mrs. Levenia Biggs, TN 7.00
- Mrs. Dorothy M. Cassell, VA 2.00
- Ms. Wyvenie H. Murphy, AR 5.00
- Mrs. Beatrice Miller, NC 2.00
- E.S. Gingerick, OH 7.00
- Mrs. Cloma McLaughlin, TX 2.00
- Mr. & Mrs. Tim Barron, TX 7.00
- Joel S. Miles, FL
- In memory Eld. Robert Miles 7.00
- Mrs. Carole Cruise, VA 12.00

OBITUARIES

Born: Lula Eva Conner, third child of Lemuel D. Conner and V. Susie Thomas Conner in Salem Va. And family moved to Botetourt Co. October 1908, and most of her first 20 years at same location. Later she met and married Robert B. Anderson September 30 1930 in Fincastle, Va. And lived first in Roanoke Co. while in the C,C,C, Camp. Each was comforted to find each other was on the same Pilgrimage, and were blest to go before Basham to beg for a home September 9th 1934, and was received by Experience and was baptized by Elder John P. Helms, and it was blessed Way Marker in their uneven, journey. They later buy a farm in Montgomery Co South of Shawsville Va. They operate their sawmill and work the farm. Later in August 1963 while gathering and stacking hay in the field Brother BOB as he was often called passed away at the stack he was building. Sister Anderson continued to care for the farm, planting trees and Gardening making every effort to be self supporting, and to keep her children in school, with help of neighbors, put her garden produce on Roanoke, City Markets where she also helped to sell produce brought from the farm she was raised on.

Her family and friends help supply a way to meetings and associations and especially Basham Church, where Nancy Victoria made every effort to have her present as long as she was

able. She loved to hear singing, it made Glad her heart from childhood and often the preaching of the gospel did too. Sister Anderson was given a good hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and remembered Jesus said: because I live ye shall live also (John 14:19) Her dear children lost their Mother and best friend, and the family that remains must thank the good Lord He lent us a dear sister to share our uneven earthly Pilgrimage! Praise the lord O my soul.

The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away Blessed Be His Holy Name.

By N.F. Conner

**IN MEMORY OF
LULA CONNER ANDERSON**

Born
March 29, 1908

Died
February 20, 1996

Services
**John M. Oakey & Son
Funeral Home Chapel
February 22, 1996**

Officiating
**Elders Junior Conner
Larry Hollingsworth**

Interment
Cedar Lawn Cemetary

Family
**Brothers
Noel Conner, Aaron Conner,,**

Calvin Conner

Children

**Nancy Victoria Dillon, Louaddie
Lowder,**

**Robert B. Anderson, Sallie Rebecca
Sears, John M. Anderson**

Grandchildren

**Paula Ross, Cindy Ross, Sandra
Smallwood, David Smallwood, Susan
Snyder, Angie Anderson, Vicki Pris
Sears, Allen Anderson, Edie Sears,
Adam Anderson, Andee Sears,
Brandy Anderson**

Pallbearers

**Edward Sears, Tommy Ross, Greg
Maheu, Allen Anderson, Cory Ross,
Adam Anderson**

**ELDER LEONARD BRAMMER
ELDER CLARENCE STONE**

**OLD CENTER PRIMITIVE
BAPTIST CHURCH CEMETERY**

SURVIVING

**DAUGHTERS:
BARBARA HOPKINS
NANCY GRAHAM**

**SONS:
GENE FOLEY
THOMAS FOLEY
DAVID FOLEY
WALLACE FOLEY
WINFRED FOLEY**

**SISTERS:
IDA RUTH FOLEY
MATTIE LEE COLEMAN**

GRANDCHILDREN: 19

GREAT- GRANDCHILDREN: 24

**MRS. FOLEY WAS PRECEDED IN
DEATH BY HER HUSBAND,
AARON FOLEY**

IN MEMORY OF

**MINNIE LOU
HOLLANDSWORTH FOLEY**

**DATE OF BIRTH
AUGUST 17, 1907**

**DATE OF DEATH
NOVEMBER 18, 1995**

**SERVICES
TUESDAY, 2:00 P.M.
NOVEMBER 21, 1995
RIVERVIEW PRIMITIVE
BAPTIST CHURCH**

**OFFICIATING
ELDER CARL TERRY**

PSALM 33:6-9.

*By the word of the Lord were the
heavens made; and all the host of
them by the breath of his mouth.*

*He gathereth the waters of the
sea together as an heap: he layeth
up the depth in storehouses.*

*Let all the earth fear the Lord: let
all the inhabitants of the world
stand in awe of him.*

*For he spake, and it was done; he
commanded, and it stood fast.*

DEACON RALPH A. HOCUTT SR.

Ralph A. Hocutt Sr., 91, of Albany, Ga. departed this earth on Feb. 23, 1997. He was the son of the late Elder William Jackson Hocutt and Mollie Kitchens Hocutt, born October 4, 1905, making his stay on this earth 91 years, 4 months, and 19 days.

On July 30, 1935, Ralph A. Hocutt Sr. was united in marriage to Agnes D. Utley. One son was born to this couple.

He is survived by his widow, Agnes U. Hocutt, his son, Ralph A. Hocutt Jr., daughter-in-law, Beverly J. Hocutt, three grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, six sisters in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, one brother in Texas and numerous nephews and nieces.

This believer of Salvation By The Grace Of God attended Primitive Baptist churches throughout Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Kentucky, Louisiana, Florida and Texas, joining Liberty Hill Primitive Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama later in life. He served his church faithfully as a Deacon until he could no longer travel. This quiet, humble and kind man would rather listen to others talk of the Mercy and Blessings of God.

His funeral was conducted on February 27, 1997 at the Heritage Chapel in Tuscaloosa, Alabama by Elder J.Y. McCormick of Eagle Lake, Florida. The body was laid to rest in the Alberta City Cemetery to await the coming of the Lord. He will be missed but not forgotten.

Written by his son who loved him dearly.

Ralph A. Hocutt, Jr.

MARY LILLIAN AKERS LUCAS

With humbleness I am writing the obituary of Mary Lillian Akers Lucas. She was born on November 4, 1917 to Wade and Maude Akers. She married Raymond J. Lucas and her sister, Fannie Sue, married his brother, Ralph C. Lucas. Both families lived close to each other, grew together and are as one loving family.

Mary Lillian loved her family, her church and community. She willingly gave of herself every day. Her kindness and love of God was manifest throughout her life. She and her husband united with Valley View and were baptized May 18, 1975. Mary Lillian willingly and humbly served the church as clerk from November 19, 1983 to July 16, 1994. Her health was failing and she felt she could no longer serve as clerk. Mary Lillian and her husband were both at church as long as they were able to come.

Throughout her life she enjoyed attending church and visiting people and having people in their home. Whenever she would go see others who were ill, she brought a gift or food she prepared to cheer them. Her meekness and humbleness shined throughout her life. She cared for others, her family, her neighbors and her church.

As her visitors and family were there day after day lovingly by her side as so many times she had been there for them. She was made comfortable and loved during her final hours. She passed from life to her eternal home on August 13, 1996.

She was preceded in death by a grandson, Mike Eanes, and a great-granddaughter, Kathryn Lucas. Surviving are her husband of 61 years, Raymond J. Lucas; one sister, Fannie Sue Lucas, son and daughter-in-law, Sam and Thelma Lucas; daughter and son-in-law, Helen and Harold Eanes; granddaughter, Myran and Doug Moore, Ellensburg, WA; grandson; Capt. Nathan and Karen Lucas, West Point, NY.

Funeral was conducted by Elder Raymond Goad and Elder Willard Cox. She is missed by her family, friends and members of Valley View. Our loss is her eternal gain. Humbly submitted in request of Valley View Primitive Baptist Church.

Raymond Goad, Pastor
Sister Naomi Agee

SISTER GERTRUDE RIDDLE PAYNE

It is with a sad heart, yet I am made to reflect on many blessings in the passing of my dear mother and sister in Christ, I hope, Gertrude Riddle Payne. She was born to Cleveland and Berta Eanes Riddle, August, 24, 1910 and passed away October 4, 1996. She was married to Harry Madison Payne, December 27, 1930. They were blessed with 53 years together. Daddy was afflicted with rheumatoid arthritis for about 20 years and mama was faithful to care for him. After he passed away she lived alone, over 10 years, often expressing how hard it would have been to live alone had she

not believed that all things work together for our good (if we are the children of God), and that whatever comes to pass is God's Holy will.

In 1993 she had a heart attack and came to live with us. Prior to her heart condition she had been blessed with reasonably good health. My sister came last January to help care for her and mama was able to stay at her home most of the time. Last August she was stricken with a stroke just 2 days before her 86th birthday. Many times she had said when she was unable to care for her personal needs she hoped it would be God's will to take her. I feel He granted her desire, she only lived about 6 weeks after the stroke.

She united with Malmaison Primitive Baptist Church June 1975. Her survivors include 2 daughters, Marie P. George and Peggy P. Wells, 1 son Harry Melvin Payne, 2 sisters and 2 brothers, 9 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Wrenn-Yeatts Funeral Home North Main Chapel, by her pastor Elder Julian Williams and Elder Raymond Goad (this at her request). Interment was in Highland Burial Park, Danville, Va.

I have heard our ministers in their petitions to God, ask Him to give us a peaceful hour in which to die. The week before mama's death she struggled so hard to breathe, but when the end came she was given a peaceful hour and her life just easily ebbed away. I believe she is now resting in the paradise of God to await the glorious resurrection of the saints, there to

praise Him in eternity. This was her hope. If we have this hope, can we think of anything more wonderful. Again I say can we think of anything more wonderful. Again I say can we think of anything more wonderful.

In loving memory,
Peggy Wells

DORIS STEGALL RICHARDSON

Sister Doris was born October 13, 1910, daughter of Elder J.F. Stegall and Alberta Eanes Stegall.

She passed away Oct. 17, 1996 and was buried at Callands in the family cemetery, with her pastor Elder Julian Williams conducting graveside rites.

Sister Doris was a member of Malmaison Church. She attended regularly until she moved to Florida to be near her niece whom she raised as her own.

She is greatly missed. Doris was very dear to me being my sister-in-law as well as a sister in the church. She didn't have an easy life, but always wore a smile.

Submitted by,
Maria Richardson Adams

IN MEMORY OF ROSA HERSHMAN TROUTT

With sadness in my heart, I will attempt to write this obituary for my dear friend and Sister in Christ, Rosa Hershman Troutt who died October 27, 1996 at the Riverside Health Center in Danville, Virginia.

Sister Rosa was born on July 6, 1911 in Chase City, Virginia, one of eight children of Jessie Howard and Emma Wilson Smiley Hershman. She later moved to the Mayfield Community near Ruffin, N. C. and worked at Dan River Mills in Danville, Virginia until her retirement.

On September 1, 1944 she married Harry Garvine Troutt who predeceased her on February 24, 1989.

She was received into the membership of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church on March 2, 1995. She loved the church and was a firm believer in the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace. She was a faithful member and attended the services regularly until the last year of her life when she fell and broke her hip and was confined to the hospital and nursing home.

Sister Rosa is survived by her stepson, Garvine Troutt and his wife Theodosia Carter Troutt and step-granddaughter, Gwendolyn Troutt, all of Norfolk, Virginia, a brother James H Hershman of Ruffin, North Carolina and a number of nieces and nephews.

Her funeral was held on October 30, 1996 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. May all of us who mourn be comforted in knowing that our Heavenly Father never makes a mistake. She will be missed by all who knew her; Family, Friends and Church Members.

Connie M. Page

Signs of the Times

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"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

1012 Bennett Circle, Keeling, Virginia 24566

SONG

**GOD is the refuge of his saints,
When storms of sharp distress in-
vade;**

**Ere we can offer our complaints,
Behold him present with his aid.**

**Let mountains from theirs seats be
hurled**

**Down to the deep, and buried there;
Convulsions shake the solid world,
Our faith shall never yield to fear.**

**Loud, may the troubled ocean roar.
In sacred peace our souls abide,
While every nation, every shore,
Trembles, and dreads the swelling
tide.**

**There is a stream whose gentle flow
Supplies the city of our God;
Life, love and joy, still gliding through,
And watering our divine abode.**

**That sacred stream, thine holy word,
That all our raging fear controls;
Sweet peace thy promises afford,
And glve new strength to fainting
souls.**

**Sion enjoys her monarch's love,
Secure against a threatening hour;
Nor can her firm foundations move,
Built on his truth and armed with
power.**

Watts.

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 EDITORIAL



ELDER R.H. CAMPBELL

"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called."

Many of the writers of the scriptures, in all ages of time, tell of the calling of man in nature into the kingdom of God. It is a very special event in the lives of each one and it changes them permanently and completely; their walk, their talk and their affections. It is always the sovereign work of God and it causes them to see and run after the things of the Spirit

and not the vain things of the world; their desires are to learn more and more of the Spiritual realm of God into which they have been called. The change is in the heart and soul of man in nature, while preoccupied with the things of the world, and completely unaware of the spiritual realm of God. At a time appointed of the Father, he reveals himself unto them and his purpose in their lives; one time it was in a burning bush, another in a light brighter than the noonday sun shining around the person and instructing them in the way they should go and the things they were to do. They may go very agreeably or with great reservations, but, they do go and they do those things that are required of them to fulfill their calling in life. The Apostle Paul relates his experience many times in his writings and you hear the brethren rehearsing their experience many times; they never tire of telling it and the brethren never tire of hearing it.

The Apostle Paul was of the Jewish faith, serving God as the fathers had before him for many generations; was established in the traditions and served with exceeding zeal; yet he found that he was actually persecuting the one that they were looking for, the Messiah of whom Moses wrote that would come to them. The one to whom the gathering of the nations would be and who would show them the way of salvation. Paul was on his journey to Damascus, intent on destroying this new sect, which he believed was the enemy of the Jews. At this point in his life, the time appointed of the Father, he was made to see the

error of his ways and he immediately began to preach the gospel which he had sought to destroy. This is the testimony of all who are called by that holy calling; they begin immediately to follow in the footsteps of the flock and are not even aware of it; they are just following the leading of the heart that has been given them. As they begin to talk to others, they find that this experience is common to all.

Paul never gave any reason for his change, other than to say, "But when it pleased God who separated me from my mothers womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were Apostles before me: but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus." I don't know how much family the Apostle Paul had, because he never mentioned them except that his mother was a Jew and his father was a greek; his calling was in the spiritual realm, and there was no relation between the two, and his whole calling was in the spiritual realm from that time forward. His entire life was devoted to the church, preaching the gospel, serving the churches and standing for the truth at all times and to all with whom he came in contact. In his epistle to the church at Rome he wrote, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also: and again to the elders of the Church at Ephesus he

said, "for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." ready to spend and be spent for the cause.

The calling of God, in the life of Paul was without reservation or conditions and so it is in the life of all the saints; they may go, lowing, as the kine pulling the cart with the ark when it was being returned to Israel by the Philistines, but they will go and do the Lord's bidding. The kine had calves in the stall but they went; and so it is many times with those that are called: they go leaving loved ones behind who do not understand the change, and the bonds that they have shared are strained sometimes to the breaking point. It breaks their heart and grieves them for the loss but they cannot return. This is very difficult; that something so precious can be a thorn of contention between them and their loved ones, but hard as it is, it is the strongest evidence that this is of God for they would not do this except that they are made to do it. This calling is stronger than the ties to nature, as John wrote 1 John 4:4 "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." God will not take second place in your life to anything or to anyone: either he is first in your life or he is not in your life, experimentally.

Rom. 11 vs. 29 "For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance." There are many gifts and God sets them in the Church as pleases Him; for they are all special gifts to contribute to the welfare of the whole

body. The calling is singular because it is the same unto all, regardless of the position they are to fill, and it is that which separates them from the world of nature and translates them into the kingdom of the Son of God. They are thereby made a new Creature in Christ Jesus and this change is for time and eternity; there is no repenting or changing of the gifts or the calling because perfect wisdom is the architect of the plan of salvation and the author and finisher of the faith upon which it is built is the only begotten of the Father. By finishing the work that his Father gave him to do, he hath forever perfected them that are sanctified: ***"sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Christ Jesus and called."***

There is nothing that is more sure and certain in this world than the salvation of the children of God. The world and all it contains was created for their sake, and they were created for God's glory. Isa. 43:6. ***"Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him: Yea I have made him,"*** And again Isa. 43:1 ***"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."*** Now, with this inspired testimony of the prophet Isaiah; is there anything that can prevent those whom the Lord has formed for himself, called by his grace and set apart unto his glory, from receiving their inheritance? Peter did not think so when he wrote, ***"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: which in time past were not a people, but now are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." Oh the beauty and the certainty of the foundation upon which this plan of salvation is laid: it is upon the integrity of God himself as said Isa. 46 vs. 11 ***"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, I will also do it."*** Not predicated on anything other than the sovereign will of God.

The entire scriptures of the bible are devoted to the subject of the salvation of the Lord's people and every writer sets forth the sovereignty of God in calling the elect, here in time, to manifest his love and mercy in giving unto them the earnest of the inheritance which they will receive, in its fulness, in the kingdom of heaven. The partakers of this heavenly calling were chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and the writers were inspired to record the way and manner in which it will be manifested in their earthly pilgrimage. It may be through severe trial and suffering, or, it may be in a revelation of the glory and beauty of the spiritual realm, but in either instance it will be effective. There are no failures and the subject is made willing and able to fulfill that

which is required of them. The Apostle Paul persecuted the Church but was made a preacher of the gospel by the effectual working of God's power: Peter was a fisherman but was made a feeder of sheep: both responded to that heavenly calling for the remainder of their life, and in the end both were made willing to lay down their lives for their calling. Most would say, I couldn't do that, but they could, just as these did, by being made willing by their heavenly Father.

Many times you hear a brother or sister questioning their calling and wondering what their gift might be if indeed they have one, but, be assured they do have one. That is what the Apostle Paul is declaring in the above text, let every man abide in the same calling wherein they are called, be content and rejoice that you have been given to know him, not what you must do to fulfill your calling. The gift is for the Church that it may be perfect and entire wanting for nothing, and it takes all of the gifts to make it so. In one illustration of the Church, the body of Christ, Paul said, the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee; and so it is with every gift, they are an indispensable part of the body, and each will serve the purpose for which they were called. God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body as it has pleased him, dare anyone question that wisdom. Nay O man who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Man cannot

comprehend the magnitude of the plan, so, as Paul says 1 Cor. 7, 24 *"Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."*

In bonds of love,
Elder Richard H. Campbell

"The substance of a diligent man is precious." — PROVERBS xii. 27.

IF the Lord has done anything for our souls by his Spirit and grace, and given us anything to taste, handle, realise, and enjoy for ourselves, we know there is a substance and reality in the things that we believe. Religion is our chief employment; our daily meditation or exercise -- the main concern of our thoughts and what lies with the greatest weight upon our minds. And justly so; for it is our all. If we have religion, the religion of God's giving, it will be uppermost in our heart. It is true we are surrounded with and often hampered by a body of sin and death; we have many worldly cares and anxieties which will intrude upon our minds; and those engaged in business have many things especially to drag them down from heaven to earth. Still, religion will be for the most part uppermost in a man's soul, where God has begun and is carrying on a gracious work. Not but what he is often very cold and dead, lifeless in his prayers, and unfeeling in his affections; not but what he may be carried away by the things of time and sense and dragged down into darkness, carnality, and death; but with it all, there is something in his bosom that struggles upward -- there is that in his heart which goes after the precious things of Christ, and the solemn realities of eternity.

VOICES OF THE PAST

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

A BROTHER has written us, asking some questions regarding the order that ought to be maintained in the churches of Christ, and desires that we reply through the SIGNS. Often when such questions are proposed the first thought with us is as to how little we know, and how little we are prepared to advise or counsel in such matters. It is so with us now, but we feel it is our duty to give to those who ask, such thoughts as we have regarding these matters. We surely do not need to say that our judgment is weak, and that we do not claim in anything that we may say or write more than to express what seems wise and scriptural to us. Moreover, in any such writing we do not seek to enter into the consideration of any local trouble which may have given rise to such questions when they are propounded. Such matters one at a distance cannot be prepared to judge, and were we to assume to do so it would but betray rashness on our part. But, speaking in a general way, it seems to us that there are some things presented in the word of God, and which have been commended to our judgment by our observation of affairs in the churches in past years, that it is right to speak of and urge upon the consideration of our brethren, The substance of the first question proposed by our correspondent

is this: Has a part of any church of believers, when matters of variance have arisen among them, and the sentiment of the church is divided concerning those matters, a right to separate themselves from the church, appointing separate meetings, setting themselves up as the regular church, when the regular pastor is serving the church, as he has been for years, upon the time of their regular appointments? It is not possible to answer this question by a simple yes or no; it seems to us that all would depend upon what the matters of variance were. If the church and their pastor are walking in gospel order, and still holding the faith of the elect of God, no matter what other matters may cause uneasiness or friction among the members of that church, it seems sure to us that no portion of the members have any right to withdraw from the church, in the sense of nonfellowship. In the division between the Baptists, which came at the black Rock convention in 1832, there were matters of faith and gospel order involved, and there could be nothing done by those who still held to the old order, the scriptural order, and to the faith, but in the end to withdraw from the others. In so doing they were but obeying the commandment of the Lord to come out from among these scorners of the right way of the Lord, and be separate. There was separation in faith, in practice and in feeling already, and there was but one thing to do then, viz., to make that separation known by public withdrawal, refusing to any longer walk with those who had departed from the

old faith and practice. No doubt similar cases have occurred among some of the churches since then, and in each case it was duty to withdraw, and set up churches of those who had withdrawn. We do not need to add to this what all who fear God feel and know, viz., that even at such times as these there must be due effort to restore those who have departed before withdrawal can be justified. This the Scriptures abundantly enjoin upon all the churches of Christ. But when any church is still holding to the doctrine of the cross, and is still following the old ways, with regard to receiving members, or excluding if needful, and where their pastor is not a heretic, but preaches salvation by grace, with all that doctrine involves, though there may be some things which give dissatisfaction to some, it is their duty to bear with those things, holding the peace of the church and the communion of saints and the worship of God as being infinitely more important than any personal feelings of their own can be. That one who will sacrifice his privileges in the church, and who has so little regard for the peace of Zion as to allow some personal unpleasantness to cause him to withdraw from the church, shows very little regard for the honor of his Savior, and very little regard for the welfare of his brethren. While we are in the flesh there will constantly be things occurring that may jar upon our feelings and which make the flesh angry, and Satan is such a deceiver that we may mistake the anger of the flesh to be the grieving of the Spirit. But the anger of the

flesh drives us away from the house of God, while the grieving of the Spirit brings us to come before God in humble prayer for ourselves, and for the blessing of God to rest upon all the church. In the anger of the flesh we think of our own hurt; in the grief of the Spirit we think not of our own hurt, but of the hurt of Zion, and of the loss which those who do wrong suffer, because they have forsaken their own mercies. If through these little words or little deeds of wrong we are led to withdraw from the church, ours is the loss, first of all, and then through our wrong the church will also suffer. We none of us live to ourselves, nor die to ourselves. In any event, or for any cause, there ought not to be any hasty action. It is a solemn thing to withdraw from those who are walking in the order of the gospel because we are displeased with some things which may be done. No church is perfect in her order; no church ever has been perfect. The churches addressed in the New Testament were none of them without fault, and some of them had great faults among them, yet so long as they were holding up the truth, and striving to maintain the order of the gospel, they were regarded by the apostles as still being gospel churches, and upon them, in spite of their faults, the blessings of God rested. In the case of these churches it is manifest that had any among them said, We cannot bear with these faults, and we must withdraw from the churches because of them, the church would have still remained the church, and they who withdrew would have

been as heathen men and publicans to it. The same is true to-day. This does not of course mean that evils ought to be winked at; no, all of evil ought to be protested against, because to tolerate it is to the harm of the church and to the reproach of the cause of God. But it is not for every evil that one is justified in withdrawing from the church, nor is it for every wrong step that one is to be excluded from the church; brethren ought to exhort one another, loving each other and loving the name of the Lord above all things. But perhaps we have already said more than was needful regarding this one question.

Has this withdrawing body a right to set themselves up as a church, or as the church in that place, and hold services as the church? Considered in connection with the things which we have already said, that is, unless they have withdrawn because of unsound doctrine or unscriptural practice, they would have no scriptural right to do so, and they could not be recognized as the church of Christ in that place by other orderly churches. This seems manifest. If they desire to be held in fellowship with those who are regarded as churches of Christ there is but one thing for them to do, viz., to return to the church from which they have departed. In the ordinary difficulties that day by day will arise in all churches there is but one thing that can be followed safely, and that is for the minority to yield their judgment to the mind of the majority, and, on the other hand, the majority must not be harsh in expressing their judgment

when some differ in any matter. Let all be done in brotherly love and with brotherly kindness, is the one imperative rule. This we say, let it be again remembered, when there is no charge of unsound doctrine, or that there has been a departure from the established order of the church in her administration of the ordinances, or of the discipline.

The third question is, Has any minister of the gospel a right to serve these withdrawing members as their pastor? We would not dare to say that no minister should go among them and preach the gospel; this each called servant of God must settle in his own conscience before God, but it does seem clear to us that no minister would have a right to recognize them as a church, and administer the ordinances among them as though they were properly organized as a church. We think that those who might come among them ought to advise them to return to the church and to bear with the things which were unpleasant to them, until the Lord should show the church what is right in the matters involved. Certainly that spirit in us which makes us resentful if we cannot have our way in anything, is of the flesh. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind," and if such departing members do return, the church ought to be kind, and receive them lovingly. Any of us may do wrong hastily, but it is a mark of grace when the wrong is repented of, and it is a mark of grace when the one doing wrong is helped to come back, rather than held at arm's length.

We have been thinking while writing these things how much easier it is to break the bond of love than to reunite it when it is once broken, therefore we ought to be slow to act, and to weigh long and well all that would seem to lead to such a break. It is far better for any of us to keep our sore hidden within our breast, if it be possible to do so, than to plunge our brethren into trouble by telling it abroad. Above all things, we ought to be sure that we do not tell these things because we have some spite against another and are seeking to belittle him in the estimation of others. Let us be sure before we speak that our motive is to heal the sore of another, and not to irritate it. Generally sores heal much faster if kept hidden and bandaged than if the cover is being constantly removed. Will what we say be likely to cause anger to arise in the bosom of our brother? then let us not say that thing. It is an awful thing to cause another to offend. But "behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth," and often our words are the coals of fire that set on fire the very course of nature. How careful then should we be in all matters of difference that may arise in the churches. To withdraw from the church of God is the very last resort, and, on the other hand, to exclude a member from the church ought also to be always the very last resort. The apostles have spoken of many wrongs existing in the churches to which their epistles were addressed, but while they reprov'd, warn'd and rebuked the churches for those wrong things, in very few instances do we

find any direction given to withdraw fellowship from the one in the wrong, and the apostles never said once to any of the churches, Unless you repent we shall drop you from our fellowship. The rebukes were plain and clear, and there was no concealing the fault, or seeking to make it out to be a small thing, but still the motive in all was to be put away from them. But in very few instances were they commanded to put away the wrongdoer. The exhortation of the apostle was that those who were spiritual were to restore those who had sinned, considering themselves lest they also be tempted, and we have understood this temptation to be not only temptation to do wrong also in some way as the other had already done, but temptation while endeavoring to restore the erring one, lest spiritual pride should creep in, saying in our hearts, I am better than this brother who has erred; and lest this spirit should make itself manifest in our words and our manner towards him. This would be to his hurt, and still more to our own hurt, and under such a spirit God could not be glorified in us.

Our brother asked some other questions, but we think that we have practically answered them in what we have already written. We hope that we have made our thoughts plain. No doubt we have omitted many pertinent things, and perhaps we have said needless things in what we have written, but it has long appeared to us that the things we have tried to present were right,

and such as the word of God commands and commands.

The late Elder F. A. Chick
(former Editor of The Signs).

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.

Gen. XII. 1. Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land I will show thee.

"In Ur of the Chaldee, before he came and dwelt in Chevron, as seems from Acts VII. 2; and the Lord said unto Abram; after the death of Terah, and indeed it is highly probable there were two appearances of God to Abram, and that the same words, or very nearly the same, were spoken to him each time, first in Ur of the Chaldees, and then in Haran: Get thee out of thy country; the land of Chaldees and the city of Ur, which was in it, or out of Mesopotamia, which when taken in a large sense were both Ur and Haran; this country was now become idolatrous. Though it was first inhabited and peopled by the posterity of Shem in the time of Arphaxad, yet these in process of time, degenerated from the true religion and fell into idolatry. The same, Maimonides call Zabaeans, in whose faith and religion they say Abram was brought up; they asserted that there was no other God, but the sun, moon and stars; and these Zabaeans, as he relates, from their books and annals, say of Abram themselves, that he was educated in Cuthia

and descended from the common people; and assented that, besides the Sun there was another Creator; to whom they objected, and disputes arose among them on this subject; now Abram, being convinced of idolatry, is called out from those people, and to have no fellowship with them; literally, in the Hebrew text, go thee out of thy country; quit all society with such an idolatrous and superstitious people: and from thy kindred; as Nahor his brother, and his family, who are not mentioned, and seems to be left behind when Terah, Abram, Lot and Sarai, came out of Ur, of the Chaldees, though it looks as if afterwards Nahor did follow them to Haran, or Padan-Aram, where he continued, and therefore is called his city; Gen. XXIV. 10; XXV. 20; XXVIII. 2, 5, 10; XXIX. 4, 5; so with great propriety Abram might be called the second time to leave his kindred as well his country; it is certain, Haran, or Padan-Aram, as well as Ur of the Chaldees, is called by himself his country and Nahor and his family and his kindred, Gen; XXIV. 4: and from thy father's house; or family, which better agrees with the second call at Haran, than the first at Ur, for upon the first call Terah and his family came along with Abram. Terah dying at Haran his family went no further, but continued there with Nahor; only Abram and Lot, upon the second call, went from thence as the following history makes it appear; Abram left as he was bid, his father's house and family, to go as follows: unto a land I will show you; meaning the land of Canaan, though not mentioned, and

seems to be omitted for the trial of Abram's faith; hence the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, XX. 8, observes that he obeyed, not knowing whither he went; and yet it is said, that he and Terah came out of Ur of the Chaldees; Gen. XI. 31; and when he and Lot, when first from Haran, the same is said of them, v, 5; it is probable the case was this: there was no mention made at first, what land he was to go to, and when he prepared for the journey, he knew not where he was to go, but afterwards it was revealed to him, that Canaan was the land, and therefore set out in order to go thither; and still though he might know the place by name where he was to go, he might not know the way to it, nor what sort of country it was; therefore God promised to show him the way, and give him a view of it, how large it was, that he might see what sort of country it was, and how large it was that he would give his posterity. This call of Abram is an emblem of the call of men by the grace of God, out of the world, and from among the men of it, and to renounce the things of it, and not to be conformed unto it, and to leave their own people and father's house and follow him whithersoever he directs them."

Gen. XII. 2. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name, great; and thou shalt be a blessing.

"And I will make of thee a great nation; in a literal sense, as the people of the Jews were that descended from him, and in a spiritual sense, believers in all ages and of all nations, that

walk in the steps of the faith of Abram, who are his children, and are blessed with him: and I will bless thee; not only with temporal blessings, but principal with spiritual ones, since Abram in person had no share of the land of Canaan; even with the adoption of children, and friendship with God; with justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, which blessedness came upon him when uncircumcised with a large measure of faith and every other grace; with sanctification of the Spirit, and with meekness for it: and make thy name great; as it was among the Jews his descendants, who boast of having Abram for their father; and among the several nations of the world; his name is famous in profane history; and is in high esteem with the Mahometans to this day; and especially his name is great and famous and his memory precious among all who have obtained like precious faith with him in every age and every nation: and thou shalt be a blessing; to all that knew him and conversed with him, they received spiritual light and knowledge by his instructions and all who read and heard of his faith and piety, should be encouraged by his example."

Gen. XI. 3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed.

"All men of all nations, and of all ages, that speak well of him, commend him for His faith and holiness, and tread in his steps; these are blessed with faithful Abraham, Gal. iii. 7, 9. And curse him that curseth thee;

here is a change of numbers, before the plural, here the singular, denoting, it may be, that many would bless him, and but few would curse him, and that every individual person that did curse him should be cursed; this regards future as well as present times, in every age and of every nation, and disapproves of, or rejects and reproaches Abram's God, his faith, his religion and his people. And in the shall all the families of the earth be blessed: That is, in his seed, as in Gen. xxii. 18, and which is interpreted of Christ, Act. iii. 25; Gal. iii 8, 16; meaning not every individual of all the families and nations of the earth; but that as many as believed in Christ of all nations are blessed in Him; and whoever are blessed are blessed in him only, and that they are blessed for his sake with all scriptural blessings. Eph. i. 3, such as redemption, justification, remission of sins, sanctification, adoption and eternal life."

Gen XII. 4. So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Gen. XII. 5. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

Gen. XII. 6. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

Gen. VII. 7. And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land; and there build me an altar unto the Lord; who appeared unto him.

And the Lord appeared unto Abram; perhaps in human form, so it was the Son of God; for whenever there was any visible appearance of a divine Person, under the former dispensation it seems to be always of the essential Word, that was to be incarnate; and who spake with an audible voice; and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land; the whole of it, inhabited by Canaanites and others; and it was for this end chiefly that Abram was called out of Chaldea into Canaan, to be shown the land, and have the grant of it for his posterity: and there build he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him: by way of gratitude and thankfulness for his kind and gracious appearance, and for the gift of the land of Canaan of his offspring, for on this altar he no doubt sacrificed in a way of thanksgiving, and as Noah did when he came out of the ark."

Gen. XI. 8. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west and Haran the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.

Gen. XI. 9. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

Gen. XI. 10. And there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.

“The land of Canaan, which was a very fruitful country, abounding with all kind of provisions usually, but now there was a scarcity of all; which was for the sins of the inhabitants and for the trial of Abram’s faith, who was brought out of his own country, where was bread enough and to spare, into one in which there was a famine; and this might be a temptation to Abram to return from whence he came, and to despise the country that was given him: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; not to dwell there, only till the famine was over, and rightly is he said to go down to Egypt, since that lay lower than the land of Canaan; and his going only to sojourn, with an intention to return again to Canaan, which shows the strength of his faith in the promise. For the famine was grievous in the land; in the land of Canaan, and perhaps no where else; God ordering it so in his wise providence, that there should be plenty of food in one land, when there was scarcity in another; that countries may be helpful to one another.”

Gen. XII. 11. And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold, I now know that thou art a fair woman to look upon.

Gen. XII. 12. Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife; and they will kill me, but they will Save thee alive.

Gen. XII. 13. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee.

“Which though it was not putting a direct lie into her mouth, she being his sister in some sense, as appears from Gen. xx. 12, yet; it was done to conceal truth, and deceive the Egyptians; and tended to endanger his wife’s chastity, as well as showed great timourousness in him, and distrust of the divlne care and protection of them, and upon the whole it must be criminal in him, and shows that the best of men are liable to sin, and the strongest believer to fall, and, and that a saint may fail in the exercise of that grace for which he is most eminent as Abram was for his faith, and yet fell into unbelief, and through that into other sins.”

Gen. XI. 1 15. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house.

Gen. XII. 17. And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai Abram’s wife.

“Perhaps with the same sort of plagues, he plagued Abimelech and his servants with on a like account, Gen. XX. 17, 18. The Jews say they were smitten with ulcers; not only Pharaoh was plagued but they of his house also, his courtiers and servants, who were accessory to the bringing of Sarai into his house; all this was, because of Sarai Abram’s wife; or upon the word of Sarai as it may be literally rendered.”

Gen. XII. 18. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, what is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me she was thy wife?

Gen. XII. 19. Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her and go thy way.

Gen. XIII. "This chapter gives an account of the return of Abram from Egypt to the land of Canaan, and to the same place in it he had been before, verses 1-4; and of a strife between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot, and the occasion of it, verses 5, 6, 7; which was composed by the prudent proposal of Abram, verses 8, 9; upon which they parted; Abram continued in Canaan, and Lot chose the plain of Jordan, and dwelt in Sodom, a place infamous for wickedness, verses 10-13; after which the Lord renewed to Abram the grant of the land of Canaan, to him and his seed. Verses 14-17; and then he removed to the plain of Mamre in Hebron, and there set up the worship of God. "

Gen. XIII. 14. And the Lord said unto Abram. after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

Gen. XIII. 15. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.

"Not only so much of it as his eye could reach, but all of it, as far as it went, and which way soever he looked; and this he gave him to sojourn in now where he pleased. and for his posterity to dwell in hereafter; he gave him the title new, and to them the possession of it for future times: and to thy seed forever: the meaning is, that he gave it to his posterity, to be enjoyed

by them until the Messiah came, when a new world would begin; and which Abram in person shall enjoy, with all his spiritual seed, after the resurrection, when that part of the earth will be renewed, as well as the rest; and when particularly Christ will make his appearance and residence, Matt. XXII. 32. This may be typical of the heavenly Canaan given to Abram and all his spiritual seed, and which shall be enjoyed by them forevermore."

Gen. XIII. 16 And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

"An hyperbolical expression, denoting the great multitude of Abram's posterity, as they were in the days of Solomon, and as they will be in the latter day; especially as this may respect all the spiritual seed of Abram, Jews and Gentiles, as they will be in the spiritual reign of Christ, Hos. I. 10, 11; so if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy, seed be numbered. Numb. XXIII. 10."

Gen. XIII. 17 Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

Gen. XIII. 18. Then Abram removed his tent, and came, and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord.

Gen XIV. " This chapter gives an account of a war that was waged, and a battle fought, between four kings on one side, and five on the other, and of the occasion and issue of it; who were the first kings, and this the first battle the Scriptures speak of, verses 1-11. Lot and his goods being taken

and carried off with those of Sodom, by the conqueror, Abram hearing of it armed his men and pursued after them, and overtook and overthrew them, and rescued lot and his goods with others and returned, verses 12-16; he was met by the king of Sodom, and Salem, who congratulated him on his victory, verses 17, 18, 19."

"Abram had the land of Canaan by promise, and now conquest of it over the invaders of it; Melchizidek, sensible of his right unto it, brings forth the best fruits of it, and tenders them to him. In this Melchizidek was a type of Christ, who comforts and refreshes his hungry and weary people with himself, the bread of life, and with the wine of his love, as well as his name and title agree with him, who is a righteous King, and Prince of Peace, Jer xx III. 5: Isa. lx. 6: and he was the priest of the most high God; a priest as well as a king; and in this he was a type of Christ in his kingly and priestly offices, who is both King and Priest, Zeck. VI. 13. Melchizidek was a priest of the true and living God, who is above all gods, dwells in the highest heaven, and is the Most High over all the earth; by him he was called to this office, invested with it and ministered to him in it."

Gen. XV. 1. After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

"The word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision; Christ the essential Word appeared unto Abram in a human form, visible to him, and with an

articulate voice spake unto him: saying, fear not, Abram; calling him by his name, to encourage him and dissipate his fears: I am thy shield; to protect him against all enemies, as Christ is the shield of His people against all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, which being held up by the hand of faith, called therefore the shield of faith, is a security against them: and thy exceeding great reward; he himself would be his reward, which is a great one, an exceeding great one, as Christ is to his people, in person, offices of grace, all being theirs, and he in all to them; all the blessings of grace and glory come along with him, and he being their portion here and hereafter, to all eternity; for since he is all things, all are theirs, all things appertaining to life and godliness, and eternal life itself."

J.K. Booton

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE TWO WITNESSES

The minds of many of our brethren have been led, of late, to discuss the subject of the Lord's two witnesses, and the prophecy concerning them, contained in the eleventh chapter of Revelation, compared with Zechariah 4:2-14. The attention of our readers was called to this subject about thirty years ago, by Brother Trott, who, at that time, expressed his convictions that the two witnesses were the gospel ministry; not that their number was literally reduced to only two, but from the legal provision in the ceremonial law, making two the smallest number admissible to establish

any testimony; thus showing that the ministers of the gospel during the forty and two months, or one thousand, threescore days of their prophesying in sackcloth, should be reduced to the very smallest number requisite for maintaining the truth, in the face of great popular opposition, and under the most discouraging circumstances, as indicated by their clothing. In those early papers Brother Trott arrived at the conclusion that the forty and two months most probably commenced at or about the year 606, and adding to that period twelve hundred and sixty days, taking these days of prophetic time to mean as many years, according to our common computation, would extend to about the year 1866, when these two witnesses should finish their testimony, and when the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and kill them, and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be buried in graves, etc.

To us it seems quite remarkable that distinguished servant of God had at the very moment when the struggle was going on in the church of God, which resulted in a separation between the New School, or Mission Baptists, and the Old School, or strictly apostolic Baptists, in which the former took position with the whole sisterhood of the harlot daughters of Mys-

tery, Babylon the Great, in support of all the novel and worldly religious inventions of the days and in discarding the Bible as the only infallible standard of truth and righteousness, and the latter withdrawing her fellowship from those who then went out from us and took her bold position on apostolic ground, repudiating all religious creeds and maxims, doctrines and ordinances, institutions and combinations, for which she could find no warrant in the New Testament; to us, we say, it is not a little remarkable that our enlightened Brother Trott was at so early a day enabled to sound the alarm in Zion, and so clearly point out what he understood to be predicted for the halfcentury which was then to ensue. The development of the Protestant beast which had risen out of the earth, commanding the making of an image of the papal monster which had risen out of the sea -- the rapid advance of the image to its completion, and its investment of power to speak and command all men to worship the beast, to proscribe, persecute and ultimately put to death all who should not worship the image of the beast. We have watched for the last thirty years the progress of this man of sin, this son of perdition, and now witness, at the very time indicated, the fearful reality of what was foreshadowed in the faithful admonitions of our beloved brother; but the end is not yet.

As the time draws near many of our most discerning brethren, and among them brethren Stipp, Owen, Rittenhouse and others, are drawn out upon the same subject, and although at the

first view there seems much discrepancy in their expositions of the two witnesses, there is a remarkable unison in their understanding of the time signified for the slaughter of the witnesses and of the powers by whom the slaughter shall be accomplished. In closely comparing the views expressed by our brethren, there does not seem to us to be so much want of harmony as we at first supposed. The present views of Brother Trott, expressed in a late letter, are that the Scriptures, and the church through the ministry, are the two witnesses; the one as the olive tree, supplying the golden oil, through Christ, as the golden bowl, conveyed by the golden pipes, the gifts of the Spirit, to supply the lamps, which burning with holy fire make the light which is reflected by the candlestick (the church) send forth its radiance. (We do not give Brother Trott's words, as his letter is not at hand, but according to our recollection.) One brother thinks the Holy Ghost and our Lord Jesus Christ are the two witnesses intended, and others again are equally confident that the two covenants, the Old and New Testaments, are meant. There is not so much difference in these explanations as some may apprehend, after all. Suppose we take the views of Brother Stipp, that Christ and the Holy Ghost are the two witnesses. The Holy Ghost is the spirit and life of all the Scriptures, and if the Scriptures could be separated from that spirit, the mere body of the Scriptures, deprived of all its real vitality, would be to us only a dead body, a mere form of words, without power or life. The church is

the body of Christ; he is her life and immortality. To strip the church, as a witness, of her identity with Christ as her spiritual vitality, she would be as dead, in regard to spiritual things, as our natural body would be if all the natural life were taken from it. A living body is a body having life in it; take that away and it is only a dead body. This is certainly true in regard to the Scriptures, and also the church. But can the life of the Scriptures or that of the church be thus separated? In one sense they cannot, in another we think they can. In the street of the city new Jerusalem, where the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, neither of these bodies can die, for there shall be no death there. But in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified, there is death. Solomon says, "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." (Proverbs 7:27) Remember these two witnesses are not to lie dead in Zion, but in Sodom and Egypt, and how? While the rulers of the darkness of this world altogether ignore the testimony of the Bible, and set up their own wisdom, works and wills as a higher law, they still pretend to venerate the book, and will not suffer it to be put in the grave. They are busily engaged in multiplying copies of it, and are flooding the land with Bibles. But mark, it is the Bible as a dead body, not as a book of inspired testimony, not as God's witness, that they venerate it; they rejoice over it as a dead body, while they oppose with all their might its testi-

mony. Having now succeeded in gaining a controlling influence over the popular mind, they rejoice and send gifts one to another, because this witness which has in former times tormented them is dead, as a witness in support of truth and righteousness, and against fanaticism and willworship. In regard to the doctrine of salvation by grace, the Bible is no longer regarded as a witness, either in Sodom or Egypt. As a witness it is dead, but the body is prostrate in the street; nor is its testimony admitted in regard to any of the ordinances or institutions that characterize the church of God in the apostolic age. The divine government of God, as testified in the Scriptures in regard to the relations of servants and masters, parents and children, citizens and magistrates, is superseded in the public streets by what is familiarly called a higher law. Those who profess to be the divinely authorized exponents of the sacred volume, instead of proclaiming "Peace on earth," are making the most violent appeals to the maddest passions of men to drench the earth with human gore, and their pulpits are made to ring with the loudest blasphemies that ever fell on human ears. Death is the separation of the vital spirit from the body which had been animated by it. Allowing then that the Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost, is the spirit of inspiration, and that God spake to the patriarchs by the prophets, and holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the rejection of the testimony of the Bible, in its spirit, as the testimony of God, while the book it-

self is retained in its letter, is to separate the life from the body, and in its absence from that spirit it is dead.

But we see also the church of God slain as a witness. It is true the church of Christ can never be deprived of her vitality in Christ, for her life is hid with Christ in God; but in her testimony, as a witness, through her ministry she is disregarded. A few weeks since, a committee visited the president of the United States, purporting to be the representatives of the clergy of all denominations of Christians; as such they were received by the chief magistrate of our nation. Their business was to persuade him to annul the relationship which God had instituted between two classes of the human family. But was there in the committee, or in the convention which they represented, a single member of the church of the living God? Not one; yet they presented themselves and were accepted as the representatives of every Christian denomination. True, the church of God shall and does dwell alone, and is not reckoned with the nations, but the officially recognized body of the church is a body without a particle of spiritual life--a dead body. But this loathsome carcass cannot be one of the witnesses intended, for it has not been prophesying forty and two months in sackcloth; it has not been slain, nor have we any hope that the spirit of life from God will ever animate it with vitality. The true church of God, the mystical body of our Lord Jesus Christ, has been prophesying in the time and manner signified, and her testimony

as one of God's witnesses has been, like the leaves of the tree of life, for the healing of the nations. To her peaceful doctrine, her Christ like example and the effect of her testimony to the world, may be attributed all the ameliorating influences tending to the great cause of "on earth peace, good will toward men," which have relieved the nations of the earth from heathen darkness and the most abject wretchedness. As a witness for God and truth, the church has encountered the most determined and bitter opposition of all other sects and denominations of religionists, from her organization at Pentecost to the present time. But as a witness for God and truth, her voice is no longer heard nor admitted, either in Sodom or Egypt. The place where our Lord was crucified is the place assigned in prophecy for her to be slain. The gross and unnatural wickedness of Sodom, the darkness and bondage of Egypt, were figurative of the influences brought to bear in effecting the crucifixion of our Lord. The scribes, Pharisees and priesthood, and the perverted civil authorities of Judea and Rome, were blended in the accomplishment of the tragedy of Calvary, and the same or similar influences must be developed in silencing the witnesses of the Lord. Our modern scribes, Pharisees, priests and clergy are now the rulers of the darkness of this world, and having gained a commanding ascendancy over Sodom and Egypt, have they not effectually slain the church of God as a witness, so far as Sodom and Egypt are concerned? Yet the church is not

exterminated nor put in a grave; she is still visible to her enemies as a prostrate antagonist, while over her, and over the dead body of the Scriptures, they who dwell on the earth (not on the sea of glass) rejoice, make merry and send gifts one to another.

Our object in this article is not to offer any new light on the subject of the two witnesses, as we do not feel competent to do so, but rather to show that the views of our brethren, which have been published in our columns for thirty years past, are not as discordant as some have apprehended. If in reality the witnesses are now slain, according to the prophecy, the triumph of antichrist will be short. The three days and an half of the virtual suspension of their testimony will soon be numbered, and at their fulfillment a more glorious state will be ushered in than the church has experienced for twelve hundred and sixty-three years and six months at least, if not more brilliant than has been witnessed since her organization. But whether our views on this important subject, and those of our brethren, are correct or not, it is beyond all reasonable doubt that we are approaching a momentous period in the history of the church, in which the Savior's admonition should be solemnly regarded: Take heed that no man deceive you. As he commandeth his disciples to watch the signs which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, so are the saints of the present time admonished to watch the signs which indicate the destruction of Babylon. The sovereign order from his awful

throne is now being heralded in thunder tones: *"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."* (Rev. 18:4) *"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."* (Rev. 16:15)

Elder Gilbert Beebe
Middletown, N.Y., November 15, 1862.

"Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." — 2 TIMOTHY i. 9.

HAVE YOU any testimony that God has called you by his grace, quickened your soul into divine life, brought you under the curse of a condemning law, given you repentance for your sins, raised up a sigh and a cry in your breast for a sense of his pardoning love, brought you to the footstool of mercy, given you faith to believe in his dear Son, with any sweet hope that he has begun a gracious work upon your heart? Can you look back upon any never-to-be-forgotten period when the Lord, by his special and omnipotent grace, quickened your soul into divine life? for I do believe we never can forget the first sensations of the Spirit of God in his quickening movements upon the soul; when he, to use the figure of Moses, fluttereth over it as an eagle which stirreth up her nest, infusing

and communicating a new and heavenly life, as when in creation he moved upon the face of the waters communicating life and energy to dead chaos. Surely if we ever felt the mighty hand of the Lord upon us, we can never forget the memorable time when he was first pleased to communicate divine light and life to our dead souls, to pour out upon us the spirit of grace and of supplications, to separate us from the world, to bring us to his feet with confessions and supplications, opening up and revealing eternal realities with a weight and a power that they entered into our deepest and most inward thought and feelings. Can you look back to such a time? Then God is for you; and if God is for you then you can, as he is pleased to strengthen your faith, look right through that blessed chain, with all its heavenly links, and see how he foreknew you before the foundation of the world, and wrote your name in the Book of Life.

Elder J.C. Philpot

MEETINGS

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

New Hope Primitive Baptist Church September 21, 1996
Union Parish Louisiana.

Pursuant to a call heretofore sent out by Rehobeth Church for a presbytery to meet on the above date for the purpose of the ordination of

Brother Grady Putman to the office of Deacon of Rehobeth Church, the following Elders and Deacons met and organized themselves into a presbytery: Elders Brumfield, Campbell, Chapell, Daniel, Goad, Haygood, Jones, Morris, Smith, Vaughn, and Wilbanks. Deacons Bird, Chandler, Fox, Newman, Pilgreen, Pittman, and Tucker.

The presbytery organized itself by electing Elder C. C. Morris moderator and Brother Ned Barron as clerk. Brother Charlie Fox was appointed as spokesman for the church, who then presented Brother Grady Putman to the presbytery.

After due examination of said Brother as to deportment, qualifications, and the state of God's gift to them as a Deacon to the satisfaction of the presbytery, the presbytery proceeded to ordain him to the office of Deacon as follows:

The presbytery selected Elder Raymond Goad to word the prayer and Elder Richard Campbell to deliver the charge. Whereupon the presbytery then proceeded with the ordination, by the laying on of hands of the presbytery and with prayer by Elder Raymond Goad, and then by charge delivered by Elder Richard Campbell.

We the members of the presbytery commend Deacon Grady Putman to all orderly, orthodox Primitive Baptists of our same Faith and Order as being sound in doctrine, careful in deportment, and humble in the display of God's gift of the office of Deacon.

The right hand of fellowship was given him by the members of the presbytery, Rehobeth Church and Brethren of sister churches, and delivered back to the church as a duly ordained Deacon by the presbytery and received by the church.


Minutes of the proceedings were read and approved, and the presbytery was adjourned in order with prayer by Elder Wayman Chapell.

Ned Barron, Clerk

Approved for submission to "The Signs of the Times" by Rehobeth Church in conference on February 8, 1997.

Elder Shannon Vaughn, Moderator
Deacon Grady Putman, Clerk

THE STAUNTON RIVER UNION MEETING

 The Staunton River Union Meeting will be held at Springfield Primitive Baptist Church, the Lord willing, the 5th Sunday and Saturday before in June. Song services will begin at 10:00 a.m.

The church is located at 706 South Main Street in Gretna, Virginia.

We welcome all lovers of the truth to come and be with us. Also, we would like to invite ministers of our faith and order who have a mind to meet with us.

Elder Marvin Brumfield, Moderator
Brother Oscar Pickral, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

MARCH 1997

Mrs. Susan Cutts, VA	\$2.00
Mrs. Anne M. Pearson, MI	25.00
Eld. T. J. McMurrain, GA	2.00
Mrs. Norma W. Smith, VA.....	7.00
Mrs. Lillian C. Wood, NC	2.00
Mrs. Edith Sewell, FL.....	8.00
Mrs. Grace Manly, AL	5.00
Mr. & Mrs. J. Neely, AR.....	2.00
Robert G. Thomas, AR	5.00
Marion N. Meeks, NC	2.00
Mrs. Rachel J. Green, WV	2.00
Mrs. A.U. Hocutt, GA	2.00
Ralph A. Hocutt, Jr., GA	
In memory Ralph Hocutt, Sr.....	25.00
Eld. C.M. Haygood, TX.....	2.00

OBITUARIES

CLEMMIE MURPHY BISHOP

I is with mixtures of joy and sorrow that we report the death of our dear sister, Clemmie Murphy Bishop. Sorrow, because we miss her, yet joy in our Lord Jesus, because we have confidence that she has entered into the joyful presence of her Lord. Sister Bishop was born on October 21, 1906 in Union County, Arkansas. She was the daughter of Thomas Edgar and Martha Ballard

Murphy. She taught school in El Dorado, Arkansas from 1927 to 1966. She was baptized by Elder R. W. Rhodes in 1970 and joined Rehobeth Church. Sister Bishop loved the Lord, the doctrine of free and sovereign grace, the church, and she loved her neighbor as herself. She was a faithful servant, always giving, helping, and supporting those around her. She served as Clerk of the church for several years. She loved to travel with her friends, visiting the sister churches around the country. Sister Clemmie passed away on August 12, 1996, at the age of 89. Her funeral was conducted by Elders Graydon Smith and Shannon Vaughn. We miss her greatly and look forward to meeting again in that Kingdom where "congregation ne'er break up, and sabbaths never end."

Written and submitted by Elder Shannon Vaughn at the request of Rehobeth Church.

BROTHER BOWMAN F. JOHNSON

We bow in humble submission to the will of our merciful and all wise Heavenly Father who has seen fit to call from our midst our Beloved Brother and friend Bowman F. Johnson. Brother Bowman was born July 8 1913, and died March 22 1997, making his stay on this earth 83 years 8 months and 14 days. I feel our loss is his eternal gain. Our deepest sympathy

goes out to his family and may they be comforted by God's love, and words of comfort is our prayers. He had a hope in an all wise, all powerful, and an all merciful God who has done all things well. Not a hope in himself or what he could do or had done, but what God had already done for him. He was a firm believer in salvation by Grace and Grace alone, and not by man's works. He believed in the election of God by that Grace and mercy of God before the foundation of the world, and that when he awakes he will be liken unto Christ's Glorious body, shouting praises unto Almighty God. He became a member of the Primitive Baptist Church May 8, 1948, and on July 31, 1993, he became a member of Fairview Primitive Baptist Church. He was faithful to his God and also to his Church until his health failed him. He was married December 2, 1932 to Clarice Bird, who preceded him in death. To this marriage was born three daughters and two sons who he leaves to mourn his passing. Also five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild, and three sisters.

Services were conducted at Chapman's Mortuary, Huntington W.V. by Elders Ronald K. Crouch, Harold R. Johnson, and Brother William A. Johnson. He was laid to rest beside his wife at Ridgelawn Memorial Park, Huntington, W.V..

Written by request of the Church:
Resolved: One copy for Church

records, one copy for his family and one copy to be sent to the Signs Of The Times.

Elder Ronald K. Crouch - Moderator
Elder Harold R. Johnson - Asst. Moderator
Brother William A. Johnson - Clerk

LONZIE W. NICHOLS

It has been our Heavenly Father's will to remove from our midst, another of our dear Brothers in Christ, Lonzie Nichols, on January 7, 1997.

He was born in Floyd County, Virginia, a son of Amos and Lula Ingram Nichols, May 25, 1909.

He was married to Sister Ora Turner Nichols, March 26, 1932, and to this union two son's preceded him in death. He has two daughters and Son's-in-Laws, Venda Gale and Bobby Booth, Audrey and Eugene Cahill. Three grandchildren, Blain and Vanessa Cahill, Vickey and Richard Smith, Tim and Kim Cahill. Five great grandchildren and two step great grandchildren.

Brother Lonzie along with five other candidates united with Paynes Creek Primitive Baptist Church August 22, 1954 and was baptized by Elder Odell Thompson.

He loved his church and was a faithful member and believed in Salvation by Grace. He was ordained as a deacon on November 5, 1977.

I remember so well a few months before my daddy, Leonard Nichols

died, he gave Brother Lonzie the books to pass, and he remarked, "This will be your job, soon you will be the deacon here." Brother Lonzie did everything he could here at Paynes Creek Church, also helped at Sister Churches, as long as his health permitted. For the last three years he wasn't able to attend.

His funeral was held at Woods Funeral Home, January 9, 1997 by his pastor, Elder Hale Terry. Brother Lonzie was laid to rest at Jacksonville Cemetery in Floyd, Virginia.

Uncle Lonzie, we all loved you and will miss your humble and tender heart and a beautiful handshake here at Paynes Creek Church.

We feel our loss is your eternal gain and a better home is waiting for you.

Written in Love and Fellowship,
A Sister and Niece
Agnes Nichols Sutphin

BROTHER JESSE HUBERT TOWLER

In sadness, I attempt to comply with the request of Weatherford Church, that I may write in memory of our dear Brother Jesse Towler. He was born on October 22, 1914, in Pittsylvania County, Virginia a son of the late Joab Washington Towler and the late Nannie Wade Pickrel Towler. He died November 20, 1996, in Franklin Health Care Center, Rocky Mount, VA. Survivors include his wife, Ruby Shelton Towler, one son John Richard Shelton Towler of the residence in Gretna, VA; two broth-

ers, G. Wilson Towler of Blairs, VA, and William Russell Towler of Crozet, VA; two sisters, Emma Towler Hammack of Danville, VA, and Louise Towler Giles of Mechanicville, VA.

Brother Jesse was a strong believer in salvation by grace and visited sister associations for many years. He was faithful to his church, serving humbly, had a calm and gentle manner and walked softly among his Brethren in love. He also served in Pittsylvania County School System. Brother Towler asked for a home with Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church, August 23, 1987 and was baptized September 27, 1987, by his beloved pastor, Elder O. K. Tench.

I believe Brother Towler was made reconciled to his illness and to death because he bore his afflictions without murmuring.

His funeral was conducted in Hollywood Baptist Church Cemetery by Elder Raymond Goad and Mr. Cecil Rhodes and his body was laid to rest beneath a mound of flowers to await the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I feel we have been highly favored of God to have had fellowship with such a wonderful brother. He is greatly missed by his dear wife, family, church and friends.

May we all that mourn our loss be reconciled to God's will.

Written by: Elder Marvin Brumfield
Moderator: Elder Raymond Goad
Assistant Moderator: Elder Marvin Brumfield
Clerk: Pam Betterton

Signs of the Times

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"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

1012 Bennett Circle, Keeling, Virginia 24566

SONG

***EXCEEDING precious is my
Lord, His love divinely free!
And sure his name doth health
afford
To sickly souls like me.***

***It cheers a debtor's gloomy
face, Unbolts his prison door;
It brings amazing stores of
grace To feed the gospel poor.***

***And if with lively faith we view
His dying toil and smart,
And hear him say, it was for
you, This breaks the stony
heart.***

***An heavenly joy his words
convey, The bowels strangely
move:
We blush, and melt, and faint
away,
Quite overwhelmed with love.***

***In such sweet posture let me lie,
And wet thy feet with tears,
Till joined with saints above the
sky,
I tune my harp with theirs.***

Berridge

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EDITORIAL

THE HOLY SPIRIT



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”
 1 John 5:7.

What a mystery this is! But we believe it, if we have been born again and taught by the Holy Ghost. Jesus said, *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things,*

and bring to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Jn 14:26. This Comforter is, *“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth in you, and shall be in you.”* Jn 14:17. It is of this Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, for these are one and the same, that I desire to write; praying that God will direct my every thought to his praise, honor and glory, and bless them to the comfort and edification of his beloved children.

Paul tells us, *“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.”* 1 Cor 2:14. Jesus said, *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.”* Jn 3:6. Can any deny that David, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and all the patriarchs of old, and well as the prophets of God, were born of the flesh as are all men? Did they not receive the Holy Ghost? Of the prophets Peter said, *“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 Pet 5:7. Peter also spake of David, saying, *“Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ.”* Acts

2:29. Surely David had received the Holy Spirit, and he said, *"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."* Ps 17:15. What fleshly man could have written, as did David in Ps 139:15-16, *"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, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them,"* if he had not been given this prophecy by the Holy Ghost? In this prophecy David was speaking of the members of Christ's body, which is his church. (Eph 5:30 - Col 1:18.). God's prophets of old searched diligently for what the Spirit of Christ in them did signify, but it was revealed unto them, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister these things, which has been and is now being reported by them that preach the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Even the angels desire to look into this. 1 Pet 1:11-12.

Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory unto God. This strong faith had to be in him by the indwelling of the Spirit, for the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. 1 Cor 2:14. Abraham believed God, *"And being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was also able to perform. Therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his*

sake alone, that it was imputed unto him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Rom 4:21-24. How do we believe? *"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."* Imputed righteousness is not through works of the law, but through faith. *"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed."* Rom 4:16. Our own righteousness, which is of self, is as filthy rags in the eyes of God: but, *"God hath laid on him (Christ) the iniquity of us all."* Isa 53:6. *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be the righteousness of God in him."* 2 Cor 5:21.

Isaac begat two sons by his wife Rebekah, and they struggled together in her, and she inquired of the Lord why it was so. And the Lord said, *"Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger."* Gn 25:23. Does this not show us that God has a chosen people? If they are chosen, they had to be previously among a people who were not chosen. These were twins and were called Esau and Jacob. Although the world teaches that God loves all men and hates no one, and is not willing that any should perish, yet it is written, *"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* This was said before they were born, having done neither good nor evil, that the purpose

of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth. Rom 9:11-13. God is not willing that any of his elect people should perish, but there are those who shall perish. *"For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and them that perish: to the one the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life."* 2 Cor 2:15-16. If God is not willing that any should perish, then no man shall perish, for God does his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand nor say unto him, What doest thou? If none shall perish, why is a lake of fire prepared for them? *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."* Rev 20:15. According to nature we would judge that Esau was more righteous than Jacob, for Jacob was a deceiver, as his name implies; and he deceived his father Isaac that he might receive the better blessings, which should have been for Esau according to birthrights: also Laban, his mother's brother, to whom he fled for refuge. But by faith Isaac blessed both Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. All of this however was fulfilling the predestinated purpose of God. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of red pottage, and thus despised his birthright. The world follows after this example, but the children of God can neither sell nor lose their birthright, for it is eternal life. This life was given them in Christ before the world was made. Jesus said, *"I give unto them*

eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Neither can they be plucked from the Father's hand. Jesus said, *"All that the Father hath given me shall come to me: and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* *"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day."*

In fear for his life Jacob fled from Esau, and in a certain place he dreamed a most wonderful dream, and beheld a ladder that sat upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and the LORD stood above it. And the LORD promised that He would give him the land on which he lay, that He would make his seed to be as the dust of the earth, and in him and his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. And He promised to be with him, and keep him in all places that he should go, and bring him again to that same land where he was. Jacob heard these promises of God, but, as it appears to me, there was some questioning or doubts in his mind, and he vowed a vow, saying, *"If God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace: then shall the LORD be my God."* I understand from this, that he would then truly know that the LORD was his God. (See Genesis chapter 28.)

When I first began reading the promises of God in the holy scriptures, I

also was very doubtful that they were for me. Eventually, however, I was given to believe and hope. If not deceived, I believe all the promises, even if I am one to whom they were not made. I still sometimes have serious doubt, yet I would not trade my little hope for the world and many like it. What is your experience? Do you doubt, and yet hope?

There should be no doubt that Jacob was a chosen vessel of God, and that God was directing his every step. ***“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.” Jer 10:23.*** I think it not necessary that I should write lengthily concerning the blessings of God bestowed upon Jacob while he dwelled with Laban, but will mention that God gave him four wives, eleven sons, two daughters, and great wealth. His son Benjamin would be born later. These sons were to become the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. During that period Jacob continued in his deceiving ways, by which he obtained much of his wealth. Then the LORD told him to return unto the land of his fathers and kindred, and that he would be with him. Even then he did not call God his own, but said, “the God of my father hath been with me.” Gn 31:5. When he came near to the land to which he was returning he became very fearful that Esau would meet him with evil intent: yet he did not call unto God, but trusted in himself that he could appease his brother. Therefore he sent servants to meet Esau with a very great present. Then he sent his

wives and sons over the brook Jabbok, with all that he had, and he was left alone. That he was left alone is significant, for we also must be alone when God reveals himself to us. We may be among many people, but yet alone in our thoughts and feelings. I believe that everyone has experienced this at some time. It was here that God made it manifest unto him that He was his God. There was none to help as he wrestled with a man until the breaking of day. Jacob had been living in the darkness of night, but now a new day was dawning. The man prevailed not against him, therefore he touched Jacob’s thigh and the hollow of his thigh was out of joint. The man said, “Let me go, for the day breaketh.” But he said, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” Surely this was our plea also when he revealed himself to us. Jacob was made to know that this man could bless him. The man asked his name and he said, Jacob. And the man said, ***“Thy name shall be no more be called Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.”*** This power had been given him from on high, for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Rom 13:1. The man did not reveal his name when asked, but he blessed Jacob there. He now had a new name and a new way of life to live, and because he was crippled by the thigh being out of joint he must now lean upon a staff, this being a strong faith in God. {We are not told what the man was, nor how he arrived there, but there should not be

any doubt that he was there by the will and power of God.}

Brethren, have we not wrestled with the Spirit of God while we were yet in darkness? When there was something troubling us that we could not understand? In the set time of God however, the day begins to dawn and we begin to see the light. It may come suddenly or gradually, but it brings rejoicing to the soul and we now desire to praise God continually. *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* 2 Cor 4:6. If we have been born again, the Spirit of God now dwells within us, and we are no longer in the flesh. As Paul said, *"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. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."* Rom 8:9-10. If Christ dwells in us, he is our life and our righteousness, and, *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."*

Though we have been born again of the Holy Ghost, we still have this body of flesh in which we dwell. Our flesh has not been changed and is full of lusts; and our flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that we cannot do the

things that we would. Gal 5:17. There is a warfare within us now, yet if we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Gal 5:16. But when we are tempted by the lusts of the flesh, which is common to man, God is faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. 1 Cor 10:13. Now the works of the flesh are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: and they that do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against which there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

We know that a natural man must have food and drink in order to live. This is true also of the spiritual man. The food that sustains the fleshly man cannot sustain the spiritual man, neither can spiritual food sustain the flesh. The spiritual man must be fed with spiritual food. The fleshly man can neither eat nor even desire this food. Jesus said, *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."* Matt 5:6. Jesus Christ is our

righteousness, and he hath said, "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even so he shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.*" John 6:53-58. We know that in a natural sense we cannot eat his flesh and drink his blood, therefore this must be in a spiritual sense. Jesus said unto Satan, "*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*" Matt 4:4. He also said, "*It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*" Jn 6:63. Many of his disciples went back and walked with him no more, for they could not believe in him. But unto his twelve apostles he said, "*Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go. thou hast the words of eternal life.*" Through the Holy Ghost these words are preached by God's called ministers, who preach the gospel, which is

the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. They have been commanded to take no thought, neither to premeditate what they shall speak; for it shall be given them in that same hour what they shall speak; for it is not them that speak, but the Holy Ghost. Mark 13:11. The children feed upon these words and are filled.

The Holy Ghost has ever lived in the chosen sons of God, that they might live by faith and worship God in spirit and in truth: yet it was the blood and water that flowed from the body of Jesus Christ that washed away all our sins and satisfied the holy justice of God. "*For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*" Sanctified means, being set apart for a holy purpose; and we are sanctified by the Holy Ghost. (Rom 15;16). Regardless what unregenerate men may preach concerning the final destiny of those who lived before the death of Jesus, we read in Zech.14:8, "*And in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them to the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea.*" These seas represent God's people before and after the crucifixion of our beloved Saviour.

Beloved brethren, I am subject to many errors, therefore prove all things by the holy scriptures, and may the Comforter, who is the Spirit of truth, always be with you. May you remember this poor sinner in your prayers of faith.

Eld. C.C. Wilbanks

VOICES OF THE PAST

SERMON BY ELDER J. P. HELMS AT
THE PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION 1965

Again the Pigg River Association has met according to appointment. By rotation I stand before you for the purpose of trying to introduce by what is known as the Introductory Sermon. No man ever stood before you less qualified for this task than I. I realize to some measure that this is the last time I shall ever have the privilege of addressing you in this capacity. During the association here in Rocky Mount seventeen or eighteen years ago, my mother passed away on Friday. I have been blessed to attend all the associations that have been held with this church.

My desire is, above everything else, I have your prayers that God might bless me to proclaim the riches of His grace as I feel it was proclaimed when this association was organized at Little Creek Church in the year 1825.

I have been trying to think of something that I might read to you this morning. Recently I heard a man read a portion of the 4th chapter of Paul's letter to the church at Rome, and who began speaking by saying that he wanted to tell us what God would do, and what he would not do. That amazed me, because I have been made to believe, and I desire to earnestly contend for what *God has done*; and to affirm that what He has done, is *done forever*.

Last Sunday afternoon our present moderator, Elder Turner, was blessed to preach, and he spoke of one thing that has rested somewhat on my mind; and I will turn to the 5th chapter of Romans, and read one verse: "*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" If I could be blessed to affirm and to bear record of this eternal truth, I would be blessed of the Lord of heaven and earth, to proclaim the riches of what He has done for his people.

The world is crying what He will do, if we will let him. But I want to lift up my voice here at the opening session of the old Pigg River Association, concerning what He has done--not what He will do, but what he has done for poor, unworthy worms of the dust. Here stands a living witness of his amazing mercy, because if justice had been dealt out upon me, I would not be here on this occasion.

In my early days in the ministry I remember something in particular in reference to this scripture. I had found Where it reads, "*Being justified by his blood,*" and I thought the Lord blessed me in a little measure, to preach the atoning blood of Christ for his people. The following week something attracted my attention and I turned to this scripture I have read; and it didn't read to suit me. I wanted to punctuate it differently, for this wouldn't do; but I found out soon that I was the one that needed punctuating, and not the scripture.

I have read to you, "*Therefore being justified by faith.*" We might

pause, and ask, How far reaching is that? Farther than ever the tongue of an individual will be able to tell; farther than the mind of an individual sinner will ever be blessed to fathom. Justification is a doctrine that belongs only to God's humble poor. You know that the head of the government in the State of Virginia, or our national government, can pardon a criminal, and the criminal will come home free from the law; but, let him be a rogue or a murderer, the stain of that thing is in him, for he comes home a pardoned rogue or murderer. But here is something that makes one as clean as though nothing had ever stained him. In other words, something that has cleansed us entirely, and brings us into a wonderful condition. I confess that I can only say I hope that He was born for me; I can only say that I hope He lived for me; I can only say that I hope he died for me -- and not only died for me, but arose for me. And from time to time over a long period, he has visited me, and assured me that he had finished the work he came to do; and that when he bowed his head upon the cross and said, "It is finished," salvation in its entirety for the here and hereafter, was wrought out for everyone of his children. This is so far reaching that it embraces all of his children whether infants or aged, whether in the Old School Baptist Church or some other denomination: all of his children are embraced in it.

What is under consideration when the word *Faith* is used? I know it is often spoken of as something we can cultivate, something we can add to, or

lose, as though it were a commodity. But let me assure you that if you had all the wealth in the universe you couldn't buy enough faith to put out a chigger's eye: and you know how much that would be.

What is faith? The best definition I have ever found, is contained in this Scripture, "*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ;*" and then tells the effect of faith when it is granted to an individual. I tell you that it will make him believe in God. By faith the first man that ever fell under the sentence of death at the hands of his brother, offered a more acceptable sacrifice than his brother. Why? it says, by faith. How did Abraham believe God? by faith. That faith that is once delivered to the saints, is not offered but given you: When the Babe was laid in the manger, there was the gift of God in its entirety. Paul said in the 4th chapter of Romans, "*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.*" It is impossible to find hope where there is no no faith. If we have faith, the Lord has us; we haven't got him.

I want to talk to you about something we don't get ourselves. Long ago a colored man said, "*If you can get something, you can also lose it.*" So I want to tell you that my hope is that the author and finisher of faith, the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega found me, (not that he did not know where I was), as he did one of old, in a waste howling wilderness, and brought me by his own hand;

brought me to the place I was made to cry unto him, because all of my own works had failed. And I was made to know that faith is the gift of God in its entirety. No wonder the Apostle Paul, in bearing testimony here and there, always adds it to grace: By grace through faith. It is impossible to have one if the other isn't there, for every gift, every good gift, every perfect gift comes down from above in the person of the Lord of glory; and he takes up his abode in your heart. He illuminates in such a way that he gives you eyes to see, and a heart to understand. Don't tell me you have to believe to have faith, for belief is the effect of faith; and not the cause of it, by any means. Faith is the gift of God, it is not of works lest any man should boast. This certainly ought to set and seal all the work mongers in the universe.

I might say here that in my first going to the association as a messenger from old Republican Church, there were between twelve and thirteen hundred members of this association; now there are not quite eight hundred. What took place? Have the witnesses that God chose to stand and bear record failed? No! for there is no failure with Him. God's purpose is being carried out in this association, as it is everywhere. Sometimes I have been made to think, and to point my finger at myself, and say, You have failed. Yes, I admit I am a failure, but I am so thankful that I can tell you of one that never has, and can never fail; and that one is the author and finisher of every bit of faith that has been or ever will be here upon the earth.

The God that created the universe, who was made manifest and laid in a manger, when it was said to those on the hill that night, "*This shall be a sign unto you, you will find him wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid in a manger,*" in him was all the gift that God had ever promised throughout all ages to his people. What more do we need today, than Him? He is the only one that ever said he would bring his children from the North, and say to the South keep not back; and that he would bring his sons and daughters from afar, even from the ends of the earth.

I know I have been among you for a long time. When I was ordained there were seventeen Elders above me on the list, and now I am at the head of the list--seventeen have gone on before; and soon according to nature I will be called to quit the walks of men. But the outstanding thing among our people has always been, and will always be contained in the language of Revelation, "*The Lord omnipotent reigneth.*" Not only does he reign over this or that, he reigns and rules over all things that are. And sometimes I can bear record, because I am given an eye to behold it: that not a leaf has ever quivered, not one has ever fallen that isn't in keeping with and according to the eternal will of God. God has appointed the coming of every one of his children into the kingdom, for there is only one way to come, and that is by the new birth: not by being born naturally, for that which is of the flesh is flesh, and that which is of the Spirit is Spirit.

“Being justified.” This man that stands before you has a hope that he is justified fully from everything that ever has, or ever can come against him. In the 8th chapter of Romans it is written, ***“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect; it is God that justifieth.”*** Who, therefore, can bring any charge before the court of heaven against you. God doesn’t look at you as men: my hope is that he looks at me through the Lord Jesus Christ. All of my righteousness: every bit that I can lay claim to as mine, is as filthy rags. Unless our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the hypocrites and Pharisees, we are gone. How then are we to escape? By faith: ***“Therefore being justified by faith.”*** Justified before whom? before God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Doesn’t he hold everything in his own hands? Is there anything you can think of that is not under his control? Has he ever been surprised? Has he ever come short one iota of his eternal will being done? I feel that if anything has been wrought in me, it is, That God has all the power there is in his own hands. Don’t undertake to tell me to fear the Devil -- I have long since learned that he doesn’t hold the keys to his own kingdom: he can’t do anything without the God of heaven and earth. If it is according to God’s will, it is going to be done; and if it is not according to his will, it won’t be done.

So Jesus came, born of a woman according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. It was according to God’s will that he was crucified: he was crucified between

two thieves, and gave up the ghost. He was laid in the tomb three days and nights, all according to the counsel of a covenant keeping God. Don’t say that man had anything to do with it. We see a movement in Rome, trying to free those from the charge of crucifying the Lord of Glory, as though man was the author of it. But I want to tell you that, regardless of what you may think or say, all of it was according to the eternal will of God. Without his crucifixion, without his death and resurrection, where would you and I be? By him we live, and by faith stand justified before God.

It is more than I can understand; and I go with my head bowed down most of the time: if I could only know, -- if I could have more evidence, has been my cry all these years. I realize that I soon must pass into the great beyond with a little hope which I received long ago in a cabin close to the Town of Rocky Mount. I am resting and abiding upon this one thing: that He came to me where I was. I had finished my work--all of it, for I had come to the place where there was no more praying, no more promises--I had failed in everything. I have tried again and again to tell about it; and I think of what my old grandfather, in his last hours, told me: “I must go into the great beyond with a little hope which sometime I have been ashamed to tell.” Here stands another one who must go and face his Maker, with the hope that the Lord of Glory suffered for me-- fulfilled every law and all of its demands for me in such a wonderful way; that I stand today, (not will be

tomorrow; but now,) justified by faith; so that in the sight of God I stand as pure and holy (not in the flesh, but) in the Spirit as the God of heaven is, Can you receive that? Oh, I know your groans, I know your fears: I know all about them; but nevertheless when we can see Jesus, we see him making an offering for all of our sins, not part of them: putting them away by his own death upon the cross; and being raised for our justification, assures us that our hope is not in vain. God has appointed so many hills for us to climb, so many ravines for us to go into the depths, but in the end the glory land is awaiting for you -- already prepared.

So away with the idea of telling what God will do and what he won't do. I want to tell you that everything is made ready for you; and you with all of your vileness according to your own judgment, will find where Paul gloried in suffering persecutions: and doubts and fears were his portion. Yet in spite of all that, he was justified fully and freely: so he stands justified before God. So, Old School Baptists, in spite of all that you are surrounded with, in spite of all that you may think or do, if God is for you, nothing can be against you.

Last Sunday Elder Turner was blessed to bring a message to me that lifted me clear up, and made me to realize in a measure, that in spite of all that I am, God loved me, and gave himself for me. He didn't send anybody else -- he came himself in the person of his Son: by whom we stand justified -- not tomorrow, not some

day that is coming, but justified now freely from all sin and iniquity.

If we could only be given to realize this eternal truth, the nights wouldn't be so long sometimes: I wouldn't have to roll and tumble so much; nevertheless you many rest assured that your salvation and everything is prepared for you. Sometimes we can get a little comfort out of the scripture where He said, *"Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

So God has made everything ready for you; and in all you are doing here, he is making you ready for it. I often try to tell Old School Baptists what is expected of them. This grace, this faith given you does not make you a boastful character of what you have done; never makes you boast of anything you have ever done or thought of in your life. But when we are given to think aright, we cry, *"Glory to God in the highest."* Yes, we glory in God, and we are glorified in him; for whom he did predestinate, all them he called; and whom he called he justified; and whom he justified he glorified. *"What shall we then say to these things, if God be for us who can be against us."*

Let it be remembered by everyone of you, that I stand in your presence, the presence of deacons and elders, and plead my inability, but tell you that God is able, not to do something, but has done it: has finished it, and prepared heaven with all of its glory for you--and is preparing you for it day after day. Oh, if I could preach like I

thought I had learned almost fifty years ago, I would be something; but instead of getting bigger, I am shrinking up; instead of knowing more, I tell you ministers I know less than I knew long ago. The growth in grace and knowledge of the truth, brethren, never has exalted one to know more than the least of you, but it brings us all down on one level. I stand before you trying to preach to you the riches of God's grace, when I feel deeply that you know more about it than I do. I am going to give way here, but I would leave this thought with you: God is not going to do anything more for one of his children. When he yielded up the ghost upon the cross, and said, "It is finished," the atonement was made; and when he arose from the dead, he sealed it. Not only did he seal it, but he is attending to his own affairs today: There is not a home in the mountains of Franklin County that he is ashamed to come to, or ashamed to introduce himself to you and make you know what a vile wretch you are--and what a glorious Saviour he is. How well I know this! I could go now, though the cabin is gone, to the very spot--if I could only feel what I felt that day, and hear what I heard that day, there wouldn't be so much doubt with me: I heard a voice, and it affirmed that He created heaven and earth; and that He was my Saviour. There was life in that word--there was power in it; and for a little while there was no doubt in me.

But it wasn't long before something else came: doubts arose; and doubts have been my portion, it seems, all these years. But I affirm to you, chil-

dren of the most high God, that the sacrifice was made long ago: you don't have to make it; you don't have to help. It is not by a little grace and a little works: it is either all grace, all grace by faith, or there is none.

Where is He now? He is seated at the right hand of God. What is He doing now? He is making intercession for us. Oh, how often I feel the need of his intercession: He still stands between us and the judgment, the righteous judgment of God; He stands between Him and us, and nothing is ever charged against us.

(The above was the Introductory Sermon by Elder J. P. Helms at the Pigg River Association, held with the church at Rocky Mount Virginia, in August, 1965. It was recorded, and is edited for publication.

"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God," is what the brethren of the churches of this association have believed from the beginning; and it was good to hear the oldest Elder among them confirming that they still believed the same things now -- after one hundred and forty years. Elder Helms relates some of his experiences in being brought into the knowledge and love of the truth. -- J. D. W.)

(Since the above was prepared for publication, Elder Helms has been called home, at the age of eighty-five. An obituary will be prepared soon. -- J. D. W.)

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Chapter V.

Gen. XV. 2 And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus.

Gen. XV. 3. And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed; and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

“He had bestowed many temporal blessings upon him, as well as spiritual ones; having given himself in covenant, and all things in it, but had not given him a child: *and one, lo, born in my house is mine heir*; meaning either Eliezer or his son, whom he had made his heir or intended to make him, since he had no child.”

Gen. XV. 4. And behold the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, this shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

“*This Eliezer shall not be thine heir*, this servant of thine, shall not be thine heir, *but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir*; that is, the one that shall inherit all that thou has, that shall be begotten by thee.”

Gen. XV. 5. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward the heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

“The multitude of his seed is before signified by the dust of the earth, which cannot be numbered, Gen. xiii. 16; and here by the stars of the sky, innumerable as they are to man. Now Abram here is bid to try what he could do; *and he said so shall thy seed be*; as innumerable as the stars, as they were, even his natural seed shall be, Heb. XI. 12 and especially his spiritual seed, who have the same kind of faith he had, and as they will be in the last day particularly, Hos. I. 10, 11.

Gen. XV. 6. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

“*And he believed in the Lord*; the essential Word of the Lord, in Christ the Lord his righteousness; he believed in the promise of God, that he should have a seed, a very numerous one; he believed that the Messiah would spring from his seed; he believed in him as his Savior and Redeemer; he believed in him for righteousness, and he believed in his righteousness as justifying him before God; *and he counted it to him for righteousness*; not the act of his faith, but the object of it, not the promise he believed, but what was promised, and his faith received, even Christ and his righteousness; this was imputed to him without works, and while he was uncircumcised, for the proof of which the apostle uses this passage, Rom. IV. 3, 10, 22, 23, 24. Wherefore this is not be understood of any act of his being esteemed and accounted a righteous one, and he pronounced and acknowledged a righteous person on account of it; for Abram was not justified before God by his own works, but by the righteousness of faith, as all that believe are, that is, by the righteousness of Christ revealed to faith,

merable as they are to man. Now Abram here is bid to try what he could do; *and he said so shall thy seed be*; as innumerable as the stars, as they were, even his natural seed shall be, Heb. XI. 12 and especially his spiritual seed, who have the same kind of faith he had, and as they will be in the last day particularly, Hos. I. 10, 11.

and received by it; what is imputed is without a man, and the imputation of it depends upon the will of another; such is the righteousness of Christ without works imputed by God the Father. This is the first time we read of believing, and as early do we hear of imputed righteousness."

Gen. XV. 7. And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

Gen. XV. 8. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

"Not as questioning or doubting whether he should or no; but this he asks for the further confirmation of his faith in the promise, and for the sake of his posterity, that they might more easily and strongly believe that they should inherit the land given and promised to them; nor is it culpable to ask a sign of God with such a view; good men have done it, as Gideon and Hezekiah, without being blamed for it; yea, Ahaz is blamed for not asking one."

Gen. XV. 9. And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon.

"This with what follows, is the sign by which Abram might know that he, that is his seed, should inherit the land of Canaan; for the whole of this is an emblem of the state and condition of his posterity, until they should inherit the land of Canaan; therefore he is ordered to take out of his herd and flock this and the following creatures,

which were used in the sacrifices before the ceremonial law was given, as well as under it; and the distinction of creatures for sacrifice, though not for food, was known as early, as appears from Gen. VIII. 20. This difference is to be observed, the Levitical law required creatures of a year old only to be offered; whereas, these were three years old, because they are then grown and in their full strength and greatest perfection; it should be remarked that these creatures here made mention of were not taken merely for sacrifice nor is there any mention made of their being offered; though it is probable that they might be offered after they had answered the principal end, which was to be a sign, whereby Abram might know that his seed should inherit the land; but the intention of God was, that as by them Abram's seed might be taught what sort of creatures they were to offer for their sins, so chiefly to show that they themselves would fall a sacrifice to the rage and fury of their enemies, in a land not theirs, and be used as these creatures were; and the number three may denote the three centuries in which they would be afflicted, and in the fourth come out safe and whole like the undivided birds, the turtle dove and pigeon to which they were comparable."

Gen. XV. 10. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against the other; but the birds divided he not.

"It is generally thought, there was such a distance between the pieces, that there might be a passage between; it being usual in making cov-

enants for the covenantors to pass between the parts of a creature slain, signifying that, should they break the covenant made, they deserved to be cut asunder as that creature was - see Jer. XXXIV. 18. So a burning lamp, or lamp of fire, an emblem of the Divine Being, is said (Gen. XV. 17.) to pass between those pieces; all this was an expression of the affliction of the posterity of Abram, of their being distressed in the land Egypt, cut as it were in twain there, and of their various dispersions in other countries; and yet, like the bones in Ezekiel's vision, were gathered together, and united again; and it may have respect to the division of the people of Israel into two kingdoms, in the times of Rohoboam, and their after reunion, and especially in the latter day, Eze. XXXVII. 16, 22: but the birds divided he not; but laid them one against another, as he laid the pieces; so the birds used in the sacrifice under the law were not divided, Lev. I. 17; which may signify, that when the people of the Jews, in the latter day, are converted, and brought together in their own land, they will better answer the character of turtles and dove than they ever did, and will be no more divided and separated from each other."

Gen. XV. II. And when the fowls came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

"Birds of prey, as eagles, vultures, kites, crows, &c., are an emblem of the Egyptians and other enemies of Israel, who came down upon them to devour them; Abram drove them away;

this may respect the effectual fervent prayer of Abraham, his prayer of faith for them, in answer to which they were delivered out of the hands of the Egyptians and other enemies, Abram saw would distress them."

Gen. XV. 12. And when the sun was going down a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him.

"And a deep sleep fell upon Abram; through a more than ordinary influence of God upon him which bound up his senses, and cast him into a trance, when he had the following prophecy and vision, which more fully explained to him the emblem he had been conversant with; this was such a sleep as fell upon Adam, Gen. II. 21: and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him; so it was represented to his mind in vision, which signified the great affliction after expressed by darkness, that should come upon his children in Egypt and elsewhere."

Gen. XV. 13. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.

"Whilst he was in a deep sleep, this is said to him in a vision of prophecy; know of a surety, or, in knowing thou shalt or may know; and be assured of it, being told of it by the Lord himself, who foreknows all things that ever come to pass; many of which he acquits his people of beforehand, nor would he hide from Abram his friend, what should befall his posterity; that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs; this prophecy could

not take place at this time, since Abram had then no seed; but at the birth of Issac, in whom his seed was called, who sojourned, or was a stranger in Gerar, a part of the land of Canaan, as Jacob also in the same land, Gen. XXVI. 3; XXXVII. 1; as well as he and his posterity, lived as strangers in the land of Ham, in Egypt, Psa. CV. 23; and neither of these countries were theirs; for though there was a grant of Canaan to Abram and his seed, it was not in possession; though a land of promise, it was a strange land, a land of their pilgrimage, and where all the patriarchs lived in it as such, EXod. VI. 4; Heb. XI. 9: and shall serve them; the inhabitants of the land not theirs, that is, the Canaanites and the Egyptians, especially the latter; these they served after the death of Joseph, by whom their lives were made bitter with hard bondage: and they shall afflict them four hundred years; this term of four hundred years is not to be joined either with the word afflict or serve; for their hard servitude and affliction, did not last long, but a few years at most; but with the phrase, *a stranger in a land not theirs*, and the *rest*, is to be included in a parenthesis, thus, *and thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs (and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them) four hundred years*; so long they shall be strangers and sojourners, as they were partly in the land of Canaan, and partly in the land of Egypt, neither of which was in their possession, within which space of time they would be in a state of subjection and servitude, and be greatly afflicted and op-

pressed, as they were, particularly by the Egyptians before their deliverance from them, Exod. i. 22; Gen. vi. 14. These four hundred years, as before observed, are to be reckoned from the birth of Isaac, to the Israelites, going out of Egypt, these round numbers are only given, as is very usual; and though the sojourn of the Israelites is said to be four hundred and thirty years, Exod. xii. 40; this takes in the sojourn of Abram in the land, who entered into it 25 years before the birth of Isaac, which added to four hundred and five the sum total is 430; for Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Aaran and went to Canaan, and Isaac was born when he was one hundred years old, Gen. vii. 4; xxi, 5."

Gen. XV. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

"The Egyptians, to whom they were servants, and by whom they were severely used, the Lord threatens to enter into judgment with and take vengeance on, as he did, by his judgment upon them, by inflicting the ten plagues on them which made them willing to let Israel go: *and afterwards shall they come out with great substance*, as they did after the four hundred years were ended; with much gold, silver, jewels and raiment."

Gen. XV. 15. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

Gen. XV. 16. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

“The seed of Abram were in the land of canaan before their descent into Egypt; and it is here predicted and promised that they shall come thither again, as they did in the fourth generation of those who descended thither; for Moses and Aaron were the fourth from Levi, or Eliezer from Kohath, and Caleb from Judah; or rather this was the fourth age or century from the birth of Isaac, men living at that time about 400 years: *for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full*, and therefore would not be turned out of the land, and the seed of Abram could not till then inherit it.”

Gen. XV. 17. And it came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp, that passed between those pieces.

“The sun was going down when the deep sleep fell upon Abram, and now it was set: *and it was dark*, a dark night, a time of great affliction and distress to Abram’s posterity as it was after Joseph’s death: *behold a smoking furnace*, or the likeness of one; for all this was a vision to Abram and was an emblem of the great trouble and afflictions of the children of Israel in Egypt, called the iron furnace, Deut. iv. 20: *and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces*, or a lamp of fire; an emblem of the *Shechinah*, or majesty of God, who afterward appeared in a pillar of fire before the Israelites after their deliverance out of Egypt and through the wilderness, when their salvation went before them as lamp that burneth, of which this was a token; this burning

lamp passed between the pieces of the heifer, goat and ram, that, Abram had divided in the midst, as was usually done when covenants were made, Jer. xxxiv. 18. Here God made a covenant with Abram, as appears from the following verse; and as a confirmation of it passed between the pieces in a lamp of fire, showing that he was and would be the light and salvation of this people, Abram’s seed, and an avenger of their enemies; only God passed between the pieces, not Abram, this covenant being as others God makes with men, only on one side; God in covenanting with men, promises and gives something to them, but men give nothing to God, but man receives from God as was the case between God and Abram.”

J.K. Booton

ORDINATION MEETING

Have you ever been lifted up from this world, together with a host of your brethren and friends, and blessed to soar on the wings of God’s wondrous Love into the heavenlies? Have you ever witnessed the Power and Love of God permeating the atmosphere and filling each heart to overflowing with unspeakable joy and love? Have you ever been amazed with the sacredness and solemnity of each and every word spoken and act performed? Have you ever been in a meeting when it seemed that each and every one who spoke was blessed to fitly speak the right words at the proper stime throughout?

If not deceived, this was witnessed by the writer and those present at the Ordination Meeting held with Pleasant Hope Church near Atlanta, Texas, October 29th and 30th, 1955. This meeting was called for the purpose of ordaining Lic. Lloyd Wall, of Bivins, Texas to the officeship of elder.

This was truly an ordination meeting. It pleased the Lord to manifest His mercy and grace and make His power known throughout this meeting. The central theme throughout was the duties, qualifications, responsibilities, and importance of a god-called minister. No one sitting through this series of sermons could lightly consider the high and grave vocation of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ and pastoring churches. This so impressed me that my constant prayer since has been, "Lord, qualify me for this exalted position and enable me to walk worthy of the vocation!"

The appropriate climax was Sunday. Bro. Lloyd Wall was assigned to occupy the pulpit. He called upon Elder J. T. Everett to word the Introductory Prayer. Fitly spoken words stimulated by the powerful love of God flowed fluently from Elder Everett's mouth as he expressed thanksgiving to God for such manifestation of His loving kindness and earnestly beseeched the Lord for a continuation of His loving favors upon each and every one--especially to bless Bro. Lloyd Wall in his endeavor to speak in that trying hour. Bro. Lloyd Wall then arose and began giving an interesting account of his experience and call to the ministry. The Holy Spirit seemed to envelope

him so that his countenance shined and his voice mellowed as he gave a detailed account of this wonderful experience. At the proper time he told how and when that his mother informed him that God had revealed to her before he was born that he would be a man-child and would preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

When sufficient time had been devoted to his experience and call to the ministry God blessed him to gracefully express his conscientious convictions and belief in the power and wisdom of God relative to the complete salvation of His people. He proclaimed that the wisdom of God was complete in eternity before time began, ordaining all things to fall out in their proper time and place so as to work together for good to them who are the called according to His purpose. Bro. Wall was blessed to treat upon the fundamental principles of the doctrine beginning with predestination and closing with a full explanation of his belief and hope in the resurrection of these bodies into life immortal. When he finished speaking several minutes were used in making manifest the love, fellowship, and endorsement by the elders, deacons, brethren and friends present in clasp- ing hands with Brother Wall.

When Brother Wall had taken his seat, we sang a hymn, and opportunity for membership was announced. Whereupon his wife, Ruby Wall, came forward asking for a home with the church. Amidst great rejoicing she was received as a worthy candidate for baptism.

I deem it proper here to insert some instances to prove that God was reigning in this affair and making manifest His providence. It pleased the Lord to make it known to a young son of a deacon that Sister Ruby would become a member of the church that day, before He revealed it to her. I quote two different conversations in order to prove this.

A little boy startled his parents at the breakfast table Sunday morning by saying convincingly, "Miss Ruby is going to join the church today." His parents inquired, "How do you know?" The little boy answered, "I dreamed it last night." Another conversation took place during the lunch hour at church. The baptism being scheduled so early in the afternoon my wife felt that Sister Ruby possibly came prepared for the baptism. She asked, "Ruby, did you bring your clothes, or will you have to go home for them?" Ruby answered, "I will have to go get them as I did not know I was going to do this." How mysterious is the working of God to prove that He is at the helm!

The elders and deacons present organized themselves into a presbytery to ordain Lic. Lloyd Wall to the office of elder immediately after Sister Ruby had been given the right hand of Christian fellowship. The ordination proceeded in an orderly manner including laying on hands and prayer, thus ordaining him to the full work of a gospel minister. His father in the flesh as well as in the ministry, Elder T. A. Wall, calmly gave his son the grave charge including good advice and proper counsel relative to the

walk and conversation becoming to a young minister, Elder T. A. Wall also warned his son of certain evils to be shunned and unpleasant experiences to be endured as a good soldier.

At two o'clock the same afternoon Elder Lloyd Wall performed his first official act as an ordained minister when he led his wife, Ruby, down into the water and baptized her in the liquid grave. This was performed in such calm and graceful manner that it is agreed by all who witnessed that he performed as though he had baptized many.

I have assisted in the ordination of eight elders but this was the most inspiring and solemn occasion I have ever witnessed. Other young men are being brought into the ministry in this section by our God. He will not leave Himself without a witness. We shall not die. God has ordained that the true Doctrine of salvation by grace through the merits of Christ will continue to be preached. Our enemies continue to say, It will not be long until there will be none left." They wish it could be true but we CANNOT believe it.

E. J. Lambert

ROMANS 14:10-12.

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

For it is written, "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Matthew 12: 29; Luke 11: 21-23.

God's people are weak, they are also strong. Their weakness is in the Spirits they are strong in the flesh. They are a paradoxical complex. Nothing can be stronger than he that can change things, that is man's outlook but it belongs only to God. No creature has the scriptural prerogative to claim that. They are doing it. It is a strong individual that *thinks* he *can* change things. The Lord reckoned natural men and women as strong. We do not mean by this that the Lord thought of them as having power, but that they *thought* they did is that true? That is true of all the children of Adam in their natural state. There has never been any more totalitarian power than a man that did not have to do anything that he did do; that could choose heaven or hell, Jesus Christ or the Devil.

This strong man has a palace, it is a gorgeous construction. Just why would anybody live in a hut when he had an inexhaustible source of material to select from? They tell me we can have what we want to have. The Arminian preachers in Job's day told him what to do to have peace with God and great good from him (Job 22:21). It did not do him any good. Don't you see that they lived in a royal palace they recognized nor knew no doctrine but conditionalism; their goods were in peace, they kept them in peace. Job's goods were all spoiled. Why the difference? Is there any explanation? To find a natural explanation is easy, but to find a scriptural or experimental

explanation to one of the stripe of Job's comforters it cannot be done. This palace of the strong man had doors and windows wherever needed, he can go and come as he pleases. No need at all for him to ever be shut up and unable to come forth; no need for him to ever have any winding stairs (Ezek. 41:7) but for everything to be on a level and he able to mount above any obstacle, and to leap any hurdle that might come against his palace. The windows would be placed in the best position so as to have full benefit of all light to see out; inside he would have great artificial lights so there would never be any darkness; he would have command of them in such a perfect way that light would be so common to him that he would think his neighbors, brethren and friends could have such a dwelling if they had done as he. This strong man has a perpetual fountain in his palace; there is not any going out in desert lands and water giving out; there is no falling into pits, becoming a captive and thirsting for water; neither is there any panting for the water of life, because inside his palace water is to be had for the taking. Too, this palace is protected from storms, rains, tempests and cold, it is a complete shelter from every molesting thing, everything that ever comes against this man is under his control. To be sure God *would* destroy his palace if he disobeyed, but he is not going to do that. He *can do it*, but he will not because he can obey.

In this palace it follows that there are many priceless gems and works of art. The keeper is a rich man, he has

acquainted himself with God and great gain has been his reward. God needs him in his kingdom--in fact the perpetuation of the kingdom and the promulgation of the news of the kingdom is dependent upon him. He can do all this. Everything depends on; him. God has done all he can to save the race and he is equal to the task before him. Now God needing all this and the man having an inexhaustible supply, he has thus traded what he has to God for the many gorgeous goods that are in this palace. These goods are kept in peace. This strong man has the palace; he has the goods and he is armed. In perfect complacency and satisfaction he goes his way, He has everything and is in no danger of losing it because he *can* keep right on in favor with God! Dear reader this is a picture of us all in nature, but let us look at the other side. He has gone on his way not knowing that there was a stronger One, but this One reckoneth not with men as to the time of their acknowledging him as King, so he comes upon the strong, man. The first thing he does is to disarm him. How does Jesus Christ disarm a sinner? Does he use carnal 'weapons? No sir, never that! A sinner, overcome is a helpless sinner, but being overcome is not all the armor that he had placed so much confidence and trust in is taken away. What was the armor? Was it grace, mercy, love? The echo sounds into every wayfaring heart. No, a thousand times no. What did he trust in? His trust was in self and that alone. God was not active and he had not been since Christ rose from the dead. Sal-

vation in time and eternity depended on his own action, but now the Creator has come upon the creature; the stronger upon the strong; the high and exalted Ruler of heaven and earth has moved upon the low and abased and undone of earth. Behold how he deals with him. Foolish people with dangerous weapons must be handled carefully. Just think! What if God had let us do as we thought in saving souls (Mat. 21:15)? What if he had let us go on thinking that our way was unto life (Rom. 8:6)? Conditionalism in the hands of sinners is dangerous to them, that is, dear reader, to live and die a strong man is evidence that we are not one that Jesus atoned for, so he overcomes this strong man that can do as he pleases (John 19:10); that can and has done many wonderful works (Mat. 7:22); that has lived in his palatial home of plenty, looking with disdain on the poor. God overcomes! That is absolute. Not a case has ever been chalked up as a failure. Heaven does not afford a record book of the failures of God, and the only one of any kind on earth is of the accomplishments of God and the failures of men (see Gen. to Rev.).

Dear child of God do you not take courage that God has, as you hope, disarmed you? It is repetition but let us ask again and again what arms has the taken from us? It is nothing more nor less than the idea that we have ability. Ability is strength and God takes that away from us. In the two steps so far God has been the actor Man has been passive or inactive. Each step has found man entirely or absolutely

helpless. Preaching that kind of absolutism will not drive people from the church that have any interest in it. But the stronger One proceeds step by step to the subjugation of this man. 3-- He binds him. We never read of the bonds being removed. God does not do things to undo them. I want to hasten to say that I do not understand that this man is bound so that he has no more movement. I do not mean any such. I do not want it said of me that I believe God's children are inactive. I do not do it. God has called servants to serve him and they do. Men are active, in the kingdom, but this step is an important one. This being bound works two ways. I believe, or trust that I believe, in both of them. Bound in such a way that they never, never can again go back to the hog wallow of sin and live in the enjoyment; bound in such a way that he is no longer able to do as he pleases; he has lost the use of his strength; his palace is no longer fit to live in -- in short this binding keeps him from the service of the Devil and binds him over to the service of God. 4-- This stronger one has completely and absolutely brought the strong one into subjugation. God did not take sin out of him; he did not take his strength away from him; he did not take his goods away from him, but he spoiled, them. Somehow, dear reader, it seems to me impossible for a child of God to ever trust in his own works. All, all his goods are spoiled. Every good thing that he formerly trusted in is in a state of ruin. Brethren, spoiled things commonly have a strong odor, of carrion about them. I do not see

how any one can ever have any more confidence in their own works. Those goods are spoiled. The putrefaction does not get less; the smell does not ever approach perfume; there in our own being we live with them and they stay right on, keeping us reminded that we are sinners of the deepest dye, and that the best days we have we carry the sentence of death in us. I believe Paul was touching this when he wrote, that vital message to the church at Rome. *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."* I have never heard that quote in support, of conditionalism. Imagine that! Mortify the deeds of your own body! Cause a gangrenous condition to come about in your own loved fleshly works! Never! No sir, dear child of God, the strong, holy One has overcome, broken your trust in yourself, bound you and spoiled your goods. They stay that way. Spoiled goods cannot save a spoiled man, but Jesus saves.

Elder W. D. Griffin

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR APRIL 1997

- Homer E. Wade, VA \$2.00
- Raymond Oxley, WV 2.00
- Mrs. Rachel Smith, NC 2.00
- Mrs. Arlene Hole, NC 2.00
- Mrs. Henry McGinnis, KY 2.00
- Eld. Shannon Vaughn, AR 2.00
- Andrew C. Agee, VA 2.00
- Richard Towler, VA 5.00
- Mrs. Darrel Rhoades, TX 10.00

MEETINGS

OLD PINE CREEK CHURCH

An annual all day meeting will be held, the Lord willing, at Old Pine Creek Church on the fourth of July 1997. The Church is located off highway #221, five 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

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

The 1997 Staunton River Association will convene the Lord willing, at Weatherford Church meeting house. The host church is Danville Primitive Baptist Church for this our one hundred fifty-six session. Services will begin at 10:00 a.m. Saturday July 13 and on Sunday July 14.

Weatherford Church is located about five miles from Gretna, VA. in Pittsylvania County at the intersection of highways 760 and 763.

We invite visitors and correspondents to attend this meeting with us.

Burnell B. Williams, Asso. Clerk

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union meeting will be, the Lord willing, at the Greensboro Primitive Baptist Church the fifth Sunday in June 1996. We welcome all lovers of the truth to come & meet with us. The song service will begin at 10:00 a.m. The church is

located on Tate St. near the UNCG which is just off highway #6 or West Lee St. as you come into Greensboro.

Kenneth R. Key, Mod.
Wayne Edwards, Clerk

OBITUARIES

BROTHER SAMUEL LEWIS POFF

If God will bless me with the ability to do so, I will attempt to write an obituary for our dear Brother Samuel Lewis Poff who we called Brother "Gee."

Brother Gee loved his church and believed in "Salvation by the Grace of God." He had been a member of Salem Church since February 1956. While visiting him in the nursing home, he was so cheerful and wanted to talk about the church and his Savior who saved sinners.

Brother Gee was born August 13, 1913 and passed away April 6, 1997 making his stay here on earth 83 years.

His services were held at Salem Church (Head of the River) with his pastor Elder Hale Terry and Elder officiating. He was laid to rest in the Salem Church Cemetery, Copper Hill, Va.

Brother Gee was preceded in death by his wife, Berchie Bohon Poff. He is survived by four sisters: Velma Graham, Charlotte, N.C.; Almeta Bohon, Bent Mountain, Va.; Ada Holliday, Nashville, Tenn.; Perdine Manning, Bent Mountain, daughters, and several nieces and nephews.

Our loss is his eternal gain.

Hale Terry, Moderator
Mary Poff, Clerk

Signs of the Times

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1012 Bennett Circle, Keeling, Virginia 24566

SONG

*How great, how solemn is the work
Which we attend to-day!
Now for a holy, solemn frame,
O God, to thee we pray.*

*O may we feel as once we felt,
When pained and grieved at heart,
Thy kind, forgiving, melting look,
Relieved our every smart.*

*Let graces then in exercise
Be exercised again;
And, nurtured by celestial power,
In exercise remain.*

*Awake, our love, our fear, our hope,
Wake, fortitude and joy;
Vain world, begone; let things above
Our happy thoughts employ.*

*Whilst thee, our Saviour and our
God,
To all around we own;
Drive each rebellious rival lust,
Each traitor, from the throne.*

*Instruct our minds, our wills subdue,
To heaven our passions raise,
That hence our lives, our all, may
be*

Devoted to thy praise

Beddome.

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EDITORIAL



ELDER R.H. CAMPBELL

For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called: that is they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of promise are counted for the seed.

These few lines of scripture, and the ten verses immediately following them, which all sup-

port and amplify on the above basic truths are probably the most universally hated and deposed by the modern day religionists. The doctrines of election, predestinarian and the sovereignty of God respecting the salvation of his children is rejected by more of the churches of today than all the rest of the inspired writings: And yet they are the meat and drink of the church established on the day of Pentecost Centuries ago. These scriptures state as simply and as candidly as only wisdom can the absolute fact that the natural man in the flesh, even though he be a seed of Abraham, is not the chosen vessel that shall worship God in spirit and in truth: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. *"The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God."* And yet the world of today, as Jesus said they did in his day, Compass land and sea to make one proslyte and they make them twofold more the child of hell their they were, so, also in this day they cover the world to bring people into their church but that is not the church of God. Their message is to the man in nature in terms which he can understand and the natural man cannot receive the truth for it is foolishness to him: he thrives on what they present to him because it appeals to his flesh, his vanity and fleshly desires. They spend millions and limitless time in spreading the theory that it would be unjust for God not to receive all men, or to receive only an elect people because this would not be in harmony with the passive, loving, and benevo-

lent image that they project of the character of God; and yet, that is exactly what the above scriptures assert.

The devises of the present day and age must be educated by the colleges of the world to use psychology, philosophy and natural reasoning as though God was a man as they are, subject to the same laws naturally and try to rationalize in human terms the plan of salvation; a plan based on works and reward for things that the natural man does. They always have exceptions for babies, morons and idiots, never realizing that they are in the same category as these regarding the ability of man to enter the kingdom of God. The Gadarene came on the same basics and principles as the Apostle Paul and the intellectual level of neither had anything to do with their being chosen. Paul writes 1 Cor. 2 vs. 1 *"And I brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God,"* and again, vs. 4-5. *"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."* The testimony of the Gadarene, who was told by Jesus to go home to his friends and tell them how great things the Lord had done for him, was as effective and impressive on his friends as the learned Apostle's was

to the Gentiles: and the Gadarene was in the category of morons or idiots when Jesus appeared to him, but he knew Jesus and Paul did not when Jesus first appeared to him. The difference the approach of these men of old and the Doctors of Divinity of today is that; one is the natural man in the flesh, dead in trespasses and sin promoting a doctrine that will include him, as he is in nature and the testimony of the other is from one who was born naturally as the first, has been where he is, but by the grace of God he has been raised up out of the miry clay of Sin and had his feet placed on the solid rock of truth; and has been sent by God to declare his conversion and hope in things eternal to others who are seeking the truth. The vessels afore prepared unto glory but to whom the way has not been revealed in its fullness, as yet, to guide and encourage them.

This message is good news indeed to this chosen people, as, it is the only plan that could reach them where they were and is the only explanation of their travels since they have been made to seek after the things of God. They were made to see their lost and undone condition: realize the desperate plight of their soul and could only fall down on their knees and pray as the publican, God be merciful to me a sinner. As the Apostle Paul, they did not realize they were sinners because the law had never been applied to them: they had been alive without the law, but when the commandment

called and they were made aware of the sin that dwelt in their members they could only pray for deliverance. They strove with all of their ability, strength and desire of heart, but as in quicksand they just seemed to get in deeper and deeper; they could not get relief from this burden of sin because they lacked the wisdom and power to accomplish it of themselves. They were made to acknowledge that the flesh was too weak and the arms too short to meet the demands of this law of sin and death.

"They which are the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Now the question is, who are the children of the flesh and they ponder, who are the children of promise, and what is the difference? They begin to search the scriptures more and more for anything that tells them of the children of promise and how they can find a way out of their present condition. They cannot find any scriptures to relate an experience where an individual, of his own power of ability became spiritual, but those who were children of promise ascribed all honor and glory to God for their deliverance from sin.

They read scriptures such as Rom. 8 vs. 3-4 *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,*

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

They realize the weakness of the flesh, from experience, and know that they cannot fulfill the demands of the law upon them and this scripture states that God sent his Son into the world that the righteousness of the law might be applied to those who have a desire to walk in the Spirit, and not in the lusts of the flesh. Joy now fills the heart because they know their desire is to walk after the Spirit and the scriptures say God sent his Son into the world for such as they are, in the flesh, and to overcome sin in their behalf. This then is the promise of salvation to a special people and the hope begins to spring up in their heart.

The Apostle Paul said Rom. 7 vs. 22, 23, 24 *"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?"* And now this vessel of mercy realizes that these are the wrestlings that they have been enduring. It is a great comfort to learn that others in all ages of time have experienced these same trials, and have been blessed to leave them on record for following generations to see and to view them as signs of the times and travels in the life of the children of promise.

"For they are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they

all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called." This scripture, if it means what it says, and it does, should once and for all time refute the popular theory of universal salvation and establish beyond any question, the doctrine of election of a certain people and that not because of lineage of birth or by the law. The promise was made to Abraham that God would bless all nations through his seed, although Sarah was barren and they were both passed the blessings of the father to his eldest son, yet Ishmael was the eldest son of Abraham, as Esau was the eldest son of Isaac; but although they were both the legitimate heirs under the law they did not receive the blessings of their father. They were not the children of promise: God had revealed, before either of them were born that the promise was not through them, but, through those chosen by him, and specified who they were.

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old God told him he would have an heir by Sarah, but Abraham said, ***"O that Ishmael might live before thee"***: Abraham could not believe that he could have a child by Sarah, but the unbelief did not change the promise as made. Isaac determined to bless Esau, his eldest son, but God had told Rebecca, before he was born that the elder would serve the younger and so it was; Jacob blessed the younger of the Joseph's sons over the objections of the father because they were all the children of promise. This was established in the mind and purpose of God before time began and could not be changed or altered by

time or circumstance. The Apostle Paul said it as plainly and direct as words can express when he wrote, ***"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."*** There is no room for debate further, God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth, and he is no respecter of persons. It is solely that the purposes of God from the beginning might stand to make manifest that He is God.

"But the children of promise are counted for the seed." This theme is repeated many times in the scriptures that there is a chosen people to whom the promises of God applies. They are from every nation kindred tongue and people but a specific seed from them was elected before time began to inherit the kingdom of heaven. As Peter told those who were pricked in the heart on the day of Pentecost, by the miracles they had seen and the preaching they had heard, ***"Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."***

Remember those who said, men and brethren what shall we do, were those who were pricked in the heart; those who were convicted of their sins when brought face to face with their sin and they then gladly received the word

and were baptized. The same word spoken did not bring forth a response in those who were not given to see the truth; those who said these men are drunk. One was called and the other was not; one was chosen and the other was not. The calling is from God of his own choice and purpose and it is unto sanctification of the spirit, preservation in Christ Jesus until the day in which they will be glorified in the kingdom of heaven. All that is required, God provides, and therefore Paul said Rom. 8 vs. 31 *"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"* and again Gal. 4 vs. 28 *"Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise."* Comforting words to those who have been given a reason to hope that all these things are theirs in the spiritual realm in spite of all the things they see and experience in the flesh, and it is all because of a promise made by one who cannot lie or fail.

In bonds of love,
Richard H. Campbell

PROVERBS 3:17-20.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

ARTICLES

By request, this is an attempt to put to paper some of the comments made at the Memphis church on a recent meeting day. At best it is believed to be incomplete with some things left out and others undoubtedly added.

The attempt is to give an overview of God's plan of salvation in time and in eternity, as spelled out in the scriptures. The attempt will obviously be incomplete since words themselves cannot convey the fullness of spiritual meaning unless they are conveyed by the Holy Spirit. The problem can immediately be seen in the use of the word "plan". The word generally implies that some idea or concept is first conceived, but then carried out at a later time. This plan of salvation however, if we be permitted to call it a "plan", was not instituted in time since "...he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world...", which is before time began, or, to say it another way, in God's eternity. Eph. 1:4. God does not say, in Revelations, I was Alpha and will be Omega, the beginning and the ending. Rather He says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending...." It is all an eternal "now" with God. The plan of salvation and the choosing were accomplished in eternity.

For God to choose his people in Christ, before the foundation of the world, it would seem necessary that some form of counsel and/or agree-

ment had to be made within and between the triune Godhead. Without such an agreement (the covenant of grace) there would seem to be no meaning to the choosing. It takes two elements to choose.

This covenant of grace, established in eternity, was before and superseded the work covenants established in time. In the providence of God Adam would break the covenant that God made with him in the garden. (Here we paint with a very broad brush) Man would also break the covenant that God made with his people through Moses, as well as other covenants between God and man. These covenants, in time, were "work" covenants where God, in effect, said "you do and I will bless". But man could not keep his part of the "work" covenants. See Gal. 2:21 and 3:21. But the covenant of grace, conceived before the world began, did and does what the "work" covenants could not do. The covenant of grace is not between God and man but within and between the triune God. Christ agreed to come in the likeness of sinful flesh and do what man could not do. Man cannot fulfill the law. The benefits of this eternal agreement between the heavenly father and Christ the son, go to the son's bride, the church.

In Rev. 13:8 we find, among other things, that the Lamb (Christ) is said to be slain from the foundation of the world. This seems to say that God's plan of salvation, though established in all eternity and sure, is worked out in the "time world" by Christ. Thus there is a distinction made between

the wording "before the foundation of the world" (in eternity) and "from the foundation of the world", (in time). Thus much of the scriptures are devoted to the beautiful picture of salvation of the saints wrought by Christ in time.

The first that we see of God's dealing with man "in time" is in Gen: 1:26, 27, where God created man in his own image. I recognize there are different views on the nature of this "image", and it's meaning. But God is a Spirit, according to John 4:24, and we are encouraged to walk in the Spirit in Gal. 5:16, as I believe Adam walked also in Gen. 2:9-17. To eat of the tree of life (Christ typified), which was in the midst of the garden eastward in Eden, would seem to me to be walking after the spirit. In like manner are we not eating of that spiritual tree of life when we take of the emblems of bread and wine as well as when we feel blessed to feed on His bountiful spiritual blessings in this present wilderness?

If Adam and Eve were spiritual in the garden there seems to have been another attribute present also. *"For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope..."* Rom. 8:20. Eve was certainly subject to the beguiling nature of the serpent. She was deceived. Adam, however was not deceived, but knowingly did eat. I Tim. 2:14.

A key question, it seems to me arises here. Why did Adam knowingly eat? Is there a spiritual pattern anywhere that would indicate an answer? I believe

there is. Christ, the last Adam, was not deceived by the sin that plagued his people, but knowingly became sin for his people, (his bride, the church which was the servant of sin) Rom. 6:20. He took upon himself the guilt to save his bride from everlasting destruction.

In like manner Adam knowingly took upon himself the transgression of his bride. And to be consistent with the pattern of Christ and the Church, Adam took upon himself the transgression to save his bride, Eve, from something.

It is often easy to make too much of some words and how they are used, and sometimes not enough. Even so, it is interesting to note that in Gen. 3:23, 24 God sent him forth from the garden of Eden and also it says "So he drove out the man...." It does not say that the woman was driven out nor that she was sent forth. Of course, the masculine gender often represents the husband and wife or even the whole family. It should be noted however, that from this time there is a different characteristic in the woman than there is in the man. There is a difference that is not easily explained, but it is the woman's seed, and not the man's seed, that will bruise the serpent's head.

It should be understood that the difference here is spiritual, between the man and the woman, and not natural. Of course, they were together naturally, else they would have had no children. But Eve apparently had a viable spiritual seed which was not then possessed by Adam. This spiri-

tual seed, which proceeds in a spiritual, but not natural, lineage from the garden is principally none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who on the cross overcame Satan (bruised his head). See Rom. 16:20. This spiritual seed is preserved in the woman, from the garden of Eden, and not in Adam, who knowingly took her guilt.

The burden of sin was never removed from Adam or any of his posterity by any works of righteousness that they did. There is none righteous, no not one. It might be said that God's dealings with man became more intense as he became more self-righteous. By their works man attempted to build a city and tower (Babel) whose top might reach to heaven. In that day, even as now, such vain works are rewarded with a confounded language and spiritual babbling to an extent that they do not even understand one another.

God's dealing with his people, from the garden to the coming of Christ, was primarily through chosen men who were to do his bidding and speak his words. Heb. 1:1. The overriding message, as previously pointed out, was to follow his word and be blessed. But, man could not and would not follow the commandments of God, nor keep his covenants. The zenith of the work covenants seems to be the covenant that God made with his people through Moses. This covenant, like those before it, had woven within it many types and shadows of the promises yet to come and be fulfilled in the Messiah. The recording of these dealings of God with his people in the

old testament are for our learning, see Rom. 15:4, and should be considered this way. While we were yet shut up unto faith, the law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ. Gal. 3: 23,24. This would not only seem to be the role of the Mosaic covenant, but the other previous work covenants as well. These covenants had many literal examples that portrayed, in types and shadows, the spiritual realities that would be manifested in Christ. These were physical happenings, under the law, that pointed to and had their parallels in spiritual realities under grace.

But the law could not bring salvation. *"For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did;" Heb.7:19. "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law...."Gal.4:4,5.* The immediate question is, *"How could such a great thing be accomplished?"* It is truly a marvelous plan. *"...God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh:..." Rom. 8:3.* He was in "likeness" of sinful flesh and, *"...was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Heb.4:15*

Consider again the seed of the woman (Eve) that would bruise the serpent's head. This seed, Christ the seed of the woman and not of the man. The affliction, commonly called "original sin", comes to the whole race of man through Adam. But the spiritual

seed of the woman, which is Christ, is not contaminated. This is the result of Adam, being not deceived and knowingly taking upon himself the guilt of his bride. The fulfilling of this is when Mary, not having known a man *"...was found with child of the Holy Ghost."Mat.1:18. "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is being interpreted, God with us."* Mat. 1:23.. Man, through the natural seed of Adam, is not involved. If man had been involved in the conception then it would seem that our Lord would have had original sin. But he was not the son of Adam. He was the son of God and came in the likeness of sinful (human) flesh (God Incarnate).

In the flesh our Lord and Savior did the Father's will. He fulfilled the law, he finished the work which the Father gave him to and he became the all-in-all to the church, his bride. He is her husband, her righteousness, her friend, her Sabbath, her justification, her sanctification, her tithing, her redemption and her salvation.

Having finished the work that the Father gave him to do in the covenant of grace, which he agreed to do, and which included dying on the cross, He arose from the dead and ascended up to heaven and is at the right hand of God making intercession for the saints Rom.8:34. But before he ascended he promised to send the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, which is the spirit of truth, which it would seem, was also in agreement and compliance with the covenant of Grace that was conceived

and entered into by the Godhead in eternity.

As spoken in John 16:7-14, this is the Spirit that will guide you into all truth, he will show you things to come, he shall glorify Christ, and he will take the things of Christ and show them unto you. Is there any other way that spiritual things can be understood? I think not.

This wonderful promise of Christ happened on the day of Pentecost. See Acts 2. *"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."* Jews, gathered from different parts of the world, were amazed that every man heard them speak in his own language. As it would seem, this not only fulfills the prophesy of Joel, as pointed out by Peter, but also completes the circle from the tower of Babel. Those filled with the Spirit now speak a common spiritual language and have an understanding, one with another, that means nothing to those without. To those without, not shown the things of Christ by the Spirit, it is an unknown tongue. They are still at Babel.

Although the day of Pentecost was a specific day as recorded in the 2nd chapter of Acts, it would appear that every child of God has his own day that might be called "his day" of Pentecost. It is the day the Spirit quickens and first begins to teach the child of God the things of Christ. And when the Spirit, that Comforter, comes he is sent "....that he may abide with you for ever: Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive," John 14:16,17.

With the bride's transgressions paid for in Christ, even the "original sin" of Adam, the reason for God driving man out of the garden of Eden has been removed. *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..." Rom. 8:1.*

It would further seem that the Cherubims, and the flaming sword, which turned in every way to keep the way of the tree of life, at the east of the garden of Eden, is now keeping the way "to" the tree of life in the garden, for the children of God and not keeping them "from" the tree of life. See Gen. 3:24. Do we not daily feed upon this green tree, the tree of life, our Lord and Savior? Is this not what Isaiah speaks of in chapter 35, verse 8; *"And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it:..."*? The way to the tree of life is surely a highway that is kept for the children of God.

In these latter days the church, it seems, will continue much as it is; except for the falling away spoken of in II Thes. 2:3, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. It will continue that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentile be come in. See Rom. 11:25. The word "until" indicates that the blindness will be taken away from Israel in that notable day. Or, taken away from Israel that is Israel. "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel....but the children of the promise are counted for seed." Rom. 9:6-8.

It would appear that the blindness will be taken away from Israel all at

once, or at least in a very short time. In Isa. 66:8 the question it asks with a positive answer inferred, "*Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children.*"

'Is this not the time when the wicked shall be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming?' II Thes. 2:8. See also Rev. 19:11-21. and Isa. 63:1, 2. For the church the promise is this: That the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. Both the dead in Christ, and the living, in their order shall be raised to ever be with the Lord. I Thes. 4:15-17.

In looking back over the above lines it seems only a very meager sketch, with many blank spots, of the greatest story ever told. Even so, it may be that the Spirit will take a seed of an idea in the readers mind and make it to grow into that which will be praise to His Holy Name.

WGC

PSALM 90: 1-2.

LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

VOICES OF THE PAST

SOMETHING IS WRONG

By Elder W.D. Griffin

Dear Brethren--There has been much concern in my mind for a number of years as to where we are going as a people and as a church.

First, let me say that I believe in the second personal coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I do not feel the freedom of applying some scriptures that some good brethren apply to the subject. Frankly, I think quite a few of them that are applied to His coming the second time have direct reference to our experimental lives as children of God. But I do believe that at a future coming day He is coming back to claim His Bride from the clutches of time. Relative to that, I want to point out this thought. When we look at the facts pertaining to the history of the world, first prior to the flood, do we find any consolation in our own history? Is our age not a counterpart of their age? How much attention is paid to a preacher of righteousness? Let us leave the world alone for a while, and let us examine ourselves.

I really and truly do not think an inventory would hurt any of us -- in fact the only reason we could object is in fear of what it would reveal. Do our people have time to listen to preaching? Is there any interest in Church? If the Lord does enable some man to build on a good foundation, does anyone pay attention? No doubt, breth-

ren, we are in that age. A few realize it and are bringing it to our minds. What do we do about it? Sigh, and perhaps get a little longer breath, and settle back in our lethargy. You cannot interest our people in being punctual at meeting time; you cannot arouse the professing people of God. It looks like to me, that we act very much like people acted in Noah's time.

Now let us pass on to the time of Christ. How were the Jews getting along in their worship? I do not have the time to hunt it up, but the Jewish historian, Josephus, describes the condition as being anything but pleasant. Wickedness was rampant in the non-professing world, it is true. But it is about the Jewish Church that I am primarily concerned. It is said that there was scarcely a synagogue that had not become polluted and degraded by some unclean thing. Does that suggest anything to our mind? How does such a condition compare with the Primitive Baptists? How about our churches? Do you know how many cease to function as a church each year?

I say again that I believe in the second coming of Christ. Is it close? Are these material things to be consumed and pass away? I do not know about that. One thing I am sure about -- that but for the grace that was given to Noah and the Jews that did believe on Him, we, as a church, are gone.

In my judgment, one of the most alarming conditions that exists today is the apparent indifference among us as to the things that make for peace. I have tried to study history some, and

I think I have some conception of our travels as a church in America. I want to digress here to say that I believe (or hope I do) that the Primitive Baptist people are the Church of Jesus Christ. If we were to undertake writing articles of faith, I do not think any better could be had than those in the prospectus of the Signs of the Times. But I absolutely refuse to be bound by what so-called absoluters and so-called conditionlists interpret those articles to mean. I do not have any patience with anybody who tries in any sense to hide their immorality, their inebriation, their profanity behind the third article of that prospectus. Nor do I have any less patience with those that in any sense, deny the purpose of God respecting every event that has, is, or will transpire. Yet, although we have men among us who do those things; I want it thoroughly understood that these people are the Church of Jesus, its founder, builder, and keeper. Why do we say that it does not make any difference how we live? Did the apostles say that? Did the law-giver? Why, when we get caught in our transgression, do we invariably say, I couldn't help it -- and in daily instances plead for mercy on that score? Did Peter do that? What does exhortation mean? Is it in the Book? Now be honest, do you know anyone who will let you exhort to good works, without them calling you an Armenian or conditionalist? Did you know that many of our ministers are afraid to use some portions of scripture in certain places? To do so means to be branded.

Since I am talking about good works I want to say that I think the most strenuous predestinarians among us believe in good works. The trouble is that the good works you must do to suit them is to not do the things Christ and the Princes in Israel said do, but do like they do. Every reader knows this is true.

As I say, we may be in the last days. God alone knows. But whether in the last days or in the middle of the gospel dispensation, the guilt lies at our door. It is us who are the sinners in this case. The condemnation is the more ours when we excuse ourselves and lay our sins at the door of God's mercy. You can say nothing is wrong if you want to; you can say the Old Baptists are the same as a hundred years ago, but it does not convince; something is wrong! In my lifetime among them they have dwindled in such a way that within not many more years the church in Alabama will be extinct. If the conditions prevail in America for another twenty-five years, that has prevailed for the past twenty-five, and those conditions are the same that has ever characterized and identified the church, then her sameness and nothing-wrong condition, is going to eventually and inevitably carry us into oblivion. If you doubt that, read our statistics.

May the Lord undertake for us. We are guilty, and I want to emphasize that I feel my guilt and know that sin lies at my door. I feel if I had labored one half as hard to save as I have to cut off, that I would have been better. If that laboring to save is conditional-

ism, then it would be more apostolic to be conditional; but it is not.

I have a premonition that it is not popular to write this way; but did you ever see a time when so much inquiry is being made? So many see where we are going and that we will soon be there. I am not advocating a get-together. It would only make another faction. Yet if we were all right, then the Old Baptists could get together. But I am talking about us, the so-called Absolute Predestinarian Baptists. The leaders of the church are responsible for the prevailing condition. It is ambitious preachers, some of whom are rotten in doctrine, and whose conduct is just as bad and low-down as the wildest, vilest unregenerate. In this state we have had too much of that, and because some have gotten by, I am afraid we in this country are seeing the fruit of shielding some like that.

Methinks it is a sad time. O Lord, have mercy on us and lead us to repentance. Bring us, O Lord, thy erring children, as we hope, to the Rock of our salvation; and enable us to stop and see in our own eyes. Give us humbling grace that our pride, arrogance, and hatefulness, may be brought into the ashes. O Lord, we acknowledge that it takes fire to produce ashes and we ask thee to bless us with reconciling grace that we rejoice in thy consuming fire of humiliation, to confess our wrongs and to reach forth in sight of all the congregation of the Lord; and first remove the beam from our eye. Happy indeed

the hour would be! It is worth hoping for. It is worth working to that end!

Old Faith Contender--March, 1947

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAM

Gen. XV. 18. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

Gen. XVI. "This chapter gives an account of Abram marrying his maid, at the insistance of his wife Sarai, verses 1, 2, 3 who upon conceiving, despised her mistress; of which complaint is made to Abram who leaving his maid to his wife, to deal with as she pleased, dealt hardly with her, and therefore she fled from her, verses 4, 5, 6, when was met by an angel, who advised her to return and submit herself to her mistress, and told her, her seed would be multiplied, gave a name to the child she went with, and described his temper and disposition, verses 7, 12; and there we have the name of God that spoke to her, and of the places where the discourse passed between them, verses 13, 14; and the chapter concludes with the birth of Ishmael and the age of Abram at his birth, verses 15, 16."

Gen. XVII. 1. And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto Abram and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect.

"Which was 13 years after the birth of Ishmael; so many years more it was

before he was expressly told he should have a son by Sarai; or had the promise of Isaac, which was for the trial of his faith; his age is here observed, that the power of God, might be now manifest in fulfilling his promise, and giving him a son by Sarai; the Lord appeared to Abram; in a visible form, the Logos, the son of God; the same as if the Lord had not appeared to him since the birth of Ishmael until the time, and if so, it may be thought to be a correction of him for hearkening to his wife, and marrying Hager without asking council of God: and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; as the word of God is, as appears by his creation of all things, his sustentation of them, his government of the church, his redemption of it, and preservation of his people safe to glory, Rev. I, 8, this prophet is very opposite here, when the Lord was about to give out a promise of a son to Abram and Sarai, so much stricken in years. Some render it, all sufficient, as Johovah is, sufficient in and of himself and for himself, and stands in no need of any other, or of anything from another, and has a sufficiency for others, both in a way of providence and grace: walked before me; not as though Abram had not walked, or had discontinued to walk before God, but that he would continue to walk by faith in a dependence on him for everything he wanted, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual; and to walk in all his commandments and ordinances, that he had given or should give him; and all this as in his presence, and under his watchful eye, that

sees and observes all things, and before whom all things are naked and open, as all are to essential word of God, Heb. IV. 12, 13: and be thou perfect; upright and sincere in acts of faith and in duties of religion and go on to perfection; which, though a sinless one is not attainable in this life, is a desirable, and is to be had in Christ, though not ourselves; here it chiefly denotes an holy and unblamable life and conversation, which though not free from sin, yet without notorious ones, which bring dishonor to God, and disgrace upon a man's character and profession, Gen VI. 6, 9."

Gen. XVII. 4. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

"And I will make my covenant between me and thee; the covenant of circumcision, so called from the token of it, which God is said to make or give, Acts VII. 8: and will multiply thee exceedingly; as he had before promised several times, and now renews it, lest he should think that Ishmael was the promised seed; for though Hagar's seed is promised to be multiplied, yet here Abram's seed by Sarai is intended, which should be exceedingly, or in great abundance multiplied; and especially as this may include both his natural seed by her, and his spiritual seed among all nations, who are of the same faith with him. Gen. XII. 2; XIII. 16; XV. 5."

Gen.. XVII. 3-4. And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my cov-

enant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

"*As for me behold my covenant is with thee*; who was gracious to make it and faithful to keep it, and immutable in it, though Abram was but a man, and sinful: *and thou shalt be father of all nations*; as he was of many Arabian nations, and of the Turks in the line of Ishmael and of Midianites, and others, in the line of the sons by Keturah and of the Israelites in the line of Isaac, was well as of the Edomites in the line of Esau; and it a spiritual sense, the father of all that believe, in all the nations of the world. Rom. IV. 11, 12, 12, 17,;18."

Gen. XVII. 5. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham or father of many nations have I made thee.

"Which signifies *an high father*, which name he bore for many years before he was the father of anyone: *but thy name shall be Abraham*, the father of a numerous offspring: *for a father of many nations have I made thee*; not that he was so already in fact, but in the purpose of God, Rom. IV. 17. Abraham had not only been the father of many nations, in a literal sense, as before observed, but in a mystical sense of the whole-world; that is of all that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles."

Gen. XV 1.6. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee; and kings shall come out of thee.

In children, for he had not only a son by Sarai, from whom sprung a numerous offspring, but he had six sons by

Katurah, who became the head of large nations: *and I will make nations out of thee*; as the nations of Israel and Judah, of the Midianites and Eslomites, of the Arabs, Saracens and Turks: *and things shall come out of thee*; as the twelve princes of Ishmael, the kings of Edom and Alidian; of the Arabs Saracens, and Turks, and of Israel and Judah and especially the king Messiah, to which may be added, all Christian kings and princes of the same faith with him."

Gen. XVII. 7-14. These verses give the covenant of circumcision.

Gen. XVII. 15. God said unto Abraham, As for Saria thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be.

"After he had changed his name and given him the covenant of circumcision: as for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah her name shall be; her former name Sarai signifies my princess, or rather princesses, being to him in the room of many, and better than ten thousand; yet only a princess to him, and in his family, being sole mistress there, but since Sarah signifies princess absolutely, because she was princess over all princess and people that should come of her, as well as the mother and princess of all female believers, who are called her daughters. 1 Pet. III. 6."

Gen. XVII. 16. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her; yea I will bless her and she shall be a mother of nations; kings and people shall be of her.

"With fruitfulness, who before was barren, and in her soul with spiritual

blessings, and in both with the blessing of eternal life: *and give thee a son also of her*; as he had given him one by Hagar; God had before promised Abraham a son that should be his heir, but he had not until now told him that he should be born of Sarah, his wife: *yea I will bless her*; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and for the strengthening of Abraham's faith in it: *and she shall be a mother of nations*; of the twelve tribes, of Israel and Judah: *kings and people shall be of her*; as David, Solomon and others, especially the King Messiah."

Gen. XVII. 17. Then Abraham fell on his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

"In reverence of the divine Being; amazed at what he told him: and laughed; not through distrust or doubt of the promise, as Sarah did, for he staggered not at that through unbelief, but for joy at such good news: *and he rejoiced*; with the joy of faith; it may be our Lord refers to this in John VIII. 56; he saw Christ in the promise of Isaac, and rejoiced that he should spring from his seed: *and he wondered*; was amazed at the power of God, that must be exerted in the fulfilment of it: and said in his heart; within himself, without expressing anything as to be heard and understood by any creature; but the omniscient God knew what he said, and the language of it, whether of belief or not: *shall a child be born unto him that is one hundred years old? not*

that he was now one hundred years old; he was ninety-nine, and going into his hundreth year; but then he would be one hundred years old when this child was born unto him, Gen. XXI. 5. It had been no unusual thing for a child to be born to a man when a hundred years old, but it was so in Abraham's day; though indeed after this we read that Abraham himself had six sons by Keturah; his natural strength was afresh invigorated, and his youth was revived, and besides Abraham said this, not so much with respect to himself as with respect to Sarah, and shall Sarah that is ninety years old bear? Some think Abraham said this as somewhat doubting, until he was more strongly assured by the Lord, but meeting with no reproof for what he said and did, as Sarah did."

Gen. XVII. 18. And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee.

Being told that he should have a son by Sarah, that should be his heir, he was concerned for Ishmael, what would become of him, who being grown up, had doubtless a large share in his affections and it is highly probable he began to think he was the promised seed, since he had lived to such an age, and had no other son, and Sarah was passed bearing children, but now perceiving it would be otherwise, he puts up a petition for Ishmael, whom he did not neglect upon the promise of another; and to show his love to him and regard for his welfare: O that Ishmael might live before thee; he prays that his life might be preserved and that it might be

spent in the fear, worship and service of God; that he might live a holy, spiritual life here, acceptable and well pleasing to God, and possess eternal life hereafter; we must take this prayer in as large sense as we can suppose the heart of a father to be drawn forth in it, for the good of his child, though it may greatly respect his sharing with the promised blessing and particularly as regards the propagation of his offspring, or his posterity at least; this was what the Lord took notice of, and answered him in."

Gen. XVII. 19. And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

"This is repeated for the confirmation of it, and thus expressed to remove all doubt about it, if any there were, that hung upon Abraham's mind; as well as to let him know that the promise of a son by Sarah was not to be suspended by his prayer for Ishmael, for whom he might have a greater flow of natural affection than for his unborn son, in whom his seed should be called: *and thou shall call his name Isaac*; which signifies laughter, and which was given from the laughter of Abraham at the promise of him; and not of the laughter of Sarah, which was not as yet. And I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant and with his seed after him; the covenant of circumcision just made with Abraham, the promise of the land of Canaan to his posterity, and of the Messiah that

should spring from him, until whose Coming the covenant would continue and therefore called everlasting."

Gen. XVII. 20. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee; Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princess shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

Gen. XVII. 21. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee, at this set time in the next year.

"The circumcision; though Ishmael was circumcised, and this posterity practiced that rite, yet it was not enjoyed upon them of God; nor was it to them, or served the same purpose as to the Israelites; and particularly the promise of the land of Canaan, made in the covenant, belonged only to the posterity of Isaac and of those only in the line of Jacob, and especially of the Messiah springing from him, which circumcision had respect unto: *which Sarah shall bear unto thee, at this set time in the next year*; that is, at the end of the nine months."

Gen. XIX. 4 "Another appearance of God to Abraham is here recorded. Three persons are seen by him in an human form, whom he kindly invited to stop with him, and generously entertains them, verses 1-3; they inquire concerning Sarah, his wife, and one of them renews the promise of her bearing a son to him, which occasioned laughter in her, for which she was reprov'd verses, 9-15. Upon their departure the Lord thought fit, for reasons given, to make known to Abraham his intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorah, etc."

Gen. XXI. "This chapter relates the removal of Abraham to Gerar, verse 1. The king of Gerar's taking Sarah, whom Abraham called his sister, verse 2; who is rebuked of God in a dream verse 3, for which he makes an apology that is admitted, and he is ordered to restore Abraham his wife, verses 4-7; and accordingly early in the morning he called his servants and acquainted them with what had happened, and sent them for Abraham, and expressed his resentment at his usage of him, verse 9; which Abraham defended as well as he could, verses 10-13; the issue of all was, great kindness was shown to Abraham, and his wife restored to him with a reproof from the king, verses, 14, 15, 16; upon which Abraham prayed for the healing of Abimelech and his family, in which he was heard and answered, verses 17, 18."

Gen. XXI. 4 This chapter gives an account of the conception, birth, circumcision and weaning of Isaac, verses 1-8; of the mocking of Ishmael, and of the casting out of him and his mother from Abraham's house, at the request of Sarah, which, though grievous to Abraham, he complied with, at the direction of God, verses 9-13; of the provision Abraham made for their departure, and the supply they met with in the wilderness from God, and where Ishmael was brought up and married, verses 14-21; and of a covenant between Abraham and Abimelech, king of Gerar, verses 22-32; and of Abraham's planting a grove and calling on the name of the Lord, verse 3.3; and the chapter ends with this

observation, that Abraham sojourned in the land, of the Philistines many years."

Gen. XXII. 1. *"And it come to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham, and he said, Behold here I am."*

"Recorded in the preceding chapter, the following affairs, after many promises of a son had been given him and those fulfilled; and after many blessings had been bestowed upon him; and when he seemed to be well settled in the land of the Philistines, having entered in to an alliance with the king of the country; his family in peace, and his son Isaac, the son of the promise grown up and a hopeful youth; the first appearance of which seemed to threaten the destruction of all his comforts, hopes, and expectations; and it was so *that God did tempt Abraham*; not to sin, as Satan does, for God tempts no man, nor can he be tempted in this sense; and had Abraham slain his son, it would have been no sin in him, it being ordered of God, who is the Lord of life, and the sovereign disposer of it; but he tempted, that is tried him, to prove him, and to show his faith in him, his fear of him, his love to him and cheerful obedience to his commands not in order to know these himself, for he was not ignorant of that, but to make them known to others, and that Abraham's faith might be strengthened yet more and more, as in the issue, it was. The Jewish writers say Abraham was tempted ten times, and this was the tenth and last temptation: *and said*

unto him, Abraham; calling his name, the name he had given him, to signify that he should be the father of many nations; and yet was going to require him to slay his only son, and offer him a sacrifice to him: *and he said, behold, here I am*, signifying that he heard his voice, and was ready to obey his commands, be they what they would."

Gen. XXII. 2. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

"Directly, immediately; not thine ox, nor thy ram, nor thy lamb, nor thy servant; but thy son: thine only son; for though Ishmael was his son, he was a son by his maid, his concubine, and not by his wife; Isaac was his only legitimate son, his only son by his lawful wife Sarah; the only son of the promise, his only son, in whom his seed was to be called: *whom thou lovest*; on whom his affections were set; being a lovely youth's dutiful son, and the child of promise; on whom all his hope and expectation of a numerous offspring promised him was built and in whose line the Messiah was to spring from; even Isaac which stands last in original text; so that, if what had been said was not sufficient to describe him, he is expressly named and the description is gradually given, and the name of his son reserved to the last, that he might be by degrees prepared to receive the shocking order; every word is emphatical, and striking, and enough to pierce any

heart, and especially when told what was to be done to him: *and yet thee into the and of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering*; this was dreadful work to be called upon to do, and must have been exceedingly trying to do as a man, and much more as a parent, and much more as a professor of the true religion, to commit such an action; for by this order he was to cut the throat of his son, then rip him up, and cut up his quarters, and then lay every piece upon the wood, and then burn all to ashes; and this he was to do as a religious act, with deliberation, seriousness and devotion: *upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of*; for there were several of them adjoining to or near each other, which afterwards went by different names, as Mount Zion the hill Acra, Mount Calvary, and Mount Moriah, supposed to be the mount intended. Isaac may well be thought in the whole of this to be a type of the Messiah, the true and proper Son of God his only begotten Son, the dear Son of his love, in whom all the promises are yea and amen; whom God out of his love to men gave to be an offering, and a sacrifice for their sins, and who suffered, near Jerusalem, on Mount Calvary, which very probably was part of Mount Moriah."

Gen. XXII. 3. And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him. and his son Isaac, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

"It seems to have been in a dream or a vision of the night that the above orders were given; and as soon as the morning came, he rose, and prepared for the journey, and to execute the orders he had received, without hesitation or delay: and *saddled his ass*; for his journey, not to carry the wood and provision on, which probably were carried by his servants; but to ride upon: and took two of his young men with him, two of his servants of whom he had many; and Isaac, his son; who was the principal person to be taken, since he was to be the sacrifice. Whether Abram acquainted Sarah with the affair, and she consented to it, cannot be said, with certainty; it is plain Isaac knew not what his father's design was; and though Sarah and the whole family might know by the preparation made, he was going to offer a sacrifice, yet they knew not where; nor what it was to be: *and clave the wood for the burnt offering*; not knowing whether he should find wood sufficient on the mountain where He was to go; and that he might not be unprovided when he got there, takes this method, which shows his intention to obey the divine command: *and rose up and went unto the place which God had told him.*"

Gen. XXII. 4. Then on the third day Abram lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

Gen. XXII. 5. And Abram said unto his young men, abide you here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

"At the place from whence he had his first sight of Mount Moriah; he chose not to take his two servants with him, lest when they saw him binding his son, and going about to sacrifice him, they should lay hold upon him, and restrain him from doing it; and to prevent this he takes this precaution, which shows how fully intent he was to obey the divine precept: *and I and the lad will go yonder and worship*; pointing to the place where the signal was, but whether they saw it or no, is not certain; Isaac is here called a lad: *and come again unto you*; both he and Isaac; this he said under a spirit of prophecy, as Jarchi thinks, or in the faith of Isaac's resurrection from the dead, Heb. XI. 19."

Gen. XXII. 6. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac, his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

"*And he took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac, his son*; who was a grown man and able to carry it; in thus also he was a type of Christ, on whom the wood of his cross was laid, and which he bore when he went to be crucified, Jno. XIX. 17; and this wood may be a figure of our sins laid up-upon him, by his Father, and which he bore in his body on the tree; and; which were like wood to fire, fuel for the wrath of God, which came down upon him for them: and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; a vessel in one hand, in which fire was, to kindle the wood with, and a knife in the other hand, to slay the

sacrifice with; to carry these for such purpose must be very trying. This is the first time we read in the Scriptures of fire for use, or of a knife. *And they went both of them together*, from the place where they left the young men, to the place where the sacrifice was to be offered."

Gen. XXII. 7. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father. and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and wood: but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?

"As they walked together he said; *My father*; a cutting word to Abraham, who knew what he was going to do with him; so contrary to the relation and affection of a parent: *and he said, Here am I, my son*; what hast: thou to say to me; owning the relationship he stood in unto him, a sense of which he had not put off, and curbs his affections, which must be inwardly moving toward him and showed his great strength of faith to grapple with such a trying exercise: *and he said, Behold the fire and the wood*; the fire in his father's hand; and the wood upon his own shoulders: *but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?* He perceived by the preparation - made, by the fire and the wood, that it - was to be a burnt offering which they were going to offer; but the creature provided for the sacrifice, he put in question, by which it appears that he was ignorant of the true design of this journey, and little thought he was. to be the sacrifice, it appears from what he said he had been used to sacrifices, had been trained up in them;

and knew the nature of them, and what was requisite unto them.”

Gen. XXII. 8. And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together.

“In which answer Abraham may have respect to the Messiah, the Lamb of God, whom he had provided in council and covenant before the world was; and who in promise and type and figure, was slain from the foundation of the world; and who in due time God would send into the world and make him an offering for sin, and accept him in the room and stead of his people; and this was a provision that could only be made by the Lord, and was the product of his infinite wisdom, and the fruit of His grace, favor and good will, and of which Abraham had a clear sight and strong persuasion, John XIII. 56; though as the words may be considered as a more direct answer to Isaac’s question, which related to the sacrifice now about to be offered, they may be regarded as a prophecy of Abraham’s, and of his faith in it, that God would as in fact he did provide a lamb, in the room of that he was called to offer; or may mean Isaac himself, whom he was bid to take and offer and so was a lamb of God’s providing; though he did not directly say so, but put him off with such an answer, suggesting it was best to leave it with God, who as he had called them to such service, would supply them with a proper sacrifice; and in speaking in this manner he might give room for Isaac to suspect what was intended, and so by degrees bring him to the

knowledge of it: *so they went both of them together*, proceeded on their journey until they came to the place they were directed to go.”

J.K. Booton

CORINTHIANS 2: 1- 5.

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

MEETINGS

PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Pigg River Association will convene the Lord will; with Republican Church, the host church on the grounds of Republican Church in Franklin County, Virginia, to begin on Friday before the first Sunday in August (August 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 1997).

Those coming from the south; go 220 North, from Bassett Forks go 8 miles. Turn left on state road 605 (a blinker light designating a sharp curve). Go 9 miles (as a marker go past Town Creek Church) stay on Henry road, turn right on 778- go 2 miles church on right.

From the North, go route 40 west to Ferrum, exit on Fieldcrest Road - go 100 yds. - cross railroad tracks, bear right - you will be on route 623 (Ingram Road) turn left on route 778 church will be on left.

We invite all lovers of the truth to come and be with us.

Elder Lane Carter, Moderator
 Jamie E. Cooper, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR MAY 1997

- Banks H. Conner, VA \$7.00
- Eld. John T. Jones, LA 2.00
- Darrell Thoades, TX 2.00
- Mrs. Lottie Minter, NC 5.00
- Mrs. Ernestine Sharp, LA 2.00
- W.D. Godwin, LA 2.00
- Mrs. Jamie Fanning, AL 40.00
- In memory of Ralph A. Hocutt & Viva Dean Poe
- Ms. Reidy Pickral, VA 25.00
- Conrad R. Key, NC 2.00
- J.C. Carroll, NC 15.00
- Eld. James C. Young, GA 2.00
- Mrs. Connie Page, NC 5.00
- Mrs. Louise Stanley, NC 2.00
- Eld. Noel Conner, VA 10.00

OBITUARIES

MRS ODELL B. ANDERSON

We mourn the death of our beloved sister in Christ Odell Anderson, but bow in humble submission to the holy will of God. She was born at Spring Hill, La. Jan. 29, 1915 and was called home June 15, 1997 at age 82 at her home in Bastrop, LA. Sister Odell was a longtime member of Concord Primitive Baptist Church in Morehouse Parish, La. She loved to meet with her brethren to worship her Saviour and always filled her seat unless providentially hindered.

Sister Anderson is survived by her husband Lester I. Anderson of Bastrop, La.; two daughters, Gloria A. Watson of Bastrop, and Shela Rosen of Crossett, AR.; two sons, Jerry W. and Terry Don Anderson of Bastrop; 15 Grandchildren, 21 Great Grandchildren and a large host of friends. She was preceded in death by one son, Millard E. Anderson; 2 sisters, and 3 brothers.

Services were conducted at the funeral home chapel June 17, 1997 by Elders Theron Jones and Clifford Wilbanks. She was laid to rest in Memorial Park Cemetery to await the coming again of her Lord and Saviour.

Eld. C.C. Wilbanks

OCIE BRUMFIELD BLAIR

It is with sadness that I attempt to write in memory of one I dearly loved, Aunt Ocie Blair.

She was born September 20, 1918 in Pittsylvania County, where she lived until January 1985 when she went to her brother's, Vernard Brumfield, Danville, Va. to help care for his wife, Verla. Ocie passed away in his home, after two and one-half months of illness, April 17, 1997.

She was the daughter of the late William Christopher Brumfield and Lelia Giles Brumfield.

November 17, 1945 she was united in marriage to the late James Lipscomb Blair, who passed away March 10, 1971. He was baptized into the fellowship of Canaan Primitive Baptist Church July 5, 1964.

Survivors include; two brothers, Vernard G. Brumfield and Howard Brumfield of Danville and three step-daughters, Nellie B. Coleman of Eden, N.C., Alease B. Carter and Ernestine B. Mize of Danville.

In addition to her husband she was predeceased by a brother, Beverly C. Brumfield, two sisters, Roxie B. Stowe and Sister Elsie B. Swann, a step daughter, Pattie Blair and a step son, Norman Blair.

Ocie was a life long believer in the Primitive Baptist Doctrine. She was active, supportive and faithful to Canaan Primitive Baptist Church. She and Brother Lipscomb enjoyed meeting many friends as they visited fellow churches far and near.

Their home was always open, with a warm welcome, to family and friends for Sunday's lunch or as a overnight guest. She was a quiet, dependable individual who was blessed to know when to speak and when to listen. And is remembered as the sweet little lady who wore the pretty hats. The church and the community have been blessed by her presence and services.

As a family we are most grateful for the fifty-two years we knew and loved her as an Aunt, neighbor and friend. She will long be remembered for her support and love in the sad and the happy times of our lives.

Knowing God never makes a mistake and cares for His own - may His grace and love comfort us in this time of sorrow.

Graveside services were conducted by Elder C.B. Davis, April 19, 1997. She was laid to rest by her husband, Brother Lipscomb Blair, in Highland Burial Park, Danville, Va.

May a copy of this be sent to the Signs of the Times, to her brothers and a copy be placed in the church records.

Written in love for my Aunt;
Vera Green Arnn
Elder J.R. Williams, Moderator

ECCLESIASTES 7:8.

Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

Signs of the Times

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1012 Bennett Circle, Keeling, Virginia 24566

SONG

*Thus far my God hath led me on,
And made his truth and mercy
known;
My hopes and fears alternate rise,
And comforts mingle with my sighs.*

*Through this wide wilderness I
roam,
Far distant from my blissful home;
Lord, let thy presence be my stay,
And guard me in this dangerous
way.*

*Temptations everywhere annoy,
And sins and snares my peace
destroy:*

*My earthly joys are from me torn,
And oft an absent God I mourn.*

*My soul, with various tempests
tossed,
Her hopes o'erturned, her projects
crossed,
Sees every day new straits attend,
And wonders where the scene will
end.*

*Is this, dear Lord, that thorny road
Which leads us to the mount of
God?*

*Are these the toils thy people
know,
While in the wilderness below?*

*'Tis even so; thy faithful love
Doth all thy children's graces
prove;*

*'Tis thus our pride and self must
fall,*

That Jesus may be All in all.

Fawcett.

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EDITORIAL

WATER OF LIFE



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” John 7:38.

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Rev 22:1.

If deprived of water all living things would wither away and perish: as in natural life, so in spiritual life. There is natural water and there is

spiritual water. No man can drink nor even desire spiritual water except he be born again of the Spirit, for, *“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Cor 2:14.*

When the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness, and they thirsted for water, God commanded Moses, saying, *“Thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that my people may drink.” Ex 17:6.* God has ever provided water for all men; but this water came forth from a rock and is a significant figure of spiritual water. In 1 Cor 10:3-4 we read, *“And all did eat and drink of the same spiritual meat; and did drink of the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” 1 Cor 10:4.* When Jesus hung upon the cross a soldier pierced his side, and forthwith came out blood and water. Jn 19:34. Zechariah prophesied of this, saying, *“And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out of Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea.”* These seas represent people, and these living waters flowed unto his children who lived before his crucifixion as well as those afterwards. John said, *“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.” Jn 5:6.* In his Godhead Christ could not die, therefore, *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers*

of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Heb 2:14. As our merciful and faithful High Priest he offered himself a perfect sacrifice unto God, and with this offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Heb 10:14. Christ loved his church, and gave himself for it; 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 5:26-27. Therefore, brethren, *"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb 10:22.*

All things were created by God, and for his pleasure they are and were created. Rev 4:11. In the garden of Eden, (the name signifies pleasure,) God planted every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: there he also placed man. A river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted, and became four heads. Only one river, but divided into four heads: these being Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel and Euphrates. Euphrates is named nineteen times in the old scriptures and twice in the new. The name signifies fertilizing, fruitful. This river of water fertilized and made fruitful the trees of the garden of Eden which did feed the fleshly Adam. This river is a figure of the river

of life as described in Rev. 22:1-2. *"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."* Surely the tree of life is Christ. He was in the garden of Eden when Adam sinned and was driven forth from the garden. but, *"lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever,"* God placed at the east if the Garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. Gen 3:22-24. If it should be possible for a man to discover that garden, he could never enter it because of the Cherubims and the flaming sword. That garden of Eden is a figure of the true spiritual garden of God, the church, or Zion. No man shall ever be in this garden except he be born there. *"And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there."* Ps 87:5-6. Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."* Jn

35:7. Who will be born again? Are they not the ones chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; who are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works; and whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life? (Eph 1:4 & 2:10; Rev 21:27.) Those who are born again have eternal life, which life was in Christ before the foundation of the world, but is only made manifest in time. In a synagogue Jesus said unto the Jews, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day." Jn 6:53-54.

Only those who have eternal life can thirst for living water, for the dead cannot thirst. Jesus said, **"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Rev 21:6.** That water proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb; the spiritual Rock Jesus Christ. He said to the woman at Jacob's well, **"Whoso drinketh of this water (natural water) shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Jn 4:13-14.** This is a well of living water that he SHALL give to those who believe on him. **"He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which that they**

that believe on him should receive.)" Jn 7:38-39. Now if we have not received the Spirit of Christ we are none of his; but if the Spirit is in us we have life because the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Rom 8:9-10.

"And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood." Rev 12:15. This flood of waters are surely lies, for he was a murderer from the beginning, and there is no truth in him. He is a liar, and the father of it. Jn 8:44. The woman that the devil seeks to carry away typifies the church, the bride of Jesus Christ; but she is given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times and half a time, from the face of the serpent. I have no special light on this scripture, but would suggest for your consideration that the two wings represent love and mercy, and the wilderness is the world, where her place is until her heavenly husband shall return for her; and she is now nourished in all the time that she must remain here. Satan persecutes her continually, and she has great tribulations, but Jesus said, **"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Jn 16:33.**

And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the com-

mandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. The seed which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Christ are the children of God. Those who open their mouths to swallow up the flood of lies are the children of the devil. When some of them claimed God as their Father Jesus rebuked them, saying, **"If God were your Father, ye would love me.*** Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."** Jn 8:42 & 44. These are the ones who worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands. The same shall drink of the wine of wrath of God. Rev 14:9-10.

We read Rev 22:17. **"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."**

There are many false teachers today who plead for dead, alienated sinners to come and give their hearts to God, saying that if they will only let him come into their hearts he will save them, and they can take of the water of life freely. **"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouths, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."** Matt 15:9. These false teachers, and the ones who believe them, shall perish, **"Because they received 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." 2 Thes 2:10-11. The truth is, **"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."** Jn 6:37. And, **"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish."** Jn 10:27-28. There are those who shall perish, and Jesus said of them, **"And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life."** Jn 5:38-40.

Beloved brethren, I hope that we are his sheep, to whom he has given eternal life, and who drink freely of that living water. May God bless his truth herein and pardon all my errors.

Eld. C.C. Wilbanks

HEBREWS 13:5-8.

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.

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

 ARTICLES

 THE ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION
 OF 'ALL THINGS': April 23, 1994

Now it might be ask, - What does the above mean? or, is anything exempted?; Well, if the forming of words has any meaning; it would seem, that 'ALL THINGS'; does not exempt anything; therefore, in that my belief coinsides with the 'ALL THINGS'; I feel, there can be nothing exempted, from the whole, of every thing, whatsoever exist in all everlasting eternity; and that, to assuredly include, all that man may consider, either minute or large; minor or major; sickness or health; anger or pleased; good or evil; poor or rich, in either worldly goods, or Spiritual food; storm or calm; wet or dry; war or peace; cloudy or sunshine; rain or clear; flood or not; going or coming; walking or running, or riding; sleeping or awake; pain or at ease, in body, mind, heart or soul. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps; so we see, even our steps and their direction, are already Predetermined and predestinated. I would say, most of the times, we surely feel, we are directing our own steps; but, from time to time, when God be pleased, to remind us of His Holy truth; we then know, that of our fleshly self, we are not capable of directing anything, not even ourselves; for without Him and His furnishings, we cannot even exist, much less, have strength to even live or breath, or exercise our brain in thoughts. It seems to me that, in this fact alone, that, "God" is our Creator,

is sufficient evidence, that all we are or ever be, and all what has to do with our whole being and doing, from conception to death, and forever there after; must of necessity, be foreordained, appointed, and absolutely predestinated, to be in perfect order time and place, exactly as He did foresee that it shall be. According as I see and feel it to be; in order for a speaker; to follow within that straight and narrow path, that declares the whole council of God; his speech must, and shall be, within that true principal, of the absolute predestination of ALL things, by the Almighty God; now that is not to say, it is necessary, to actually use the word Predestination, while in his discourse; for after all, if God purposed it, and or ordained it to be, and or willed it to be; is that not the very exact same in meaning, as His having predestinated it? Yes, I believe so; and so much so, that I feel and believe, that to deny either, is, in essence, a denial of all. For to me, we either do, or we do not believe, in and on, the all in all true and living "God" who thought of it all, purposed it all, willed it all, and created it all, and did it all, for His own purpose and glory; and furthermore, by that very reason, "He is God," makes it an entire impossibility, for even one iota, of its entirety, to ever vary from that exact path or course, as He did purpose, and see it all from its inception, to its finish or consumation or ending. I feel, if I were to deny that, then I have denied of His all seeing eye. But, thanks be unto "God," man's denial of Him and His Holy truths; has never, and shall never, effect even one iota of change, in His Holy truths re-

maining Holy truths, though mankind has tried to do just that, with all his strength, now, since Adam (the first man) were created from the dust of the earth or ground.

Man, in his weak mind and stony heart, would have "God," under that same law as is man of the flesh; not being aware, that the Self existant God, is under no law; for as He is above man; so is He far far above all outside Himself; He is infinite, while man is finite; He is the Holy Spirit, while man is sinful flesh; God is the Creator, man is the created. He is all powerful, man is selfhelpless; though, he of his fleshly self, be unaware of it. God is the Ruler, Let us be ever reminded of this truth. And so therefore, let us not be boastful, as if we ourselves, ever turned a hand, to aid that process that causes us to believe and feel as we do. Instead, may His name ever be praised, for it all.

I do believe it to be, an entire impossibility, that there ever could, or ever will, exist, even the slightest or minutest occurrence, in all time and eternity, that "God" has not always had full and complete knowledge of; And that each and every one of those occurrences, that has or shall ever come, was and is and ever shall come, in exact order time and place, as God did foresee, foreordain, and did absolutely Predestinate, that they all shall come in that exact order. And therefore, as having to do with what "God" predetermined would be, within all His allotted time for this world to stand; there never has and never shall pass, even one second of time, when anything ever took place, what were out

of order, or out of its designated place; and all that being, simply by reason that, He is almighty God. And just that, is sufficient proof of its truth, to His every, born again, little child. For he or she, is fully convinced, that whatsoever God has ever had any part in, it just has to be, no less than, ABSOLUTELY PERFECT. For within the operation of His government, it is simply and entirely impossible, for there to exist, a chance system; such as - probabilities; maybe so's; if so and so's; but if's; not quite; almost; part of the way's; just simply and wholly and Holy complete.

As God looked upon His work, in His creation of all things, He saw it as good and very good. Now, God willing; led us see, what was His meaning in those words - good and very good; was it not that, God had completed a perfect work, that was in perfect order, so as it was to exactness, as was His purpose in, will too, and pleasure in and for so doing His work in creating them all? I believe so. For I believe, all God doeth, is good and very good. And I further believe, that good and very good extends, not one step further than, what points directly to, whatsoever be God's workings, within its entirety, from start to finish. Surely, sinful mankind could never, rightly claim of himself, having ever instigated any portion of that good and very good; when even Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, who never committed a sin, said - Why call me good? etc. It just is simply impossible, to praise God and man, at one and the same time; for the praising of man, is the exact opposite to, the

praising of God. If I or any other man believe, we of ourself, have done any good, in the sight of God.; then, we have done nothing as we ought; but are deceived in our ownelves. For God is the author and finisher of any and all good, in His sight. The best sign or evidence, or good being performed 'thru' a man, is his confession, that in his fleshly self, there dwelleth no good thing, and that he is a sinner. For, in the Lord's teaching of a poor sinner, there is no circumstances, under which, any man could ever rightly boast of himself. For the lifting upward of the Lord's name, is always the lowering down of the fleshly man; and the lifting upward of flesh, is the lowering down, the name of the Lord. And so, once again; there is no room provided for self boasting; or boasting of any other man of himself; even though that man be President, or holding any other high office; for the Lord God placed him right where he is; for He arranged and brought into being, all circumstance, that brought it all as it is. Man deviseth; while "God" bringeth all to pass, in exact accord with His afore laid plan, purpose, will and pleasure. Since Adam and Eve, mankind has used his every available devisive means, to mock his Creator God,; not being aware of that fact of Holy truth, - "God" cannot be mocked.

Whenever one is blessed with a pure mind and heart of understanding the true principal of absolute predestination; that one then will clearly see, there exist no grounds upon which to charge any sinning on God's part, in the whole operation.

Troy G. Shepard

VOICES OF THE PAST

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAM

Gen. XXII. 9. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

"It was a new altar; perhaps there never was an altar there before: *and laid the wood in order*; for the sacrifice to be put upon it: *and bound Isaac his son*, with his hand and feet behind him, as was the usual manner to bind sacrifices when offered; especially this was so ordered, that Isaac might be a type of the Messiah, who was bound by the Jews, John xviii. 12; Matt. XXVII. 2, as was bound and fastened to the cross: *and laid him on the altar upon the wood.*"

Gen, XXII. 10. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

"All things being ready for execution, nothing remained but to cut the throat of the sacrifice; and in order to do that, the instrument for it laying by him, he put forth his hand; it is enough to make one tremble to think of it: *and took the knife to slay his son*; with full intention to do it, which was carrying his obedience to the divine will to the last extremity, and shows he was sincere in it, and really designed to complete it and this was taken by the Lord as if it was actually done. He had the knife in his hand, and just ready to give the fatal thrust,

but in the nick of time God appeared and prevented, it, as follows."

Gen. XXII. 11. And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he, said, here am I.

"The uncreated angel, the Son of God, who perhaps appeared in human form, and spoke with an articulate voice, as he frequently did; for that this was a Divine Person is clear from his swearing by himself, and renewing the promise unto Abraham, verses 16, 17, 18: and said Abraham, Abraham; the repeating? his name denotes haste to prevent the slaughter of his son, which he was upon the point of doing; and in which Abraham was not dilatory, but ready to make quick dispatch, and therefore with great earnestness and vehemence the angel calls him by name, and doubles it, to raise his quick and immediate attention, which he did: *and he said, Here am I*; ready to hearken to what shall be said, and to obey what should be ordered."

Gen. XXII. 12. And he said, Lay not thy hand upon thy son, neither do thou anything to him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

"*Lay not thine hand upon the lad*; which he was just going to stretch out, with his knife in it, to slay him; though the Lord had bid him to take his son, and offer him for a burnt offering; to try his faith, fear, love and obedience, yet he meant not that he should actually slay him, but would prevent it when it came to the crisis;

for he approves not of, nor delights in, human sacrifices; that this might not be drawn into an example, it was prevented; though the Gentiles, under the influence of Satan, in imitation of this, have practiced it: *neither do thou anything unto him*; by lacerating or wounding him in any way: *for now I know that thou fearest God*; with truly childlike fear? with such reverence of him that was fervent love, and strong affection joined with it; with a fear that includes the whole of internal religious worship, awe of the Divine Being, submission to his will, faith in him and love to him, obedience springing from thence. 'And this is said, not as though he was ignorant before how things would end for he knew from all eternity, what Abraham would voice, as he frequently did; for that this was a Divine Person is clear from his swearing by himself, and renewing the promise unto Abraham, verses be and what he would do, having determined to bestow that grace upon him and work it in him, which would influence and enable him to to act the part he did; he knew full well beforehand what would be the consequence of such a trial of him; but this is said after the manner of men, who only know things after they come to pass; or this may be understood of a knowledge of approbation, that the Lord now knew, and approved of the faith, fear, love and obedience of Abraham, which was so conspicuous in this affair – see Psal. 1. 6. *I have made known*; that is, to others; God by trying Abraham's faith, made it manifest to others, to all the world, to

all that should hear or read this account of things, that he was a man that feared God, loved him, believed in him, and obeyed him, of which this instance is a full and convincing proof: *seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me*; but as soon as he had the order to offer him up, prepared for it, took a three day's journey, and all things along with him for the sacrifice; when he came to the place, built an altar, laid the wood in order, bound his son, and laid him on it, took the knife, and was going to cut the throat of his son; the Lord looked down upon the act as really done; it is a plain case that he did not, and would not have withheld his son, but would have freely offered him a sacrifice unto God at his command; and that he loved the Lord more than he hid his son, and had a greater regard to the commandment of God than to the life of his son, and preferred the one to the other. And thus God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, Rom. VIII. 32. "

Gen. XXII. 13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and; behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

"And Abraham lifted his eyes They were before fixed upon his son lying upon the altar and intent upon that part he was going to thrust his knife into; but hearing a voice above him, he lifted up his eyes thitherward: *and looked, and, behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket*

by his horns; the ram making a noise in the bushes behind him he turned himself and looked and saw it. From whence this ram came is not known. It was God's gift to Abraham; there is no absurdity or improbability to suppose it was immediately created by the power of God, and in an extraordinary manner provided; and was a type of our Lord Jesus, who was foreordained of God before the foundation of the world, and came into the world, in an uncommon way, being born of a virgin, and that in the fulness of time and seasonably, and in due time died for the sins of men. The ram had its name from strength, in the Hebrew language, and was emblem of a great personage, Dan. VIII. 3; and may denote the strength and dignity of Christ as a Divine Person; being caught in the thicket, may be an emblem of the decrees of God in which he was appointed to be the Savior; the covenant in which he voluntarily involved himself, and by which he was held; or the sins of his people, which were laid upon him by imputation, were wreathed about him, and justice finding him implicated with them, required satisfaction and had it; or the hands of wicked man, comparable to thorns, by whom he was taken, or the sorrows of death and hell that encompassed him, and the curses of the righteous law which laid upon him; and perhaps he never more resembled the ram caught in a thicket, than when a plated crown of thorns was put upon his head, and he wore it. *And Abraham went and took the ram; and offered him up for a burnt offering,*

in the stead of his son; in which he was a type of Christ, who was made an offering for sin, and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savor; and it being a burnt offering, denotes the sufferings of Christ and the severity of them; which were in the room and stead of his people, of God's Isaac, of the spiritual seed of Abraham, the children of the promise, all his beloved ones; who are therefore let go, justice being satisfied with what Christ has done and suffered, it being all one as if they had suffered themselves; as here in the type, the ram having its throat cut, its blood shed, its skin flayed, and the whole burnt to ashes, were as if Isaac himself had been thus dealt with."

Gen. XXII. 14. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh; as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh; which may be rendered, either the Lord hath seen, or has provided; the future being put for the past, and so it is called, in the answer to what Abraham had said, verse 8: God will provide, and as a memorial of it, gives the place this name: or he will see or provide; as he has for me, so he will for all those that trust in him; as he has provided a ram in the room of Isaac, so he has provided, and will send his only son, in the fulness of time, to be a sacrifice for the sins of his people: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen; from that time to the times of Moses, and so on in after ages even

until now, it has been used as a proverbial saying, that as God appeared to Abraham and for his son in the mount, just as he was going to sacrifice him, and delivered him, so the Lord will appear for his people in all ages, in a time of difficulty and distress, and when at the utmost extremity who call upon him. This may also refer to the presence of God in this mount, when the temple should be built on it, 2 Chron. III. 1, and to the appearance of Christ in it, who was often seen here, in his state of humiliation."

Gen. XXII. 15. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time.

"The angel having restrained him from slaying his son, and having provided another sacrifice, which he offered, calls to him again; having something more to say to him, which was to renew the covenant he had made with him, and confirm it by an oath."

J.K. Booton

PSALM 29:1-4.

Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.

Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters.

The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

THE GOSPEL STANDARD**NOVEMBER 1991****JEHOVAH-JIREH**

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-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen " (Genesis 22. 147.

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 altar 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 Saviour? 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 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" - 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 come in our lives: you cannot get over them, you cannot get round 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 a mountain a way." I believe at last we shall look back from the swellings of Jordan: we shall see God's faithfulness to that promises 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!

Substitution may be a big word for some of you. In simple language it is this, and there is heaven in it: He instead of 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 altar, and there he was, ready to die, appointed to death, and there was that sharp knife refused 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 to the altar. That innocent ram that had never sinned, that ram is laid on the altar. 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 forever 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.

Peoplesometimes 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 traveled this journey, and now the mountain is pointed out, and the altar 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 deliverance. 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 place before Zerubbabel. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: 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,

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 of your unknown way: "In whom we trust that we 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." He saw that 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 those 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 providen-

tial 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 1 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, then 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 cruse of oil that will never be completely dry. "All creatures obey His command. Dear child of God, in grace and in providence you will always have a handful of meal in the bottom of your barrel and always some oil in your cruse.

"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 some 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 saying, "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 weeks 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 fulness which dwells in His beloved Son. "What'er we need in Jesus dwells." "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide" In Romans 8, Paul had such a beautiful view of it. He how the Father provide His dear Son as a saviour, provided all to open a fountain for sin and for uncleanness; and provided 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 heavens Jehovah-jireh, the Lord provide," So may we view the specialty 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 fulness 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 some-things beloved friends. Faith adds various bits and pieces at the end. Faith looks at a Lord 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-jireh, the Lord will provide." Now faith says, I am so weak and helpless, but "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide" me with all the strength that I need, strength made perfect in weakness. "As thy days, so shall thy strength

be." Now does your faith ever work like this? "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide." You feel painfully your lack of wisdom; you need wisdom, but you lack it. But "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide" If He is going to provide all things for His people, He will provide them with wisdom. So you might go on. O but don't we need grace! "He giveth more grace." He has it to give. We need it. We are enriched by receiving it, but He is none the poorer for giving it. Grace to live, grace to die, grace to pardon, to forgive, to cleanse, grace to humble, to subdue sin, grace to bring us safely along, safely through, grace to be with our spirit, grace in all its fulness, grace abounding.

"His grace shall to the end,
Stronger and brighter shine."

And faith does not miss this out. Is His name Jehovah-jireh? And do I feel my need of grace? Do I sometimes feel destitute of it? When the Lord will provide me with all that grace that I need. For, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen"- His faithfulness, His blessed ability to fulfill this promise through His beloved Son. Jehovah-jireh, to supply all that divine help and divine strength and divine wisdom and divine grace that you need.

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh." Now beloved friends, "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide," in New Testament language, in gospel vocabulary, it is this, the very same truth, the identical truth, but in different words: "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by-Christ Jesus." You

can live on a promise like that, die on a promise like that, if the Holy Ghost leads you into it. "My God will supply all your need." "Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide." It is all your need; everything you want, not everything you think you need, but if you really need it; you shall have it. "My God shall supply all your need, providence and grace, great and small, in life, in death, for time and for eternity.

"Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide." "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

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 your needs out of His riches in glory! That is true, but it doesn't say "out of His riches in glory"; it says, "according to. That 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, 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 unwilling, and He

will only do it because He cannot break His promise." 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."

"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."—
JOHN iv. 10.

We cannot know the nature, though we may know the necessity, of the gift of God, till we experience its power as revealed and shed abroad in our soul. When we know some measure of the gift of God when we feel eternal life flowing through our spiritual veins. How do I know I live naturally? Is not my participation of natural life known to me by an internal consciousness that I possess it? I know I live, because I feel that I live. And so, if we have spiritual life, there will be, at times and seasons, an internal consciousness that

we have it; we shall feel the spiritual heart beat, and the spiritual lungs breathe, and the spiritual eyes see, and the spiritual ears hear: in a word, we shall be internally conscious of those emotions and sensations which are peculiar to the life of God in the soul. Spiritual life will be seen in its own light, felt in its own power, and shine forth in its own testimony. The little that we do know (and it is indeed for the most part but a little) makes us long for more of it. If ever we have received "the gift of God" into our conscience; if ever we have felt the mysterious operation of divine life in our hearts; if ever we have known the sweet emotions and peculiar sensations by which it manifests itself, it has killed us to all other religions; and as a measure of divine life has flowed into the heart out of the fulness of the Son of God, we want no other religion but that which stands in the power of God; by that alone we can live, and by that alone we feel that we can die.

J.C. Philpot

MEETINGS

CONTENTNEA PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION


The Lord willing, the next session of the Contentnea Primitive Baptist Association will be held with North East Primitive Baptist Church, Onslow County, N.C. On October 11-12, 1997. All who believe and

love the doctrine of salvation by grace are invited.

To locate the Church, go north on US 17 from Jacksonville to Pumpkin Center and turn right on Piney Green Road (at Moore Buick Dealer) and go approximately 3 miles to the Church on the left.

Gene Lupton
Association Clerk

THE SMITH RIVER ASSOCIATION


he 1997 session of the Smith River Association will convene the Lord willing at Salem Church meeting house. The host Church is County Line Primitive Baptist Church in Floyd County, Va. Preaching service will begin at 11 o'clock A.M. on Friday, Sept. 5, Sat. 6, and Sun. 7.

Salem Church is located in Floyd County, Virginia on Floyd Highway N. (State Route #221) between Check, Va. and Copper Hill, Va.

We invite visitors and correspondents of our faith and order attend this meeting with us.

W.G. Parsons
Association Clerk


THE SOUTH ARKANSAS ORIGINAL OLD SCHOOL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

he South Arkansas Original Old School Primitive Baptist Association will be held with Pilgrim Rest Church off Highway 167 north of Fordcyce, Arkansas. Take 273 about 1/2 mile to the Church. Session be-

gins on the third Sunday in September (September 20-21, 1997, Saturday before). We invite all Elders, Brothers and Sisters of same faith and order to come and be with us at this meeting if the Lord's will.

Asso. Clerk, Frances Townley


SOUTH OUACHITA ASSOCIATION

he South Ouachita Association will be held, the Lord willing, on Saturday and Sunday, September 27 and 28, 1997.

The meeting will be held at Rehobeth Church located at Eldorado, Arkansas - Five miles North on Highway 7, and one-half mile West on Highway 335. All lovers of the truth are invited to come and be with us.

Ned Barron, Association Clerk
(318) 778-4217

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

he next session of the Staunton River Union is to be held. The Lord willing with Malmaison Church, the 5th Sunday and Saturday before in August. A cordial invitation is extended to our ministers, brethren, and friends.

Elder Julian Williams, Mod.
Peggy Wells, Clerk

THE WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

he West Country Line Union will convene with Moons Creek Church the fifth Sunday in Au-

gust. The Church is located off highway #86, between Danville & Yanceyville. From Danville turn left on Park Springs Rd., church is located about 1/4 mile on left. From Yanceyville turn right on to Park Springs Rd. The meeting will begin at 10:00. All lovers of the truth are invited and a special invitation to all ministers of our faith and order.

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Moderator
Deacon Franklin Blalock, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JUNE 1997

Mrs. Julia Garne, NC	2.00
Mrs. Ethel Carter, NC	7.00
Eld. J.Y. McCormick, FL	7.00
Mrs. Jessie W. Ray, NC	2.00
G.R. Slate, VA	2.00
Mrs. Lina B. Willis, NC	2.00
E.B. Hodnett, VA	2.00
Mrs. Carrie Jo Williams, TN	7.00
Miles T. Bird, LA	2.00
Mrs. Mae Williamson, LA	2.00
Walter F. Griffith, NC	2.00
Mrs. Frances Townley, AR	
In memory Eld. John Townley ...	5.00
Mrs. Mary W. Janney, VA	7.00

OBITUARIES

RUTH WALKER BLAIR

Sister Ruth was born on September 18, 1910 in Stuart, Virginia, daughter of the late Abram Linville Walker and Mary Williams

Walker. She passed away on March 14, 1997 in Roman Eagle Memorial Home, Danville, Va. following five years of declining health.

She was first married to Joseph W. Inge and moved to Danville, Virginia. He passed away in 1971, on November 3, 1973 she married Ernest Linwood Blair and moved to Pittsylvania County and made her home there until after the death of Brother Ernest on June 9, 1988 when she returned to Lansbury Drive in Danville, Virginia. She had been a resident of the Nursing Home for eight months.

Sister Ruth joined Dan River Primitive Baptist Church on April 27, 1969. In September 1992 she had a desire to move her membership to Canaan Primitive Baptist Church since her husband, Brother Ernest was a member there and the location being near their home. She was received by letter on September 13, 1992 and came to meetings as long as she was able.

She and Brother Ernest had much love and interest in the welfare of the Church and very supportive in every way.

She is survived by one sister, Mrs. Jessie Gravely of Danville, Virginia and a number of nieces and nephews.

Graveside services were conducted in Highland Burial Park on March 16, 1997 by her pastor, Elder J.R. Williams.

She is greatly missed by family, church and friends. May we all be reconciled to God's will.

Elder J.R. Williams, Moderator
Geneva B. Scarce, Clerk

**OBITUARY OF SISTER
MARGARET LEWIS BRUMFIELD**

With a sad and lonely heart, I will try to write the obituary of our Dear Sister in Christ, Margaret L. Brumfield.

She died on Saturday, May 3, 1997, at Elder Care Nursing Home, Rocky Mount, Virginia. She was a member of Strawberry Primitive Baptist Church for many years.

She was married to Clarence D. Brumfield, who passed away on June 27, 1985.

She was born February 21, 1915 to James Christopher Lewis and Pattie Dillard Lewis, Danville, VA. She leaves one sister, Mrs. Helen Shelton, Danville, VA. One Son, Wayne Brumfield, who lived with her and took care of her until he died October 12, 1995. After her son died, she went to live with friends in Moneta, VA and they took good care of her.

She was a faithful member at her church until she became disabled and has been missed greatly.

She has been blessed with good friends to take care of her, everything was done for her that kind hands could do. She was put in the Hospital and Nursing Home for treatment. The Good Lord knows best, He called her home on Saturday, May 3, 1997.

The funeral was held at 2 PM, Monday, May 5, 1997 at Wrenn-Yeatts Funeral Home Chapel, Danville, VA, by her Pastor Elder Thomas Solomon and assisted by Elder Lane Carter and Elder Raymond Goad, and was buried in Highland Burial Park, Danville, VA

beside her husband, beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the coming of her Blessed Saviour to gather his loved ones home.

May we bow in humble submission to His Holy Will. He never makes a mistake, he giveth and he taketh away, Blessed be his Holy Name.

Written by a Sister in Hope,
Sister Gertie Holley

SISTER FAUSTINE WILLIAMS

Sister Faustine Williams passed from this life on March 19, 1997, at the Pickens County Medical Center in Reform, AL. at the age of 91.

She was a native of Pickens County, Alabama and a faithful member of the Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church in Pickens County. She was preceded in death by her husband, Thomas E. Williams.

Sister Faustine is survived by her daughter Elsie Nell James, Fayette, AL; two sisters Elsie Ruth Spencer, and Dorothy B. Watson, both of Kennedy, AL; one grandson and three great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church on March 20, 1997, with Minister Ralph Smith officiating.

PSALM 29:3.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters.

GLENNA ALTIZER YEATTS

Born on February 21, 1898 to James Meritt and Caroline Cummings Altizer, Glenna was one of eleven children. Her parents were members of the primitive baptist church. Of the eleven children all seven sisters and one brother were at one time members of Valley View Primitive Baptist Church. Joining Valley View with three of her sisters in July, 1931, she was a faithful member who loved to hear the gospel and singing of hymns.

Throughout her life, sister Glenna thought of others in many caring ways. Her humbleness and love were two of her greatest virtues. Many lives were touched by her meekness and genuine love. Never complaining she was content and reconciled to make the best of every situation. For almost ten years she resided at Heritage Hall Nursing Home. While there she appreciated the care given her by all the workers from the custodial staff to the administrator. Each of them were important to her. People that knew her loved her and she was an inspiration to all.

Sister Glenna was thankful for the clear mind she was blessed to possess during her later years even though her body was frail. Many times she wondered why she was living such a long life while all her other brothers and sisters were deceased. She knew when it was time for her to go she would be blessed to do so.

During her last week frail and weak, Sister Glenna was surrounded by fam-

ily and friends. So many times she asked to go to sleep to be with her Lord. On March 11, 1997 she went to sleep and was with us no more.

Surviving are two daughters and sons in law, Doris and Laddie Phillips, Christiansburg; Neoma and Alvis Altizer, Radford; three granddaughters, Sandra Phillips, England, Rhonda Wagonbrenner and Kimberly Altizer, Christiansburg; a granddaughter and her husband, Denise and Reid Lee; a grandson and his wife, Joseph and Mary Ellen Phillips; three great grandsons, Michael Lee Phillips, Matthew Lee, and Russell James Phillips; one great-granddaughter, Melissa Lee.

Funeral services was held at 1 p.m. at DeVilbiss Funeral Chapel in Radford with interment in Westview Cemetery. Sister Glenna will be missed by her pastor, Valley View members, family, and friends who knew and loved her.

Humbly submitted by request of Valley View Primitive Baptist Church With love of a dear sister in Christ and precious aunt,

Naomi W. Agee Assistant Clerk
Elder Raymond Goad, Moderator
Valley View Primitive Baptist Church

ISAIAH 59:21.

As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

Signs of the Times

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SONG

**APPROACH, my soul, the mercy seat,
Where Jesus answers prayer;
There humbly fall before his feet,
For none can perish there.**

**Thy promise is my only plea;
With this I venture nigh:
Thou callest burdened souls to thee,
And such, O Lord, am I.**

**Bowed down beneath a load of sin;
By Satan sorely pressed;
By wars without and fears within,
I come to thee for rest.**

**Be thou my shield and hiding place,
That, sheltered near thy side,
I may my fierce accuser face,
And tell him, Jesus died.**

**O wondrous love I to bleed and die,
To bear the cross and shame,
That guilty sinners, such as I,
Might plead thy gracious name.**

**"Poor, tempest-tossed soul, be still;
My promised grace receive;
'Tis Jesus speaks! I must, I will,
I can, I do believe.**

Newton

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EDITORIAL



ELDER J.R. WILLIAMS

We trust our minds will be guided together in the truth as we ponder the depth of God's dealings with his people in the past

as well as now.

I find no way to understand the written word of God by reading, re-reading, studying night and day or any effort of the creature.

Then we attempt this writing entirely dependant on thoughts coming to mind we don't have at present.

This brings us to better understand the inquiring of John the Baptist in the following; Luke Chap. 7 verses 20-28. About this time it is recorded that Christ was performing so many

miracles, even raising the dead, his followers could not believe who He was, or how he did it. John sent his disciples to ask of Him whom he baptised and heard the voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," asking art thou he that should come? or look we for another. Are we not in somewhat this same state of awe as we see the effects of God's reigning grace on his people. Behold them sometimes spellbound, at the glorious gospel having been given some poor soul, that never was able to make a natural speech, proclaim the unsearchable riches of God's kingdom. John the baptist knew of the promise of one to come, taking the sins of his people on himself, to free themselves of its sentence of death. Yet when we are left to natural reasoning we cannot see Christ the beloved Son of God in His power and love to accomplish all things for His people. In Matthew we read "go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see." We think things which ye do hear and see." We think His people that have seen and heard by the effectual power of the holy spirit must be shown and must hear again and again that He is God and there is none other, that He alone holds the issues of life and death in His own hand, that He himself does kill and make alive. Yes go show John again those things. Yes go tell John again that I'm alive and alive for ever more and because I live ye shall live.

“Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.”

From natural understanding we will not be able to tell how God does any of the things contrary to nature he does, so we believe at that time John was asking he was left in a natural state of mind. He was surely shown at one time, for it reads show John again. Do we, if we could be included, always see the light or travel in the light. As for me it seems, more often in darkness, but to beg to be shown again He is the giver of every good and perfect gift, Himself being that only perfection needed for complete salvation to every heir of promise.

Then our mind is stopped at this little word how, really the key word for understanding as well as performing of the work of God, not works of God.

It is the work of God that ye believe in him, then there is but one conclusion to how, it is by, through, and for His purpose and pleasure that all things exit.

We believe John was again given an answer to his inquiry as his people have been given in every age if even for a minute. How the blind see, how the lame walk, how the lepers are cleansed, how the deaf hear, how the dead are raised, and to the poor the gospel is preached.

If all this isn't by His, effectual working power in His people and after his determined wisdom and power, I have no present knowledge of Him and

need to ask as John did, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another.

Might His power be manifest to such a degree in each of us, we can at times declare, Thou art our God and besides thee there is no other.

In hope of Him
for my life,
Elder J.R. Williams

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Elders; and Editors, of the Signs of the Times:

It is my desire, to express my heart felt thanks to you all, for your laboring so faithful, in your efforts to get our paper out to us all. While at the same time; I deeply desire of a thankful heart, unto my Lord and God; for making it so. For I feel to realize, all is in His hands, and at His disposal. And so it is; we have no thing or nothing; we did not receive. For without Him; we could neither be anything nor do anything. I therefore feel it to be thus with us all; we are all completely self-helpless; and and wholly dependent upon Him; for our all in all of all things, both natural and Spiritual.

May His name be praised both now and forevermore AMEN:

Troy G. Shepard

ARTICLE

I just read an article written by Elder Gilbert Beebe; dated February 1, 1865. Which was his answer to a Brothers request; that has to do with Isaiah 45:7.

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.”

But the brother desired Elder Beebe, to dwell more particularly on the Creation of evil:

In reading what Elder Beebe gave, in answer to the Brother's request; I felt, and still feel; was an inspiration from above all earthly principalities or kingdoms in this world.

Now it is my mind to begin my quotation of that portion; where Elder Beebe dwellest particularly, upon the creation of evil:

Quote: We are aware of the difficulty arising in the minds of God's little ones upon this subject. That God is a being of infinite perfection, spotless purity, who cannot look on sin with approbation, is as he has revealed himself unto them; but how he at the same time can be the Creator of evil is hard for them to conceive. There is a mystery of Godliness and a mystery of iniquity in both of which God will be glorified. We all readily admit that God is the sole creator of all things that exist in heaven, earth and hell. And in his creation he has presented to our

wondering eyes an endless variety. We can hardly conceive of any being or thing now existing that has not its opposite. The serpent and the dove, angels of light and angels of the bottomless pit, light and darkness, heat and cold, good and evil: and is there anything existing that God has not made? He has created all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil. In all the creation God has made nothing that can bear a comparison with himself. His creatures are not gods. None of them possess as creatures his peculiar attributes or perfections. Yet all things are and were created for his pleasure, and he is above them all, and will bend them all to his government. In the sublime language of Job, “He stretcheth out the north over empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens, his hand hath formed the crooked serpent. Lo these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him? But the thunder of his power who can understand (Job 26: 7, 10, 11, 13, 14).”

But the term evil as used in our text we understand to mean judgments, calamities, afflictions and chastisements which are sent upon the children of men. They come not up out of the ground, nor do they fall upon us by chance. God's careful providence watches over us, and no evil can come nigh our dwelling except meted out in weight and measure, time, duration

and result, by the unerring wisdom and power of God himself. As it is written, "Is there evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Job said, "Shall we receive good from the Lord, and not evil?" That is, shall we receive prosperity, and not adversity, pleasure and not pain, joy and not sorrow? Wars, famine, and pestilence are evils, which come and go at God's command. And persecution and oppression are under his control. Men are used by him as his sword and his hand, devils and wicked men are restrained or suffered to vent their malice, as God ordains. And under this conviction we are instructed to pray God to, "Lead us not into temptation, but to deliver us from evil," And to shield us in the day of evil. As in our text light is contrasted with darkness, so is evil contrasted with peace. "I make peace and create evil." By withholding peace and bringing evil upon them, that is. The Israelites received evil at the hand of the Lord for their rebellion and idolatry when he sent fiery serpents into their camps, and when he caused their enemies to triumph over them. And so in his dealings with his children, sometimes he sends on them fiery trials, deep afflictions, sore temptations which disturb their peace, and bring labor, sorrow and grief upon them for the trial of their faith, and as chastisement for their faults.

"I the Lord do all these things." This is consoling to the afflicted saints who have confidence in God. They know what he appoints for them is best, though it may call them to pass

through flames or floods, for they know that all things work together for good to them, and they are led to say, "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good;" for so said Eli, when the Lord brought evil on him and upon his sons. (End of quote):

His purpose in this, and all things; shall be fulfilled to its every jot and tittle; of that, I have no doubt.

Troy G. Shepard

VOICES OF THE PAST

ECCLESIASTES 9: 13-15

"This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me; there was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it; now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor wise man."



As our minds are illuminated by the Holy Spirit we will see many wonderful mysteries about this city. The text teaches things that the wisdom of the earth is not able to understand, much less is it able to love them. Anywhere that we turn in the Bible we will find the truth of our brother Paul's writing to the church at Corinth. "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 subject matter seemed great unto Solomon, and it will seem that way to all those that are led into the truth. Imparting this knowledge to the men and women that are natural, is something that we can not do. In the first place, what could we say about this city that would make it attractive to a man in nature? It is too small, its defense is too small, and its deliverer is too infinitesimal to draw the attention of strong men. If we were looking for a place of safety would we seek a little city? If we desired a place for assurance and calmness of thought, would we enter a city that had but few men in it? If we desired to have a future of security, would we be willing to inhabit a city that did not have any deliverer save a poor wise man? If we remember well, we know that at one time in our life that we would not have been caught in a city like unto this.

The strangest things take place with men. I did for a long time seek and inhabit a city that was large, whose defenses were strong and able to all those in it, to deliver the city from all comers, to keep her borders inviolate from all that would scale the wall of protection. How foolish it would have been for anyone to talk to me that God favored a city like unto this little city. It would have been foolish in anyone to talk to me about it, for they would have been talking to a fool. While I am often besieged by suggestions by the wily one that I do not have a good hope, yet I do not feel that talk had one

thing to do with my being blessed to see the Old Baptist Church. It had been weeks since I had heard the name of our Creator used, except to swear by; it had been ever so long since anybody had said anything to me about religion of any kind. And yet the first week in this month (December) was forty years ago, I am sure that I saw something that I had never seen before. The city that had been so well fortified fell to the power of the poor wise man. None was any more active than I in trying to prevent this great fall. I daubed mortar; I carried huge timbers (that I had helped to get ready) and put them in strategic spots; I gave much advice; I summoned up all of the old tricks of trade in order to outwit this poor man that I did not intend to have rule over me. (Luke 19 :14) The city fell, and I fell with it.

What a glorious day it was when the children of God fled for refuge to the city of God. We had barely escaped in the falling of the walls of that old Jerusalem. To begin with our every hope died as those walls went down. We had been sheltered by them all of our life. This had been the only city that we had known, and as we fled it terrorized our soul to see the only home we had known fall down by the onslaughts of another. This left us homeless as well as helpless. I hope that my little message will reach you and you in retrospection; that you will be given to live once again that time when you had no place to turn to, when you were a homeless vagabond in the earth. How strange it all was, for we did not know who had destroyed

our once flourishing city. We realized His power, but not His mercy; we realized His destruction, but not His salvation.

Do you know what it is to be homeless? Do you know what it is to be run out of the only home and city that you have ever known? Another thing: Do you remember that there was a woe pronounced on those that were with young when that city fell? How did you make out? There has never been a calamity like unto her that is with young when the cry comes to leave the falling city. You had not long had a hope--in fact it was a young hope indeed, and yet you had to leave. Do you remember how it was with you? Did you wonder what would become of you? Did you think about your little hope, and that perhaps you had been mistaken about having one? As yet you know, you had not much to go on. You had met the law giver, but you did not know the law keeper. You had life all right, because it had sent you to Jerusalem (old), and you had tried to comply with every rule of the city, but it was not enough.

What were your expectations? Let us look back down the road. Didn't we expect destruction? Our city had fallen. We could not deliver it. God, the law giver, had waged a war that had ended in triumph and glory unto himself, but it had scattered the whole of the inhabitants of the city. This fleeing for refuge intrigues me. A refugee does not have time to get his household goods; he does not have anything to convey them to another location. He barely escapes with his

life, and he despairs of retaining it. How anxiously he casts his eyes at the conflagration that he has just left, as he sees his city and his home and his possessions go up in ashes. It would seem that the tongues of the flames are lapping at his heels, and there is more hurrying although this poor tried soul is so weary. Surely there is not any hope for such a one.

And there is not any hope for mercy from God the law giver. There is not any hope or expectation that this poor harassed sinner that could not stem the tide of God's vengeance against the city, could turn and recover his former standing and build again the vanquished city. What desolation is his or hers. But hark, my soul, did I hear a voice? Bend down little children that you might hear it as it floats over the way. This voice does not come from your rear. You heard a voice back there, and it sickened your soul as it thundered, "The soul that sinneth shall die." There is not any help at Sinai; there is not any likelihood of the law giver relenting. But that voice, how soothing it sounds! Listen tired and weary sinner. Yes, even now I hear the words come so lowly, O and yet so clearly and so comforting. *"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

But perhaps you think that I am his dealing with the work of the poor wise man. Perhaps you think that I am not writing along the line of election and predestination. That is what I am doing. God's everlasting covenant is a wonderful topic, and far be it from me

to minimize the work of the Father in choosing his family. The work of Jesus; Christ, as the poor wise man, is of paramount importance to the welfare of God's people. It is as important as the choice of the Father. Much has been said (much of it unwisely from every quarter) about time salvation. What would you know if it had not been revealed to you in time? If there is one person, from whatever corner of the globe they come, that will take the position that they have contributed anything to having a knowledge of God's choice and of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, then I want it plainly understood that my text is not for them. The text that I am treating on has previously laid down certain characters that did not do anything towards contributing to their welfare. They did not win the race, nor the battle, nor get their bread, nor come into riches, nor get their favors,-- by what they could do. This certainly is treating of a class of people that are saved in time by the poor wise man. It is this saving, it is this experience that I desire to treat on. May I ask you again this important question, If the light had not shined around Saul and the voice from heaven had not spoken to him, do you have any evidence that he would have ever gone to Ananias? Please give chapter and verse.

If a like spiritual work had not been done for you and this sinner, what would our occupation be at this time? Would we be living in the old Jerusalem or in the new? Would we be in the city that the law giver would be bringing to destruction despite all our efforts, or would we be in the little city that the poor wise man would be delivering by his wisdom? Many are not too well acquainted with the doctrinal phase of this deliverance

(including the writer), but many (including the writer) feel to have a good hope through grace that we have been in both cities; that we had to flee from the one in order to escape destruction; that we were found helpless and lost and hungry and thirsty by the Lord; that we were led forth by the right way to a city of habitation, even a city few in number (manifestly), and that he showed us His prevailing arm of deliverance.

If I have ever known God, I found him as a strict God of justice. In his vindictive wrath against my law erected, law defended city, I found no mercy, no love, no hope. I stared death in the face without a voice of compassion, without a word of comfort, without a thought but that everlasting destruction was for the city and all of its inhabitants. I did not leave that falling city looking for Jesus, for I did not know Jesus. I left it with the full expectation of being apprehended by Him whose laws I had broken, and that at that apprehension death would be my lot. In this law city I fell among thieves, and they beat me and robbed me, and left me lying by the roadside helpless. Who found me? Draw near dear child of God, and let us reason together. Remember, if we can not reason together here, the time will shortly come when we shall come into the presence of God, with whom there is no slackening his justice in order to give mercy, with whom we can not reason. May our question resound into all the earth (that is, into all quickened earthen vessels), and may the reverberations thereof shake every idolatrous position we have taken to ourselves, may it cause us to take stock of what we are teaching as the doctrine of God our Saviour.

Now back to the question: Who found us? What did we do to call him to our side? On these questions hang the history of the church. The answer to these questions shows whether we are in the defended city or not. If we did anything to call him to us, then salvation is not of the Lord. If anyone helped him with the carrying of us to the inn (city), then salvation is not of the Lord. If any administrators or auxiliaries or other standby helps were involved in his care of us, then salvation is not altogether of the Lord, and the praise therefor is to be rendered according to the part played in salvation. If any of the brethren or friends paid any part of the two pence given for our keep, then the poor wise man did not pay the cost of redemption in full. If we must earn our keep while He is away, then salvation is not of the Lord; and since honest men do not collect the same debt twice, I feel sure that God will not do so either; and if we earned it while he was away and then he came back and paid everything there certainly would be dishonesty in the defense and deliverance of the city.

I believe in religious freedom, and if it suits men to preach any other name than Jesus as the deliverer of the city, I am satisfied for them to do it. If it seems evil to preach Jesus, then any set of gods many or lords many will do; but what seems evil to men will be the meat and drink of Joshua's house.

When the Lord Jesus Christ found us and carried us to the inn (the city, the church) we were as free in spirit as we will ever be here. Did you hate anybody? Would you have hurt the feelings of the least of your brethren? Would you have made anybody an offender be-

cause of a word or the interpretation of it? Dear reader, pause for one moment with me. Did you see anything wrong with the city? Did you see anything wrong with the inhabitants of it? What was your attitude about sin? Did you think that you would be free of sin and trouble and sorrow? Answer me, reader, isn't it true that you were sailing on the balmy clouds of keen anticipation of a life among the saints unalloyed by the base things of time and nature? Not a sign of a great king coming, not a sign of an enemy, not a thing to be defended from. This period might be compared to the beauty of the Mount of Transfiguration. The Lord Jesus had led you up; he made known to you the beauties of that sacred mountain, but at the end of his revelation he led you down. Words become useless fancies to describe the feelings of a child of God when it is made apparent to him that he is still in the world of sin and sorrow, and that it lurks in every member.

What had been so wonderful to him now becomes a sorrowful hallucination. It looks like that this city is to fall; it looks like that their hope of a rest was being followed by the most harrowing experience at all. But the soul searching inquiries are followed by being told again that Jesus is now enthroned to defend the city, to give the inhabitants the victory in winning the race; to wage and win their battle against sin and the world and the devil; to give the simple bread, to give the riches of his grace to men whose understanding had been null and void; to give favors and benefits and blessings to those who did not have any skill in their hands. (Psalms 78:72)

Elder W.D. Griffin

HEARING PAUL DECLARE THE UNKNOWN GOD

Sometime ago, while in the pulpit with the Bible opened to the 17th chapter of Acts, I began to read at the 16th verse. When I had read through the 26th verse I was carried by the Spirit to Mars Hill in Athens, Greece; and became a live listener as Paul preached this mighty sermon on the text, THE UNKNOWN GOD. I was one who had helped erect the inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. I had to stop reading as I began to experience extraordinary visions and wonderful meditations relative to the actual setting and circumstance of this memorable occasion. I was so astonished at the sight of Athens, Mars Hill, and the many altars and inscriptions and gods made of stone and wood; and the people who worshiped them; that I have done research since then to see if it was a true picture. G. Frederick Owens says, "Athens, one of the greatest cultural centers of Paul's day, grew up around a 520-foot-high rocky plateau called "the Acropolis". Here, on this elevated area, stood the many-columned Parthenon, far famed architectural wonder, *and so many other sacred edifices that the place was called, "the many templed Acropolis"*. May God grant that you relive with me as I relate this.

I came to Athens because I had learned that the most wise of the earth were there. I had such a craving for

wisdom because of my convictions that I was so ignorant and unlearned. I had itching ears to hear something that would satisfy my hunger for wisdom. I had a worshipful heart and a strange feeling that I must come to Athens in order to hear these great wise men talk of wisdom. I had a feeling that I would find unity there and that the wise men would all be agreed. I was disappointed upon my arrival when I found wise men in the Market Place disagreeing and quarreling. I learned that the wise men spoke constantly on Mars Hill. I attended the lectures and found that they disagreed. I began to venture out and behold the many altars and the constant flow of people. Some went to one altar; others went to another; while others formed in companies to go to the various images. I followed one company to an altar and while the people were bowing before this image I read a long inscription about this god. They knew so much about their god; yet the inscription meant nothing to me. It was empty and meaningless. I thought of how foolish it was to fall down and worship something that couldn't see, feel, or even stretch forth his hands. I exclaimed in anguish, "Do all of you worship in reality this graven image whom you have to move and carry about?" Some raved against me, but a few walked to my side and one of them inquired, "Tell us about your god?" I answered, "I know nothing about a god, however, I feel there is but One--Who has more power than this god whom you worship." We

agreed to investigate all of the other shrines and altars. We read each and every inscription printed on the banners at the many edifices and a few from each company joined us as we proceeded from one place to another.

After investigating all these long inscriptions of the many gods we concluded that we had not found any that suited the feelings and convictions of any of us. What could we do? We were all anxious to worship together THE GOD whom we could not define. We talked freely one with another and found a relationship with each other that we could not explain. We reasoned that there were so many altars that surely we could erect one and worship together. We found that we could not match the long inscriptions found on the other altars. We all confessed to one another that we wanted to worship the God whom we knew nothing about. We thought we must put up an inscription as all of the others had. They wrote long inscriptions about their gods but we could write nothing because we all confessed our ignorance of Him. Finally we agreed on a short inscription of four little words: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. We did not know how to worship Him but we tried. How we wanted and wished that we could know more of Him.

One day a lone stranger passed our way and he paused long as he read the inscription. While he was standing there some men came hurriedly up and yanked him by the arm and said to him, "We are taking you before Areopagus that we may know what this new

doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is." Something drew us to follow him as there was something magnetic in the expressions of his eyes and manner. It had such a drawing effect upon us that we began to wonder, IS HE A GOD? We kept as close to him as possible as arrangements were made for him to speak, and our company was clustered together as Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and began to speak. Other companies were there too in that throng of people. His words rang loud and clear in powerful tones as he began, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with the inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." I thought of all the inscriptions that he read he called attention only to ours. It seemed he was speaking only to us. Is he ridiculing us for being wholly given to idolatry? was the question that came to my mind as he paused in this sermon. As I was thinking, Are we worse than they?, I really heard his words, "Whom ye ignorantly worship." As he spoke, "Him declare I unto you", I thought He is making known to us the God that we do not know. Our God sent him to us.

I reasoned further that this man is taking special notice of us who confess our ignorance. We know that we are ignorant of Him and that we do not know how to properly worship Him. This man is recognizing us as the ones who truly worship Him even though it is an ignorant worship. This

God Whom Paul preached had properly tuned our ears to hear and our hearts to understand and our minds to receive as Paul thundered, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands". Again the speaker paused as my thoughts raced on. I thought, there is not a plurality of Gods each one having his own little dominion -- JUST ONE! He is THE GOD! What a Being! One Supreme God! He is sovereignly ruling *NOW* in both heaven and earth. All things are under His almighty supervision to such extent that He is Lord of all creatures. All things are held in the hollow of His hand instead of Him dwelling in temples made with men's hands. I heard Paul's voice become clearer as he continued, "Neither is worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to *ALL* life, and breath, and all things."

As Paul paused I experienced a multitude of comforting thoughts. Our God owns all things, controls all things, and works all things and does not need our power to assist Him. He does not need our wealth to make Him richer. He does not need our wisdom to inform Him, neither our political ability to advance His cause. I began to fear and tremble as I was swallowed up in thoughts of God's majesty and greatness. I felt His great hand swallow me and all the earth and fullness into its hollow with room to spare. I thought I had felt little but I had never felt so insignificant as this. Paul con-

tinued: "*And 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.*" No nation could boast of being better than other nations because God made them all of *ONE* blood. The same blood that coursed through the arteries, heart, veins, and capillaries of Adam and Eve had come in a continual flow through the generations to follow uninterrupted to the present time. Even though seas of blood have been shed, this blood has been made to grow in volume until now. No person can estimate its volume now.

No one could say so much in so few words unless he had been sent of God: a time to be born, die, plant, harvest, mourn, dance, laugh, cry;-- all times of persons, nations, days, nights, and events were before determined. Not only *when* but *where* of all events were before appointed and determined by THE GOD of the Heaven and of the earth. The time and the prescribed place of all beings from the smallest insect to the greatest creature that ever existed, or will exist, were all before appointed and determined by Him. If all the plants were pens; if all the seas were ink; if all outer space were paper; and every creature were a ready writer, I venture to say, that God's sovereignty could never be fully told in this short duration of thousands of years of time . . . The subject becomes so great in its magnitude that I am lost in amaze-

ment and awe; while a multitude of thoughts flood my mind.

The question of WHY takes hold upon me as I hear Paul continue, "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, AND FIND HIM, though He be not far from EVERY one of US." *Seeking* the Lord, *feeling* after Him, and *finding* Him: all this is the constant labor and glorious victory of every one whom God has touched with His eternal Spirit. Every one who knows his own weakness and dependence seeks the Lord, for they have found through sad experience that the wisdom of the world, the might of men, and the riches of the earth can never progress us one inch toward God nor satisfy our fainting souls. I must seek His guidance in prayer without ceasing. I must *feel* after Him if I am so fortunate to be an object of His care and providence. *He cares for me, is the sweetest feeling a poor worm of the dust ever felt. He provides for me, is a sublime feeling for poor beggars to feel. He holds me in the hollow of His hand, is the most protective feeling experienced when confronted with the powers that be, who would take us and kill us if they could. Finding that He helps us, undertakes for us, and fights our battles in our stead, all this gives ease of mind, comforts the heart, and restores the soul. A question enters my mind which startles me: Where can I go to find Him? Who can I send into the heavens or across the sea?*

Paul continues, "*For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own*

poets have said, For we are also His offspring." It is because of Him that we live. Any time He should withdraw Himself from us we would die naturally. Even the natural life within us is GOD. It is through Him that we move a finger, foot, tongue, or eye. We could not naturally see without Him. We can not write, think, nor speak without Him. We cannot retain things in our memory without Him. We owe Him our lives for creating us and numbering our days, as well as providing all things necessary for our natural existence. He owns us. We can never repay Him with praise for what He is to us as natural human beings. *If He be in us ALL, as surely He is, then, to partially understand ourselves is a lesson toward understanding God. I cannot analyze my mind, neither can I understand my thoughts. Even the study of my own physical anatomy becomes so complex, or complicated, that I cannot understand the workings of my natural body. What makes my heart beat? What induces the thoughts that enter my mind? How is the food digested that I put into my mouth? How are these digestive juices distributed to the various parts of the body? Surely I am a complicated mechanism that only God can run! Paul interrupts my thoughts again as he says: "Forasmuch then we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."* Such foolishness, I reasoned, that man who is so wonderfully made should want to worship something far less

than he himself is. What folly to try to help God when man can't, without God, help himself ?

thought, vain is the help of man. I vowed, Never again will I worship a creature but the ONE Who created all things.

Paul had stood so dignified and spoke with such power and authority until now that I was startled at the emotions that softened the tone of his voice as he made a step forward with a gesture of his hands and proclaimed; "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; BUT NOW COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT". I thought, Paul is not commanding us to repent; he is telling us that *GOD* commands it. The fullness of the time of this ignorance had really come to its end. The time of this ignorance God winked at. This time of ignorance was included in the time before appointed. Of course He winked at it because it needs be that we go through this time of ignorance in order to teach us that we cannot be wise of our own volition; but that *ALL* wisdom comes down as a free gift from Him who made us. His command to repent from this ignorant worship is certainly effectual and will cause the least to turn from their own ignorant ways of worship and to praise Him rightly. This command which is *NOW* being proclaimed exercises the minds, hearts, and souls of each and every one of His people in every nation, kindred, and tongue under Heaven. I heard Paul proclaim it. I felt the power of it in my soul. I prayed, "*Turn me, Lord, and I shall be turned.*" He

Paul gave the proper gesture that he had finished speaking and paused for a moment before leaving the rostrum. As he paused I thought, I want to know more about that *man whom God hath Ordained*; I want to know more about that *Appointed Day* in which He would judge the world in righteousness; and, I want to know more of this *Assurance given unto all men*. In short, I want to read over and over again this mighty heart-stirring sermon on the *GREATNESS OF GOD*.

By this time Paul was leaving the rostrum, and all of our company as well as some from other companies met together at the exit that we might be closer to the man, and say a word to him. I heard some say, "We will hear thee again on this matter." Some from out in the audience mocked him. I was one of those who clave to him. I said to Paul, I want a copy of this. He answered, "There is a man with me who wrote my sermon out word by word while I was speaking. I not only paused in order that the words have time to grow in your own minds, but another purpose was that the one who is preparing a treatise for Theophilus could have time to write every word of it. You shall have a copy to read over and over again." I thanked God for having led me to this place to hear this mighty sermon. I am awakening from my trance and have a few observations to make before closing this article. I have read all of the sermons and letters delivered and written by Paul as published in the New Testament; but none holds me more spellbound than the one delivered on

Mars Hill in Athens, Greece. If I ever become doubtful of God's sovereignty God's sovereignty and almighty ruling and working of all things I turn to that sermon again to remove the doubts. When I question His right and authority to take vengeance and render severe judgments; I read again this sermon.

Paul reached the climax of this sermon in his last words, "Whereof He hath given assurance unto all men that HE HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD." Paul had disputed daily in the Market Place and had "Preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection". Dionysius, the Areopagite -- a very wise man of literature was one who clave to Paul after hearing this sermon.

It would be a good idea when confronted with those who affirm the might of man and deny the sovereignty of God in all things, to just quote to them the full text of Paul on Mars Hill. If this will not shut the mouth of those who argue that God needs our help--nothing can be said that will close their mouths from speaking blasphemy. Dear reader: will you please turn again to the 17th chapter of ACTS and begin reading the 22nd verse, slowly read through the 31st verse as the conclusion of this article. Thanks.

Elder E. J. Lambert

ROMANS 8:5.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."

"Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."— LAMENTATIONS v. 21.



ARE you not often destitute of the power to repent, and confess your sins before God? Does not conscience often bring to view a melancholy retrospect of carnal thoughts, wicked desires, vain imaginations, foolish Lords, frivolous speeches, and all that catalogue of evils, that huge bill which godly fear sometimes files in the court within, as seen in all our departures from the life of God? But are you able to repent? are you able to feel cut to the very heart? are you able to mourn and sigh because conscience brings against you this long indictment? Can you always feel your soul melted down with sorrow on account of it? Are you always able to feel contrition because you are proud, worldly, covetous, everything that is evil, everything that is hateful in God's sight? But, then, there are times and seasons when the Lord is pleased to work upon the conscience, to move and stir the soul, to touch the heart with his gracious finger-- then repentance and godly sorrow flow forth. It is with us as with the rock that Moses struck. There was water in the rock; but it required to be struck with the rod before the waters flowed out. So we may have the grace of repentance in our souls; but it requires the divine hand to strike the rock, to cause the waters of godly sorrow to gush forth.

J.C. Philpot

WITHIN WERE FEARS

Fragments of Two Sermons

Preached on October 14th, 1888

"Within were fears." (2 corinthians 7:5)

I daresay some of you were able to sing the second hymn; and some of you were afraid to sing it, you had your fears about singing it, now had you not? "Within were fears." Before these words we read, "Without were fightings." In this particular case there were great oppositions without, and they caused fears within; and afterwards when Paul was comforted by the coming of Titus, his fears were sweetly removed.

The same person who says these words also says, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Then you may say, "If all things are working together for good, why did he fear?" Some people's faith begets fears. I would rather have some people's fears than some people's confidence. I know that when faith is perfect in me I shall have no fears, but then faith is not perfect in me, and I am the subject of fears. Some people are tried by the words in Revelation about the fearful; that among the characters mentioned as "without the city" are "the fearful"; but that means those who are ashamed to own Christ, not those who are the subjects of these fears

As the Spirit is pleased to enable me, I intend to speak of:

I. The ROOT of the fears of God's people.

II. SOME FEARS.

III. The ADVANTAGE of these fears.

IV. The REMEDY for these fears; for the sweetness of the Gospel is this, that there is a balm in this Gilead for every sickness.

I. What is the ROOT of these fears? Some will say, "The flesh." I do not say that is altogether wrong, but I do not think it is the correct answer, though there is something of the flesh about these fears. There are some people all flesh, there is plenty of flesh about them. Where are their fears? They have no fears; so the root of fears is not ultimately flesh. But what is the root? Some will say, "Unbelief." I do not deny this either, and, of course, if there was no unbelief, there would be no fears; still they do not come ultimately from unbelief. Many people have no faith, they are all unbelief. Where are their fears? The lamentable point about them is that they are so fearless. But what is the root of fears? I should say, "Faith." Though there is some flesh and some unbelief about these fears, I think faith is the root of them. The mistletoe grows on the oak; we know it is not part of the oak, it is a parasite; but if the oak were not there we know that the mistletoe would not be there. So, if God's people had no faith, they would have no fears.

I have made an assertion and I want to prove it. Preachers ought to be careful what they assert. Some ministers get up in the pulpit and say, "You have it from me, just as it is;" and it is just as it is, it is not all full weight. Do you think when the Prime Minister makes a speech in Parliament that he

has not considered what he is going to say before? He would not be listened to much if had not; if he said, "Oh, you have it just as it is." I do not think he would be Prime Minister long. No, these statesmen think about their speeches more than we give them credit for. And a minister should have closet work before preaching; there should be prayer and some study.

II. But I want to prove what I have said by showing that FEARS spring from faith. God's people are called "believers" because they believe the Word of God, and if they are believers they cannot become unbelievers; they may feel atheism, but they cannot be overcome by it. God's people believe the Bible, they receive it as the inspired Word of God. It is not mere assent to it, but the Spirit gives Divine light in their understanding:

*"The Spirit breathes upon the Word,
And brings the truth to sight;
Precepts and promises afford
A sanctifying light."*

They are sometimes afraid to read it; I am. I go into my study and I do not read the Bible; why? Because I feel that by coming into contact with the Word of God I shall defile it. I do not say it is right to indulge these kinds of feelings. But if I do not read the Bible for a little while, I soon have to be at it again. I sometimes am even afraid to think about God; I feel so much defilement. And they believe in God, they believe in His infinite Majesty, His infinite holiness, His boundless love, His boundless power, and His boundless wisdom. They believe in the God

of the Bible, and do not they have some fears about it?

And they believe in the law of God; they believe it to be "holy and just and good," and that if they commit one sin, they are under the curse of the law, and this causes fears. Those who are really under the curse have no fears, they do not think of the law; when they get up in the morning, or when they go to bed at night, or in the night, they are easy. And God's people believe in the Gospel, they see the blessedness of the Gospel, and they have fears as to whether they are interested in it.

They believe in the doctrine of Election, they read the words in Romans: "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded" i.e., hardened, left to the hardness of their own hearts. God is not the author of sin, but He may be the permitter of it. Do you not think God's people have fears as to whether they are the elect? If they did not believe in election they would not have fears. And they believe in God's having a peculiar people, and this tries them, particularly when they remember that those people are zealous of good works; they fear whether they are one of them.

God's people believe in the Everlasting Covenant; they believe God made a covenant before the world began, in which everything and every providence connected with His people is written, and all their names are in the Book of Life; and do you not think they have fears as to whether they are written in this living roll of living names?

God's people believe in Particular Redemption; they believe that Christ has redeemed His people, and not all the world; that He died for some and not others. I do not say people always believe all these things at once; they may kick against some, but they are brought to believe them in time.

I had not the advantages that you have. I was brought up in the Established Church, and was taught to believe in Universal Redemption. When God began to teach me I thought that redemption was universal, that Christ died for everyone, but that I must be regenerated and renewed before I could feel the effects of it. But it was a muddle; I had not the advantages of hearing the truth that you young people have, and I would just say, It is a very serious thing after you have heard what is good, to go to hear errors. I give you this friendly counsel, and I hope you will take it; you know I am your friend. With me, I was brought up in the Established Church to hear the bad, and afterwards brought to something better; and I must say I should be very sorry to go back to the bad again.

If God's people believe in Particular Redemption, do you not think they have some fears about whether Christ died for them? Do you think they always feel that they were on the heart of Christ when He died between two thieves on the cross of Calvary? It is a very great thing to be able to say, "Christ expired for me." They have many fears about it. Some people have no fears, they think Christ died for everyone; and so, of course, He died

for them, and they can say quite flip-pantly, "Christ died for me." If God's people had not faith to believe in Particular Redemption, would they have any fears about it? Some are glad to be able to say:

*"As Jesus died to save the lost,
Perhaps He died for me."*

It was a help to me the other day; it is not full assurance, but there is some faith about this "perhaps." Sometimes they can go a little further and say, "I hope He died for me."

And these people who believe read in the Bible, in Revelation, that no unrighteous person can enter heaven, no wicked person can enter those gates of pearl into heaven, where God is the Light; there would be no room for a wicked person to hide himself there. They have fears as to whether they have a righteousness. Isaiah said he was clothed with this robe of righteousness from head to foot. They read, "Who shall ascend up into Thy holy hill?" But then they go on to read of a righteousness that is provided; and God's people know there must be fruit. When the fig-tree was cursed it had plenty of leaves -- plenty of untimely leaves, but no fruit; it would not have been so bad if it had been barren altogether, but having so many leaves one would naturally expect fruit. And these people have their fears about these things.

They believe also in the New Birth, that God's people are all born again from above; and they have fears as to whether they are born again; if they did not believe in the New Birth, would they have fears about it?

They believe God is the Hearer and Answerer of His people's prayers, and when He does not seem to answer theirs, are not they tried about it? Christ pronounces a blessing on these poor fearing people. He says, "*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.*" Do you not think that when a poor hungry man knocks at a rich man's door, he has fears as to whether he will get anything? And do you not think when a thirsty man is traveling through a desert he has fears whether he will ever reach a spring of water? And so it is spiritually. Have I not proved what I said, that fears have their root in faith? It is not mere natural assent, but believing in "demonstration of the Spirit, and with power."

Other people have a sort of belief, and their affections may be moved. Esau wept on his brother's neck. Saul wept, though he had murderous thoughts in his heart, yet he wept; soft-hearted creature!

Further, the will may be affected. The Israelites said, "All Thy commandments will we do;" and they did nothing. So people may be under certain influences.

I hope I have proved to some of you poor fearing ones this morning that you have in your hearts some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel.

Evening Sermon

"Within were fears." (2 Corinthians 7:5)

We must remember these were the words of an apostle. Paul says, "Without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;" and he was delivered from his fears.

We noticed this morning that the root of these fears is not in the flesh, nor in unbelief, but ultimately in faith, and we tried to prove it. When a minister makes a statement, he ought to be able to prove it. I do hope I proved my point; still, I do not want you to believe a thing because I say it, but I want you to listen to what I say, and then weigh it in the scales of the sanctuary, and to throw away what is not according to God's testimony; but if anything is full weight, beware how you reject it.

We noticed a few things that God's people believe and have fears about, among them: they believe in the Bible, the law of God, and in the doctrine of election.

But we will notice a few more things which God's people believe and have fears about. They believe that the real children of God have faith -- that they believe "in demonstration of the Spirit, and the power," and that "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." They see that all their church and chapel-going and reading the Scriptures (and God's people are great Scripture readers) are not acceptable to God without faith, and they fear that theirs is not the right kind of faith.

They believe God's people have a hope. The hope of the hypocrite shall perish, but we do not want a perishing hope. Bunyan tells us that one Ignorance passed the river with Vain Hope, and when he got to the other side Vain Hope left him, and he found there was a way to hell past the gates of heaven. And the children of God are sometimes afraid that theirs is not the right sort of hope.

Then they know that God's people have love. "Now abideth faith, hope, and love." They love God, and they love Jesus Christ, and they love their brother. If a man says he loves God and does not love his brother, the Scripture says he is quite a liar. And do you not think these poor people have their fears, when they feel anger and resentment and even malice against a brother? Now you will say, "Do not be hitting at us again." I am not hitting at you. If the poor minister makes a cap, as innocently as a hat-maker does, without knowing whom it will fit, someone perhaps puts it on, and then says, "The minister is so personal!" I recollect a case of it. I was once preaching at a place, and a woman who heard me afterwards wrote me a little note and asked if I would call and see her. I always like to go and see anyone if it is in the way, and I can, when I am asked, and so I went. When I got there, the woman said: "Minister, you ought to have called and told me of my fault privately, and not have spoken of it in the pulpit before everyone." And I did not know anything about her fault till she told me! Is not human nature a strange

thing? I must say I like personal preaching. I heard a sermon a little while ago, and the only part that did me any good was the part that was personal; that came home to me.

They believe God's people have broken hearts, and fear if their hearts are really broken. Do you not when you feel so much unbrokenness even about your brokenness? They say with the poet:

**"And if it is not broken, break;
And heal it if it be."**

I daresay there are many of you here who are never troubled about whether you have a broken heart; you go on easily all day, and have no fears about it.

They believe God's people have a contrite spirit, and that is a near neighbour to a broken heart. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise;" and they fear if they really have a contrite heart.

**"And tell me, gracious God, is mine
A contrite heart or no?"**

Then these people believe that God's people are an obedient people; obedience is wrought in their heart, obedience to the Word of God. They read such a precept as this: "Be not conformed to this world." We are not to be conformed to the world in our business, and they have fears about it. And they believe God's people have the fear of the Lord, such as Hart describes in his hymn -- a fear "to warm as well as light"; and they have fears as to whether they possess this fear of the Lord.

They believe God's people are poor and needy, and fear as to whether they are really poor and needy. They believe in the powers of darkness; they firmly believe that there are principalities and powers with which to wrestle; and do not they fear they will be overcome by them?

Also they have fears of death, if they had not faith, they would not have such fears of death. Other people do not have such fears about death; they may be afraid of the pains of death, but what of that! we may be cut down suddenly. If people believe that they will die and be buried like a dog, and that will be the end of them, what need have they to fear death? But God's people look beyond, they look into a boundless eternity.

III. We have spoken of some of the fears of God's people, and we will notice thirdly some of THE ADVANTAGES arising from these fears. We may have fears about election, but God says, "Be diligent to make your calling and election sure;" so these fears may lead to diligence. God's people have fears about particular redemption, and this leads to waiting upon the Lord about it, and to prayerfulness.

Fears may act as ballast, mind, I do not say the ballast is the ship, but the ship would go over without the ballast. I know my ship would; it has gone over sometimes, and it would have quite foundered, if God in His mercy had not picked it up again, and then supplied me with a goodly number of fears as ballast. Some people say that if a person cannot say, "Christ ex-

pired for me," we ought not to admit him into the church; I do not see that in the Bible.

IV. We will notice a few of the BEST REMEDIES for fears. Faith is a good remedy. The disciples said, "Lord, increase our faith." If you have much faith, it will swallow up your fears. Although I have said that fears are the offspring of faith, yet if we have much faith it will swallow up our fears -- swallow up its own children, as it were.

Walking closer with God is a good remedy. The poet says,

"O for a closer walk with God!"

Why? Because it leads to

"A calm and heavenly frame."

Communion with God is a great remedy. If God shines into your soul you cannot fear. I tell you these things that you may be led to seek them in prayer.

G. Hazlerigg

Sent in by: W.R. Pullig
10220 Ridgely Drive
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COLOSSIANS 3:1-4.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

MEETINGS

**GOOSE CREEK ISLAND
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH**


On Saturday, 28 June 1997, at the request of the Goose Creek Island Primitive Baptist Church, Lowland, North Carolina, a Presbytery met for the examination of Brother Gene H. Lupton, and if in their judgment found qualified in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, to ordain him to the full work of the office of Gospel Ministry.

All Elders and Deacons who were present and of like precious Faith and Order formed the Presbytery. The Presbytery included Elders J. T. Prescott and Jesse A. Foreman, and Deacons Roy Houston, Clayton Brown, Charles Pratt, and Alton Goodwin.

Elder Prescott opened the meeting with prayer.

Motion was made, seconded, and agreed for Elder Foreman to sit as Moderator.

Motion was made, seconded, and agreed for Sister Patsy E. Irsik to sit as Clerk.

Sister Linda F. Lupton, wife of the candidate, was invited to come forward to be seated near her husband.

Motion was made, seconded, and agreed for Deacons Houston and Brown to present the candidate to the Presbytery.

Motion was made, seconded, and agreed for Elder Prescott to examine

the candidate. Elder Prescott declined questioning, affirming the church members' concerted voice.

Motion was made, seconded, and agreed for Elder Prescott to word the Ordination Prayer and Elder Foreman to give the Charge.

With the "laying on of hands" by the Presbytery, Elder Prescott offered the Ordination Prayer. Elder Foreman offered prayer before reading the Charge to the candidate as recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Elder Prescott added that with all the trials and tribulations to come, "may the Lord be forever present."

The Moderator asked the church members if they were satisfied with the work of the Presbytery. The members replied "yes."

Deacons Houston and Brown delivered Brother Lupton back to the Church as an ordained Minister and was received by the Church.

While singing "Amazing Grace" the brethren came forward to extend the right hand of fellowship to Elder and Mrs. Gene H. Lupton.

Minutes were read and approved. It was agreed that a copy of the minutes be sent to the Clerk of the Contentnea Primitive Baptist Association and a copy to the *Signs of the Times* for publication. After preaching, the meeting was dismissed with prayer by Elder Foreman.

Elder Jesse A. Foreman, Moderator
Sister Patsy E. Irsik, Clerk

**LAUREL RIDGE
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH**

As per precepts and examples as set forth in the written word of God looked out among themselves and recognized a certain gift. They therefore called for a presbytery to be formed August 16, 1997 at 2:00 p.m. at Laurel Ridge Primitive Baptist Church, Roanoke County, Va. for the purpose of examination of this gift, brother Vaughn Ferris and if found qualified to be ordained to the full work and service as deacon.

All Elders of our faith and order present were invited to sit in the presbytery and all deacons were asked to sit together. The meeting was opened by prayer by Elder J.R. Williams. Elder Leonard Brammer was elected as moderator and Burnell Williams to serve as clerk.

Brother G.W. Conner, acting as spokesman for the church, delivered brother Vaughn Ferris to the presbytery.

The qualifications for deacon was read as set forth in scriptures Timothy 3rd Chapter by Elder J.R. Williams.

Examinations followed by Elders Larry Hollandsworth (reference to Acts chapter 6). The presbytery being satisfied as to the qualifications of this candidate proceeded with the laying on of hands and prayer was offered by Elder W.T. Conner. The charge was delivered to brother Vaughn Ferris by Elder Raymond Goad.

He was then delivered back to the church as an ordained deacon.

The minutes of the work of the presbytery were read and adopted, a copy to be placed in the church records, a copy to be sent to the Signs of the Times for publication and a copy to be given to along with a certificate of ordination. Presbytery was dismissed by Elder Raymond Goad.

Elder Leonard Brammer, Mod.
Deacon Burnell B. Williams, Clerk

cc: Signs of the Times
Church records

**LAUREL RIDGE
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH**

As per precepts and examples as set forth in the written word of God looked out among themselves and recognized a certain gift. They therefore called for a presbytery to be formed August 16, 1997 at 2:00 p.m. at Laurel Ridge Primitive Baptist Church, for the purpose of examination of this gift, brother James Meadow and if found qualified to be ordained to the full work and service as deacon.

All Elders of our faith and order present were invited to sit in the presbytery and all deacons were asked to sit together. The meeting was opened, by prayer by Elder J.R. Williams to serve as clerk.

Brother G.W. Conner acting as spokesman for the church, delivered brother James Meadow to the presbytery.

The qualifications for deacon was read as set forth in scriptures Timothy, 3rd Chapter by Elder J.R. Williams.

Examinations followed by Elder Larry Hollandsworth (Reference Acts 6th Chapter). The presbytery being satisfied as to the qualifications of this candidate proceeded with the laying on of hands and prayer was offered by Elder W.T. Conner. The charge was delivered to brother James Meadow by Elder Clarence Stone. He was then delivered back to the church as an ordained deacon.

The minutes of the work of the presbytery were read and adopted, a copy to be placed in the church records, a copy to be sent to the Signs of the Times for publication and a copy to be given to Brother James Meadow along with a certificate of ordination.

Presbytery was dismissed by Elder Raymond Goad.

Elder Leonard Brammer, Mod.
Deacon Burnell B. Williams, Clerk

cc: Signs of the Times
Church records

I PETER 1:14-16.

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

HEBREWS 4:14-16.

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

1012 Bennett Circle, Keeling, Virginia 24566

SONG

**LAMB of God, we fall before thee,
Humbly trusting in thy cross;
That alone be all our glory;
All things else are dung and dross.
Thee we own a perfect Saviour,
Only source of all that's good;
Every grace, and every favor
Comes to us through Jesus' blood.**

**Jesus gives us true repentance:
By his spirit sent from heaven
Jesus whispers this sweet sentence:
"Son, thy sins are all forgiven :"
Faith he gives us to believe it;
Grateful hearts his love to prize:
Want we wisdom ? he must give it;
Hearing ears, and seeing eyes.**

**Jesus gives us pure affections;
Wills to do what he requires;
Makes us follow his directions,
And what he commands, inspires:
All our prayers, and all our praises,
Rightly offered in his name,
He that dictates them is Jesus;
He that answers is the same.**

**When we live on Jesus' merit,
Then we worship God aright;
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
Then we savingly unite.
Hear the whole conclusion of it:
Great or good, whate'er we call,
God, or King, or Priest, or Prophet,
Jesus Christ is All in all !**

J. Hart.

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EDITORIAL



ELDER R.H. CAMPBELL

Either I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone 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.

These are the words of the Apostle Paul in his letter to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle here is surely re-

ferring to his experience on the road to Damascus, because the power of God was manifested to him in no uncertain terms and he was changed from a persecutor of the Christian faith to a preacher of righteousness and he was not ashamed of that.

As he wrote to the church at Phillippi, *“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more. Circumsised, the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I might win Christ”*.

The Apostle was not ashamed of the Gospel because it was his only hope of salvation and he realized that only by the Grace of God was he a possessor of that hope. As all of God's children acknowledge, they were walking according to the course of the world, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the natural mind and as Paul, were righteous in their own eyes. They felt that they were as good as any and better than most. They were then made to realize that they were as good as any man in the flesh but that all flesh is as grass and all are lacking in

righteousness. They, for the first time judged their walks and ways with righteous judgement, and acknowledged they had been weighed in the balance and found wanting. They desire to walk after the spirit, but found that they could not, of themselves. As the Apostle Paul said *"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."*

This is a lesson that all must learn, they are given a desire to perform that which is good but how to do it they cannot find. Paul, moans *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of 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"*. The natural man never realizes this and thinks that he is able to do whatever he desires and follows what he feels is the right way to go. One writer of old said, *"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"*, and this saying is still just as true as it was in the day in which it was written.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, or to anyone else that has been given a taste that the Lord is gracious. God's ways are so much higher than the ways of man that man cannot see the depth of the wisdom in their own salvation, but God reveals these things unto them at his own

time and in his own way, by his spirit. Jesus said unto his disciples, just before he was to be crucified, *"But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance. whatsoever I have said unto you"*. All of the plan of salvation of the saints of God was accomplished in the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ., as he also told his disciples, *"He that believeth on me the works that I do shall he do also: and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father."*

The apostle Paul knew better than anyone the power in the gospel, because he said in his epistle to Timothy, *"And I thank Christ Jesus the Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."* All of the saints of God were in ignorance and unbelief, until the light of the gospel, the power of God was shined into their heart and soul. I have never heard one who gave evidence of a work of grace in their heart say that they were ashamed of their faith. I have never heard one say that they were sorry that they joined the church, only that they wished they could have joined sooner and lived a more profitable life in the church. They may be ashamed of themselves and their weak and uncertain walk, but never that they were ashamed of the gospel

whereby they were changed, and made to walk a new path. The gospel is the power of God, unto salvation, not a start or a beginning, but unto salvation. Their feet have been placed on that highway which is called the way of holiness and that road leads into the portals of glory, there are no exits, detours or accidents along the way that can cause a single soul to fail to arrive at the determined destination. No one who has been blessed to feel and experience that journey would ever turn back to the world and its ways because they have learned of a love that surpasses anything that the world has to offer.

May the love, mercy and grace of God be with each one who travels this uneven journey of life and ever be mindful of the fact the he that has begun a good work in you will, not maybe, perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. As the apostle said, *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, The just shall live by faith."* This is what keeps them pressing on to the mark of the high calling of God, here they have only a foretaste of what it will be, an earnest of the inheritance that is laid up for those who have been saved and called with that holy calling.

Elder Richard H. Campbell

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editors:

Well its been a year since I subscribed to the dear old paper, and I see its time to renew again. Enclosed is a check for a 2-year renewal plus something for the collection fund.

I look forward to the magazine each month, and don't want to be with out it, Lord willing, as long as I live. I'm also receiving "The Gospel Standard" and have ordered & read / are reading - several good publications of theirs. Sermons by Gadsby & Kershaw, etc. They are all I get in the way of church and yet I find, as always, That Spiritual food is of The Lord, and so sometimes I'm comforted by what I read, and often feel that surely there can be no hope for such as I.

My health isn't as good as it once was, and a lot of it is mental stress and anxiety.

But I hope & pray God will be with me through whatever my lot in life is, and and that my faith in Him will not fail. I feel to have been such a disobedient child, if I am a child, and this causes me much concern. I am unworthy of His goodness & mercy, and yet in His goodness, He is still merciful to me.

My husband suffered a severe head injury in a bicycling accident about 3 weeks ago, and God spared his life, which was a miracle in itself.... But his vision is impaired at this time, and time will tell if it can be fully restored, or at least enough to be able to drive, read, etc.

Well - There is much in my heart I would like to be able to write about, but its not meant to be for now, anyway.

May God bless all of you editors to keep the paper coming to us each month.

A sinner saved by grace, if saved at all.

Unworthily,
Caroline Martin

ARTICLES

ISRAEL



According to my understanding of the Old Testament scriptures, the ethnic origin of all races, living in the world today, is traced directly to one of the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth, the order of their respective ages. Gen. 6:10. Abraham's national lineage is traced directly to Shem, the son of Noah. See Gen. 11 verses 10 and 26. The ethnic origin of the Gentiles is traced directly to Japheth, one of the three sons of Noah. Read Gen. 8: verses 2 and 5. Thus, we have proven here by the scriptures that the Jews have their natural origin in Shem and the Gentiles have their natural origin in Japheth. I could enter further into the natural posterity of Ham, another son of Noah but do not feel that it is expedient to do so at this point.

The Jews were God's chosen people under the worship of the law in the prophetic or second dispensation of time. God made a covenant with Abraham saying, *"God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the*

earth be blessed." Gen. 28:4, 14. Paul confirms the above in Hebrews 6:13, *"For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee."*

The scriptures tell also of the origin and early history of the Jews. Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, not only believed in God but he also worshipped Him. *"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."* James 2:23. *"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."* Gal. 3:6. Abraham, his son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob, are known as the Hebrew patriarchs, or fathers. They lived, as best that I can tell from the scripture, about the year 1900 B.C. Jacob, who was also called Israel, had twelve sons. They were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulon, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin. All living Jews today are the descendants of one of these twelve sons. The twelve Tribes that later made up the Jewish people all descended from one of the above named Israel's (or Jacob's) sons who are the literal forerunners of the Jewish people. That is why the Jews are sometimes called the Children of Israel, or Israelites.

God's believing, elect or chosen people were made manifest in the first dispensation of time, as verified by His blessing of faith to these follow-

ing names patriarchs: ***"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." Hebs. 11:4. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Gen. 5:23. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God has translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Heb. 11:5.***

As far as I am able to tell from the scriptures, there was only one race or nationality of people who lived in the first dispensation of time. This race of people was wiped out or destroyed in the flood or deluge of water when Noah, his wife, their three sons and three wives were spared from the waters of destruction. Noah and his family (eight souls) were of this race and all mankind today, regardless of race or nationality, must be descended from them and ultimately from Adam and Eve, our first parents.

God has had His chosen, elect people in the world since the beginning of time. This fact exists because they are His Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ who was with His Father when He made His everlasting covenant with His Son in the Counsel hall that was held in the annal of eternity. The Apostle Paul pinpoints this seed as follows, ***"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Gal. 3:16.*** As we have just

pointed out above, they were here in the first dispensation. Concerning them it is recorded, ***"For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come." Roms. 5:13, 14.*** While the Oracle of God (His order of Divine Worship) was not made manifest until after the flood, we must remember that His Seed was here prior to that time since He has declared, ***"Nevertheless He (God) left not Himself without a witness." Acts 14:17.*** The people of God, His Seed in Christ, have ever been identified by one glorious hall mark. This is the one, true, original faith. Job had the same faith that identified Noah, as well as Abel, Seth, the Apostle Paul, even down to the last heir of promise. True faith is the gift of God's Spirit.

In order that the oracle of God (God's Order of Divine Worship, given under the law, that culminated in the establishing of the Church by Jesus Christ), could be delivered and set up, God appointed that the identification of His Seed must be designated, set apart, marked clearly and made manifest here in the time world. This identification and designation of this Spiritual Seed is first mentioned in ***Roms. 9:7. "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall Thy Seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these***

are not the children of God: but the Children of the Promise are counted for The Seed.” As we have already pointed out, Abraham was first.

Then Isaac was the child of promise, not Ishmael, Isaac's half brother. It was recorded in Sarah's language after she saw Ishmael mocking Isaac, when she said unto Abraham, ***“Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.”*** Gen. 21:10. The transposition of The Seed, therefore, was passed from Isaac to Jacob on that memorial night just before the break of day, as Jacob wrestled with the Angel of God at ford Jabbok. This Man or Angel (in the scriptures the counterpart is called "Man") told Jacob, ***“Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and has prevailed.”*** Gen. 32:28. ***“And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”*** Gen. 32 : 30. From this point henceforth, Israel has ever halted upon his thigh. In all ages of time, wherever that name has been bestowed, that nation or people has been preserved and their life, although persecuted severely at times, has continued. No amount of persecution and trial could destroy them.

It is to be pointed out in a specific manner that the Seed of Promise (Christ), the Son of God, who was with His Father as the Word in the counsel hall of eternity, was not to Ishmael, Isaac's half brother, nor was it to Esau, Jacob's twin brother. All of the poster-

ity or natural descent of Ishmael and Esau today persecute Israel and her friends. This involves a perfect hatred involving an irreconcilable enmity to the extent of killing and murder with violence. The best of my determination places the posterity of Ishmael and Esau in the Arab or Islamic World. The Arab or Islamic world (like the Jewish world is known as Semitic because Arabic is a Semitic language. Arabic is closely related to the languages of the ancient Assyrian, Babylonians, Hebrews, and Phoenicians. Of these peoples, the Arabs and the Jews, descendants of the Hebrews, are the only important Semitic groups who have kept their ancient language and some of their old customs. In today's knowledge a Semite (both Jew and Arab) is defined as one who is a descendant of Shem, son of Noah. He is a member of a Caucasian race now chiefly represented by the Jews and Arabs, but in ancient times included the Babylonians, Assyrians, Phoenicians and others.

According to scripture, Abraham left his home in what is known now as northern Mesopotamia and traveled to Canaan, the area today that is known as Palestine. This area includes present day Lebanon, Israel and a portion of Syria and Turkey. He and his descendants lived there for many years. These descendants included Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and their respective generations. Following this, as we are all aware, many Israelites journeyed to Egypt, a nation today that falls into the Arab world.

The Bible tells us that Jacob's sons sold their brother, Joseph, into slavery in Egypt for twenty pieces of silver. The Egyptian Pharaoh, or king, favored Joseph and made him ruler over his (Pharaoh's) house and gave him second command in the Egyptian kingdom. Later, when a famine struck Canaan, Joseph forgave his brothers (who had sold him down into Egypt) and brought them and his father to Egypt.

For many years the Israelites prospered and lived well in Egypt. But later a king "who knew not Joseph" (See Ex. 1:8) made slaves of the Israelites and forced them to build large cities and palaces in Egypt. God spoke to Moses in the burning bush, saying, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. (Note: Sic- He did not say the God of Abraham, Ishmael and Esau.) And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people (Israel) which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." Ex. 3:6, 7, 8.

According to the predestinated purpose of God, Moses, the devout leader and teacher of the Israelites, led them out of Egypt in the 1200's B.C. This movement is called in the scripture, The Exodus. The Israelites wandered in the wilderness between Egypt and

Canaan for forty years. It was here that they received the Ten Commandments (or the law) at Mount Sinai (through Moses, a type of Christ) during this period. The reception of the Ten Commandments of law verifies and identifies the Israelites as God's chosen people in the second dispensation of time. The Ten Commandments and the order of worship that God gave the Children of Israel to be used in the tabernacle contained the Oracle of God; this pattern and order of divine worship of His chosen people sufficed to Him with the sundry types of offerings in the tabernacle until the Gospel order was established at the beginning of the third dispensation of time by Christ Himself. (By Oracle, I mean to say the medium by which God reveals hidden knowledge or makes known His divine purpose; also, the place where the revelation is given.) All of these things (worship under the law) pointed to the first coming of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As God has given us faith now to believe that Christ has already come, they were given the identical same faith then to believe that He would come. God has never granted but one faith and that to one people. Moses died alone on Mount Pisgah, and his tomb remains unknown until this day (God buried him, according to scriptures) so that no man could worship him or his tomb or final resting place in this time world.

From this point The Seed, the mark of the true church of God, was interposed upon Joshua. Before Moses died, he chose Joshua to succeed

him, saying, ***"Be strong and of good courage; for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them."*** Joshua 1:6. Joshua led the Twelve Tribes back into the same land of their fathers. This "land of their fathers" was the land that God had spoken to Abraham many years before and from where Joseph and his father, Jacob, had departed into the land of Egypt. The Israelites probably had become established back in Canaan by about 1200 B.C. Here the Canaanites, Philistines and others fought them for many years. Other attacks came from the neighboring kings of Edom, (the descendants of Esau, Moab and Ammon). The Israelites fought repeated wars with these people, who worshipped idols. God interposed upon Israel during all of this time The Seed (Christ, by faith) as David told the Philistine Giant, ***"Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the Name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou has defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee."*** 1st Sam. 17:45, 46. Such faith, as expressed here, can only be the kind that is the Gift from The Seed, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We will say that they (the Patriarchs of old, even King David) believed in and also worshipped the Absolute God of Heaven, who only holds all power in His blessed Hand.

Following Joshua's day, God called such devout servants as Gideon, Samson, Deborah (known as Judges) through whom He led the Israelites. But to meet the many dangers that threatened them, the Twelve Tribes united to form a kingdom. They wanted a natural king to rule over them. The devout Prophet Samuel warned the people against forming a monarchy (a government which retains a natural king as its titular head), but finally gave in to their wishes and they chose Saul as king. The people honored Saul for his bravery, but found that he lacked wisdom and steadiness. In time, they turned from Saul to young David, a shepherd boy, who had killed the giant Philistine warrior Goliath. As we are all well aware, when Saul died in battle, David became king, whose throne was later inherited by David's son Soloman.

After the Israelites returned from Egypt through the wilderness, into Canaan, the land that God said flowed with milk and honey, a city was begun there that later was to be named or called Jerusalem. King David well chose this city about the year 1000 B.C. as the capital and chief city because it did not lie on any major trade routes. It was also high and difficult to attack. This little city in that day lay on top of a region of broken hills in the Highlands of Judea. The city is actually 2,618 feet above sea level. Here in this little city, David chose the site for the Temple which Soloman, his son, later build. We will refer back to the subject of the Temple at intervals in this article.

When Soloman died, political and economic troubles arose among the Israelites and the kingdom became divided. According to scriptures, Soloman's son, Rehoboam, increased the heavy taxes upon them and ten of the tribes broke away and set independent nation in the north. They chose Jeroboam as king, and called themselves the kingdom of Israel. The two remaining tribes, Benjamin and Judah, formed the kingdom of Judah in the south. The citizens of this kingdom were called Judeans. Joseph, the espoused husband of the Virgin Mary, and the Virgin Mary were of this group. Bethlehem where Jesus was born, was in the kingdom of Judea. The word "Jew" comes from this name, "Judea."

Continuing on down the line, following the unbreakable chain, link for link, following the path of The Seed, the lineage of faith among the Israelites, God raised up such venerable prophets as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea and others to stand upon the watchwall of Zion for the heirs of promise among them. With fearless honesty, they faithfully declared the Word of God, crying out and aloud, sparing not, reproaching the people and rulers for their wickedness. These prophets declared that the true and living God is the God of all creation, the God of all mankind, Ruler and Creator of all things, not just the God of the Jews only. It must be pointed out that true church of God in all generations has possessed this same faith and believed this identical doctrine or truth.

The Babylonians conquered Judah in 586 B.C. and destroyed the first Temple in Jerusalem that was built by Soloman. They took and carried away some Jews as captives, but left many in Judah. It was during this time of the Babylonian captivity that Daniel was cast into the Den of Lions and Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego were cast by the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, into the burning fiery furnace. Because Daniel would not bow to the edict of Darius, another King of Babylon, *"he (Daniel) went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."* Dan. 6:10. Here is another mark of The Seed. God's people (as in the case of Daniel) have never compromised this doctrine or truth and they have always been made to look to Jerusalem, the church and her glorious Head, the eternal God, when under the threat of their lives and heavy persecution. Immediately after this time, Daniel was cast into the Den of Lions, because of his belief in the law or oracle of God. See Daniel 6:5 .

The Jews spent many years as captives in Babylon. In reading the Book of Ezekiel, he prophesied that someday they would return to their homeland. From the best I can determine it was in the year 538 B.C. that Cyrus, the Persian Emperor, did allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple. This (second) Temple (with the remnant of the "Wailing Wall" in Jerusalem today) was completed

about the year 516 B.C. Following this time, God raised up the prophets, Ezra and Nehemiah, and others, as His true prophets among Israel.

This brings us down now to the time just before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was at this time that two very rivalistic religious groups became active in Jewish life. The Pharisees (like all Armenians today) felt that religion must grow and be interpreted. Spiritual revelation was disavowed. They claimed to believe in the resurrection of the body, but believed it had already passed or transpired. They began to make new laws and rules for daily living, as they thought, based upon the Old Testament scripture. These laws (man - made) were to be just as binding as the written law in the scripture. Another group, the Sadducees, bitterly disagreed with the Pharisees, and accepted only the written law. The Sadducees openly denied the resurrection. They refused to recognize the so-called new laws of the Pharisees as binding upon them. Both groups were very self - righteous in their attitude, and were very hostile toward one another.

Now it was during this time that Jesus was born. Their own internal quarrels weakened the Jews. All of these things were in the predestinated purpose of God, and only fulfilled His divine and holy will before the world began. The Jews had now become into a very high - minded, natural proud, high, lifted up state of mind and vanity. Jesus said concerning them, "*Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes*

and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven." *Matt. 5:20.* He also said, "*Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."* *Matt. 16:11* Pompey, a Roman army general, had captured Jerusalem at this time, and the Jews had to accept Roman rule. Jesus told Pilate, the Roman governor, when asked if he was a king, replied by saying, "*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hearest my voice."* *John 1 8:37.*

They (the Jewish Pharisees and Sadducees) accused Jesus of sedition and other unlawful acts under their new system of laws and had Him brought before Pilate who ordered His crucifixion because he (Pilate) found no fault in Him. The Pharisees and Sadducees said, "*We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."* *John 19:7.* They used one of their newly made, man - made laws to indict Jesus. They were completely unaware of the meaning of two scriptures that Jesus had quoted them. One is found recorded in *Matt. 24:2.* "*See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down ."* He spoke of the forthcoming destruction of Jerusalem and the second Temple by the Roman army. In another place He spoke these words, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews,*

Forty and six years was this temple building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the temple of His body." John 2:19, 20, 21. He referred to His own resurrection from the dead. They had no idea or thought as to what He was talking about.

Another scripture that He told them (these unbelieving Jews) is found recorded in ***11 Peter 2:22***. "***For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.***" Peter had reference here to the Oracle of God, the worship that God had given them under the law that came by Moses. It was not the truth they departed from but from the "holy commandment" (the law) that Peter was referring to. They had never known the truth to have departed from it. After the resurrection and ascension of Christ to glory, the conflict between the Jews and the Romans increased to the point where the Jews finally revolted in the year A.D. 66, but the Romans defeated them. The Romans captured Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and destroyed the (2nd) Temple, as Jesus had told the Jews would take place in the above quoted scripture because they had come to the point (by the Oracle of God being removed) that they worshipped the building rather than the meaning and signifi-

cance for which it had been established. In this awful destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans, the Jews were scattered to the four corners of the earth into every nation of the globe. From that date A.D. 70 until May 15, 1948, almost 1900 years, they were called "the Scattered Nation." After World War II, many of them immediately returned back (according to God's predestinated purpose) to the same land where Abraham had first dwelt approximately 3,846 years earlier and had been one of the first there to believe God, the same land that the Lord told Moses that He would bring them, "***unto a good land a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.***" ***Exodus 3:8***. God called this land Canaan for an everlasting possession. See Gen. 17:8.

It was on May 14, 1948, that Israel declared her independence when the state of Israel was established. The United States was the first country to recognize Israel. On that date, Arab armies from the Islamic countries of Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and Transjordan (now Jordan that then controlled that part of Jerusalem that has the "Wailing Wall" of the old Temple) invaded Israel, intent on crushing the new nation. Saudi Arabia and Iraq (both Arab countries) also took part in the fighting. Little Israel (as little David's case compared identically when he faced Goliath) was desperately short of arms. But the Israelis drove the Arabs out of Galilee, the Negev, and a strip of land connecting Israel to Jerusalem, as well as other areas of Palestine. There are many

now living today in this generation that witnessed this milestone in the history of the world, perhaps, unaware as to the great impact upon the history of time and the future posterity of mankind. Every battle in which they have since been engaged with the Arab nations they have won, as God blessed them anciently. They had now come back home to Canaan's land, the identical same one that God gave Abraham and the children of Israel nearly 5,000 years ago. Thus, we have fulfilled, the prophecy of Simeon when he held the Christ child in his arms, *"This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel."* **Luke 2:34.**

Tel Aviv was made capital, where the seat of government is now located instead of Jerusalem, the old capital. The old, original capital, Jerusalem, could not be made the capital at that time since the Arabs still controlled a portion of the city, including the main landmark, the vestige of the (2nd) Temple, the "Wailing Wall." Thousands of years of neglect had turned much of Israel's soil into wasteland. The returning Jews drained the swamps, sank wells, and planted forests. Land once worthless became fertile again. Cities and towns were built through out the reclaimed province. The industries, built these cities and towns, are today some of the most advanced in western Asia. It is to be noted and pointed out that seldom, if ever before, in history has a people worked with such energy to build a modern industrial nation on the ruins of the past.

Before I proceed further with this article, I would like to point out a few facts about the current (to-day's) status of Jerusalem. In their taking back of their homeland it was in the Yom Kippur War in 1973 that the Israelis did not stop at the order of cease fire (as in 1967), but continued until they won the whole of Jerusalem, and even Hebron. The last portion of the area taken by Israel called the Golan Heights was another step in the fulfillment of prophecy.

With regard to Israel retaking the whole of Jerusalem in 1973, they retook land that had not been in their possession for nearly 2,000 years. After that defeat by the Romans in A.D. 70, the Roman Emperor who had succeeded Pontius Pilate ordered, as we have said, the destruction of the temple. Only a portion of one wall of the old Temple (the second Temple) remains standing today. It is called the "Wailing Wall," because many Jews have never ceased to mourn the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple that took place in A.D. 70. They (the Jews) had not been allowed to pray there since A.D. 70 until 1973, a period of almost 2,000 years. This temple reaches back to the days and time of King Solomon, son of David.

When the Jews were scattered to the four corners of the earth in A.D. 70, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and before the crucifixion of Christ, the blindness of the Jews that the Apostle Paul spoke about in Romans 11:25 had already begun. *"Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gen-*

tiles be come in." All of this was predestinated to take place in order for the scripture, as found recorded in Song of Solomon 8:8 to be fulfilled. - We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for? "To my understanding Solomon here had definite reference to the Gentile church. The Gentiles, who had previously been looked upon as dogs (a people altogether of a filthy, unclean nature) for hundreds of years, were now the favored people of God and continued to occupy this status for the nearly nineteen hundred years that followed when the Jews were scattered from nation to nation. The Oracles of God were given to them (the Gentiles, Japheth's descendants) (God's ordained worship), after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. *"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received him to them gave He power to become the Sons of God."* John 1:11, 12. The application of the following scripture follows: *"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES."* The Gentile dispensation by way of divine recognition, began at this point and lasted until the beginning of World War II. It was at this point of time that the Gentile's fulness came in and ended, as I shall describe below.

In all of their sundry (many, many) persecutions and their wanderings from country to country, their many trials throughout the ages of time and many generations the worst was yet to come. In this I have to believe (according to God's predestinated purpose), they paid their final debt for their participation in the crucifixion of their own King, the Lord of Glory, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I am given to believe that the fulfillment of the prophecy as recorded in Malachi 4:1, was fulfilled from 1940 to 1945 during World War II. This war marked one of the most vital turning points in the history of time. "For, behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven, etc." During the 1930's, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party in Germany made anti-Semitism, or hatred of the Jews, an important part of their program. Hitler blamed the Jews for Germany's many problems in the years after World War I. He repeated his falsehoods so often that the German people believed them. Before World War II ended in 1945, the Germans had slaughtered more than 6,000,000 men, women and children of the 10,000,000 Jews in Europe. He had huge furnaces built in Auschwitz, Poland, and other nearby places, where many of this number were gassed to death, in shower stalls where they (the Jews) thought they could take a clean shower after riding for days on cattle trains when being sent to various German concentrations camps during the war. When they cut on the shower valve instead of getting water, they got poison gas. Then their bodies were

burned to annihilation. He killed them so fast that he did not have time to bury them. Destroying them in this manner was his only alternative. 500,000 of them (or more) starved to death in concentration camps of eastern Europe. Thus ended their exilement of 1,900 years. Don't tell me that enough persecution will not reunite any nation. The Jews commemorated this holocaust in Jerusalem during the summer of 1981. I watched it on World News T.V. in June, 1981, when they lit thousands of candles to commemorate the memory of those that had died at the hands of Hitler's slaughter.

I would like to point out that during this period of 1,900 years from A.D. 70 to A.D. 1940, during their exilement the nation was not without an occasional true believer or witness in the Lord Jesus Christ and the true church. A case at point was the incidence of Elder Benard Greenwood. He was a German-Jew, a native of Germany, born in Weener, East Friesland, Kingdom of Hanover, on September 23, 1827. (Some of you may have his book entitled, *The Dealings of God With a Labourer, or The Experience of Elder Bernard Greenwood.*) He came to this country (The United States) in the 1850's. He was shown the truth and united with the Old School or Primitive Baptist in the State of Ohio. He moved to North Carolina in the 1880's and for a short while, lived at LaGrange, N.C., where he preached for the church there and also nearby at our church, Mewborn's. My grandmother Turnage heard him preach on

several occasions. His photograph today hangs in the pulpit of Sandy Grove Primitive Baptist Church (Black Creek Association of North Carolina) Nash County. His body rests in the Maplewood Cemetery, Wilson, N.C., where he lived or resided until his death. My grandmother Turnage told me that on one occasion he had an appointment to preach in the courthouse in Snow Hill, Greene County, N.C. at night. Some of the local Jews, who were merchants in that town (and who knew of his natural origin or identity) went out to hear him also. After the service was over, when the crowd had come downstairs from the courtroom where he had just preached, these Jews accosted him in a corner in the hall to one side where they loudly and angrily conversed together in the Hebrew Language. She said it got so hostile in sound that it appeared the matter would come to blows. However, it did not, the conversation soon died down, and the Jewish merchants moved on out. Elder Greenwood came over to where his brethren had been standing to one side in awe and with much concern as to his safety. Elder Greenwood exclaimed emphatically to them "*they did not like my Jesus, they did not like my Jesus,*" seeing the wonderment on their faces. We can see, therefore, that even during the period of time when the Gentiles were God's favored, while the Gospel Church was nucleated among them, there were true, occasional believers among the Jews. Likewise, there will be a scattering (only a small remnant) of true

believers now and in the future time left to this time world among the Gentiles. This small remnant of Gentile believers will be however, true followers of the Lamb. I do believe that we will never again see throngs or multitudes standing on the foundation of the true doctrine, as many of us saw 50, 75, 100 or 150 years ago, and as was seen in the early days of the Federal period of the History of the United States of America, 1776-1840. His return to the Jews accounts for the falling away or decline in membership, the breaking down of fellowship, and decline of interest today in our churches. May we be reminded that for those years prior to be Revolutionary War, the signing of our Declaration of Independence and those years that followed, at least 70 percent or more of the people in America, that professed religion, were pure predestination in their faith and belief. Now, ask yourself what is that percentage today? (Yet, today the Armenian doctrine has never been more prolific.) Bitter persecution in England by King Henry VII and Queen Mary, Mary t Queen of Scots, or better known as "Bloody Mary" had brought pure hearts to America.

Back in the days that followed the Revolutionary War and for all of those years that comprised the 19th century, and even up through the years that immediately preceded World War II, our country, the United States of America, had a government that was relatively free of corruption. Since 1950. the corruption in our government here, as well as England, and

other Gentile nations, has reached proportions that would have been unbelievable to our grandparents and forebears. A crime record with no previous comparison, debts of nations, unrest and turmoil convince fully this unworthy writer that the fulness of the Gentiles has come in. Violence in or among society in general in our own nation here has reached the point that we (ourselves) can scarcely believe what we see and hear with our own eyes and ears. The corruption in government (even this year, 1986- 87) has been beyond all reasonable proportions in the latter. The Lord told Daniel, *"O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."* Dan. 12:4. We are definitely living now in the time of which Daniel prophesied. Scientific knowledge has tripled in the past two decades with many nations of the world now possessing the Nuclear bomb or the potential and capability necessary of obtaining and making it. Yet, since the ending of World War II, the United States has won no clear cut military victory anywhere. A truce was signed to end the Korean conflict and a withdrawal settled the Vietnam War. (The invasion of Grenada by the U.S.A. in 1984 was a skirmish only and was not a battle as such.) On the other hand, ISRAEL has won every battle that it has fought or in which she has been engaged, since 1948.

Many of us are aware of the deadly conflict that exists today in the Middle East. There is not a nightly interna-

tional news program on television but what this grave conflict between Israel and her neighboring Arab (Islamic) countries is not mentioned. There are, no doubt, many, many people, that have wondered what this conflict is all about and the reason or reasons that have caused this conflict to erupt into violence, war and bloodshed from time to time in the past several years. This conflict is going on now at this very time.

In the year A.D. 70 when the Jews were scattered to the neighboring countries of the world, being displaced from their God-given homeland of Canaan (today known as Palestine and / or Lebanon), their land was vacated. The neighboring Arab Countries, descendants of Ishmael and Esau, moved into the area. For nearly 1900 years these Arabic nations occupied this area. They established their homesteads, villages, towns and cities. From a natural standpoint the Arabs had lived on these premises long enough (1900 years) to feel that the land belonged to them. They may have had a natural (silent) right of possession or ownership, but they had no eternal right because, according to scripture, God had promised this land to Abraham, as we have already said, about 5,000 years earlier. When the appointed or predestinated time came for them to reoccupy it, they did, as they had always done, two times previously. Both nationalities are of the seed of Abraham, but one is designated in *Romans 9:7* as **CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE** while the other is designated as "the children of the

flesh." **Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Issac."** *Gen. 21:10.* There is no way possible for these two nations (Israel on the one hand and the Islamic or Arab world on the other) to ever live or reside peacefully together since the scripture says, "*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* *Romans 9:13.* This conflict is further widened today with the United States supporting Israel while Russia is supporting Syria, an Arab country, with Russian made rockets on Israel's border, aimed at Israel. A compromise could soon take place but hostilities will not cease.

The Arab or Moslem world today often called the Arab bloc, stretches from the Atlantic Ocean of West Africa to the Persian Gulf. It includes all Arabic-speaking people of Ifni, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Sudan, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Trucial Coast, Oman, Aden, Yeman, with cultures extending into Iran, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Indonesia. Islam is the religion taught by the Prophet Mohammed in the A.D. 600's. Mohammed was an Arab who was born in Mecca in A.D. 570. He believed that he had been sent to destroy the idols of the heathen Arabs and to teach them to worship his god. He preached that there was only one god. Allah, and that he, Mohammed, was Allah's messenger. Those who today believe in this god, and accept Mohammed as his messenger are called Moslems, from the Arabic,

meaning those who submit to him. Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran, a name familiar to many, falls into this category. Islam, today, is one of the world's largest religions, having more than 400,000,000 followers, located in the above named countries. To worship any God other than the true and living One would be Paganistic in principal, according to my humble judgment. Their places of assembling are not referred to as "church," but "mosque" or "minaret."

It was in 1978 or 1979, that President Carter held what was known as the "Camp David Summit" conference at the presidential retreat, Camp David, Maryland, in which he attempted to bring together Israel and the Arab world together through the means of Egypt's President Sadat, and Begin, Prime Minister of Israel (Sadat was later assassinated in 1980's as I recall in Cairo, Egypt.) This was an effort to halt the work of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (commonly called the PLO) whose objective today is to regain the land that was lost to Israel, as we have already pointed out. With all due respect to President Carter, had he known and understood the scripture, he would not have wasted the millions of dollars from this country that were promised to Egypt. Man cannot reconcile that enmity which God has said will never be reconciled. It has been said, "*What God has done is done forever.*" I do not believe that any man can change the intent of those (just quoted) words. The compromises of men, when against the command of God, will end

in failure. The "love of God" and the "hate of God" are permanent and Unchangeable. See Romans 9:13.

Today, at this very hours the two Arab (Islamic) countries known as Iran and Iraq are and have been interlocked in a fierce war since 1980 over the area known as the Persian Gulf through which flows more than 50% of the world's oil and petroleum supply. In this conflict the United States through the Reagan administration has backed Iran through the secret supplying of arms and munitions to that nation while Russia has done the same for Iraq. Out of this country's (the United States of America's) participation in that conflict has recently arisen a government scandal of our nation's government's secretly selling arms to Iran and giving the proceeds of such sales to the contras. freedom fighting soldiers in Nicaragua, against the Russian backed Nicaraguan government called the "Sandinistas" with profits from such sales being yet unaccounted for. Here again, our country, the United States of America, is helplessly hooked into and involved with "Gog" and Magog "against its determined aim and goal of swallowing up and destroying Israel.

Even in today's world news, we hear and read where President Ronald Reagan on October 8, 1986, sent a Bible, during the time of this scandal of Hashemi Rafsanjani, second in command of Iran under Ayatollah Khomeini, with the following inscription: "*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." Galatians 3:8. This verse refers to Abraham who is the common ancestor of both Moslems and Jews. Moslems know Abraham as Ibrahim. Jews trace their ancestry through his son, Ishmael, as we have already pointed out. I mention this incident only to point out the fact that even our president, Ronald Reagan, is partially aware of what is now taking place in the world, as it relates to scriptural or Bible prophecy. In closing this article, I quote this scripture from Jesus' own language in Matthew 19:30. **"But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."** The first and the last and the last and the first are synonymous in meaning. They are the same in every sense of the word. The first here has reference to Abraham, the lineal forbear of Christ, from whom He descended through Judah the son of Jacob. The last are those the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the twelve tribes, who have now reoccupied Jerusalem after a period of exilement for nearly two thousand years. All of this according to scriptural prophecy and the foreknowledge of God.

In all of their wanderings for the past 4,000 years from that promised land that God said unto Abraham, **"And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God,"** they have now returned for the last time. Three times during this period of time (the past 4,000 years), based upon

information in this article, have they been displaced from this land, but they will go no more out until the second coming of their King. They could not receive Him the first time because of the predestinated decree of the establishment of the Gentile church. **"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the Sons of God." John 1 : 11, 12.** Paul said concerning them. **"Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; HOW MUCH MORE THEIR FULNESS."** Romans 11 : 11, 12. Let us not forget this scripture, **"And so all Israel shall be saved." Romans 11:26.**

In their (the Jews') fulness was the coming back home to their ancient home, Jerusalem, of which they now control in its entirety. This brings us down to the final fulfillment of the prophecy that John saw in Revelation 21 : 1, 2, as follows: **"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John saw the holy city NEW JERUSALEM, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."** In the first resurrection of the just, her corruption will put on incorruption, her mortality will put on immortality. These are the number

that was the seal of the living God, *"an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."* Rev. 7:2, 4. John then pointed out another number in addition to the *"one hundred and forty and four thousand,"* whom he said *"sang a new song,"* and their number is *"ten thousand, and thousand, and thousands of thousands."* This is that number that he said *"no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."* Rev. 7:9. In this manner was included the Gentile church.

When NEW JERUSALEM, the happy, eternal home for which His weary pilgrims now long for finally comes, there will be a new Temple within it. John tells us what it will be *"And I saw no temple therein: for the LORD GOD ALMIGHTY and THE LAMB are THE TEMPLE of it."* Rev. 21:22.

So with the fulfillment and final consummation of all things now at hand when Gog and Magog, Islam and Atheistic Communism (or Russia), come up against little Israel, as has been prophesied in Ezekiel 38:18-22, with all of their vast technology, superior nuclear bombs, missiles, ultra modern naval combats, combat troops (because of Israel's God - given impediment or block to those Arab nations which control the Persian Gulf out of which flows 50 percent plus of the world's oil supply), they will be no more than Napoleon, Hitler, William

the Conqueror and Alexander the Great and others who eventually met their respective dooms. Since the beginning of time men have set out to conquer the world, but God has disallowed the fact since He has said of Himself, I am *"King of kings and Lord of lords."* No man or set of men, nation or group of nations, will He ever allow to take complete control of the earth and world. Time will end before such takes place.

Before the end of time, Gog (Islam) will give its power over to Magog (Communism) in a final endeavor as the means to accomplish this end when Communism (of Russia) would destroy Israel and take control of the world's greatest source of oil supply in the Persian Gulf area of the Middle East. This is verified by the scripture, *"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority..."* Revelation 13:2.

The intervention of God (yet to be made known) will destroy Gog and Magog or Islamism and Communism. God will impute His terrible fire, brimstone and hailstone in the final destruction of the world. I suggest again that you please read Ezekiel 38:18, 22. *"If God be for them (Israel), who can be against them?"* Romans 8:31. HIS SEED among both Jews, Gentiles, and all nations out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation will be raised in the first resurrection. Those who are alive and remain

at His coming shall not prevent those who are asleep. The dead in Christ shall rise first and those who remain shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at His second coming! Read 1st Thess. 4:13-18. Those whose names are not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone that burneth forever and ever. Rev. 20:10. *"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen."* Rev. 1:7, *"Lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."* Luke 21:28. *"Surely I come quickly, Amen Even so, come Lord Jesus."* Rev. 22:10. To that last heir of promise who will witness this indescribable sight, what a glorious thing it will be! Faith then will become sight and hope a blessed reality, for ISRAEL, God's children who will go no more out for ever.

J.M. Mewborn
January 29, 1987

PROVERBS 16 : 1-3.

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.

Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.

VOICES OF THE PAST

REGENERATION, NEW BIRTH, &C. REPLY TO AMOS FOX.

NEW VERNON, N.Y., AUGUST 2, 1841.

The first subject in order may be stated thus: What is the difference, if any, between regeneration, the new birth, and conversion? By regeneration, we understand that work of the spirit of God, by which the subjects of divine grace are quickened from a state of death in trespasses and sins into spiritual life. In this work that life which was given them in Jesus Christ before the world began, is communicated to them by the instantaneous operation of the Holy Ghost. This work is as independently and emphatically the sovereign work of God, as was the creation of the world, and consequently admits of no instrumentality or secondary causes of any kind, quantity or quality whatever. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal his Son in me, straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood." Regeneration brings its subjects into that state wherein the subject is alive to spiritual sensations; being quickened, he can realize something of the holiness of the law, of his sinful state, of the mountain of his guilt, the justice of his condemnation; of his utter inability to appease the wrath or cancel the demands of the law of God. Though ushered, by regeneration, into a new condition, so that he feels, sees, hears and under-

stands things very differently from what he ever did before, yet he cannot see how God can sustain his justice short of executing on him the sentence of the law. The opening to the understanding of the poor, distressed, quickened soul the joys of his salvation, to bring him to the experience of the forgiveness of sins, to remove the load of his guilt, to hush the thunders of Mount Sinai, and to open to him the blissful portals of light, life, joy and immortality is what we mean by the new birth.

In the new birth the laboring soul is set at liberty; is born into light, love and peace; into a new element, new joys, new desires and new exercises; "old things are passed away, and all things are become new;" the terrors have subsided, the thunders have ceased; joy succeeds the smart, and the whole soul is absorbed in the love of God--love to God, to his Lord, to his people, his ordinances, and to all things lovely in the divine estimation. This gracious work qualifies a man to see the kingdom of God; but this alone does not bring him into that kingdom; he was a member of the spiritual kingdom before, but of the visible he is not a member until he takes on him the yoke of Jesus in the ordinance of baptism.

Conversion is a term which may be applied to any change either in men or things. Regeneration and the new birth are certainly a conversion, because a change is effected; but many conversions may take place where there is no saving change wrought. Thus we have in a brief way expressed our views on the first items of the inquiry.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

"O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." — PSALM XC. 14.

MANY of the dear children of God are tossed up and down on a sea of great uncertainty, doubt and fear, because they have not had sensible manifestations of Christ to their soul. He has not come into them in the power of his love; still they often say, "When wilt thou come unto me? O visit me with thy salvation; speak a word to my soul; it is thyself, and thyself alone, I want to hear, to see, and to know!" Now these are drawings of the gracious Lord, the secret beginnings of his coming, the heralds of his approach, the dawning of the day before the morning star arises and the sun follows upon his track. But when the Lord does come in any sweet manifestation of his presence or of his power, then he will abide where he has come, for he never leaves or forsakes a soul which he has once visited. He may seem to do so; he may withdraw himself; and then who can behold him? But he never really leaves the temple which he has once adorned and sanctified with his presence. Christ is formed in the hearts of his people the hope of glory; their body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and Christ dwells in them by faith. Though we often mourn over his absence and do not feel his gracious presence as we would, still he is there, if he has once come.

J.C. Philpot

MEETINGS

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The Lord willing the Staunton River Union will be held at Canaan Primitive Baptist Church the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in November. The song service will begin at 10:00 A.M.

We invite all lovers of the truth to meet with us.

The Church is located in Pittsylvania County on the Mount Cross Road. (844)

Elder J.R. Williams, Pastor
Geneva B. Scarce, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JULY 1997

Mrs. B.T. Hollandsworth, VA \$2.00
 Mrs. Annie C. Lawrence, VA 2.00
 Mrs. E.H. Chandler, LA 7.00
 Eld. Raymond Goad, VA 2.00
 Donald Agee, VA 2.00
 Mrs. Willie Mae Ratliff, VA 5.00
 H.C. Brown, VA 5.00
 Mrs. French C. Hogan, VA 10.00
 Alpha Sears, OH 2.00
 Charles Alders, TX 25.00
 Clinton N. Barron, LA 2.00
 Eld. Marvin Brumfield, VA 2.00
 Mrs. Carrie McDaniel, VA 2.00
 Mrs. F.K. Morgan, AR
 Memory husband F. K. Morgan .. 20.00

OBITUARIES

BROTHER INGRUME V. LOCKEY

With a sad and lonely heart I will try to write the obituary of our dear Brother in the flesh and hopefully a brother in Christ. Ingrume was born on February 5, 1912 He built a full and reasonable farm life. All of his years was on the farm excluding 39 months in the U.S. Army. Most all his Army stay was in the European Theatre. He was married shortly after returning from the the Army years to Pearl C. Lockey. Born to them in the 47 years of life together were 4 children. Phyllis #1, Van #2, Lynette #3, and last Timothy.

His first wife preceded him in death just over 4 years. He was very lonely until his second wife Lila Ross. They were married on or about 1 1/2 years before he was called home by our heavenly father on July 1st 1997. He was laid to rest in Ameriah Gamer Cemetery in Newport just a short ways from where he was born. His funeral was conducted by Elder J.M. Horne who pastors our Newport River Primitive Baptist Church. We all bow in humble submission to his will the only one who knows what is not for us to await the coming of the one to return who will call his children home for us to live with him. This 26th day of September 1997.

God Bless,
Gordon M. Lockey

MILDRED SMITH LOFTIS

Sister Mildred Loftis of Reidsville, N.C. died August 15, 1996 at Moses Cone Memorial Hospital in Greensboro, N.C. She was 77 years old at the time of her death.

Funeral services were held Sunday, August 18, at Wilkerson Funeral Home in Reidsville, with burial following at Reidlawn Cemetery, conducted by Elder Kenneth Key.

Sister Mildred moved her membership from Pleasant Grove Church to Hadnot Primitive Baptist Church on June 1, 1991 where she remained a faithful member until her death. She lived at Emerald Isle, N.C. at this time. She moved back to her home in Reidsville in 1995, due to her failing health.

She is survived by her son Rick Loftis of Reidsville, two daughters, Grey Carter of High Point, N.C. and Joyce Heath of Pink Hill, N.C. and four brothers and five sisters.

Done by order of conference June, 1997.

Elder J.T. Prescott, Moderator
Leola Bright, Clerk

PSALM 51:1-2.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

IVEY JOHNSON PRESCOTT

On April 26, 1997 our dear and precious brother was called home by our heavenly Father.

Johnson was born December 5, 1907 to Ivey and Beulah Prescott in Carteret County, N.C., where he lived until moving to Winston Salem, N.C. in 1926. For many years he was a radio installer at Reisenweaver Communications Co., retiring in 1989.

He was married to Elizabeth Hinsdale in 1928. They were married 68 years.

Johnson joined Hadnot Creek Primitive Baptist Church March 14, 1964 and was ordained a deacon in March 1965.

On a personal note, Johnson was my natural brother and I remember most his wonderful smile, even through his last years of pain and suffering. His life reflected his philosophy of always looking on the good side of things and for the best in his fellow man.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth of the home; four sons Kenneth Prescott and Terry Prescott both of Winston Salem, Joseph Larry Prescott of Myrtle Beach, S.C. and Ronnie Prescott of Raleigh, N.C.; one daughter Doris P. Walker of Winston Salem and Elder J.T. Prescott of Swansboro, N.C.; one sister, Leola P. Bright of Kinston, N.C.

Funeral services were held at Bunker Hill Primitive Baptist Church with Elders J.T. Prescott, John Wingfield and John Lee officiating.

Done by order of conference June 1997.

Elder J.T. Prescott, Moderator
Leola Bright, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

" The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon "

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1012 Bennett Circle, Keeling, Virginia 24566

SONG

*In union with the Lamb,
From condemnation free,
The saints from everlasting were,
And Shall forever be.*

*In covenant from of old,
The sons of God they were;
The feeblest lamb in Jesus' fold
Was blessed in Jesus there.*

*Its bonds shall never break,
Though earth's old columns bow;
The strong, the tempted, and the weak,
Are one in Jesus now.*

*With joy lift up your heads,
Ye highly favored few—
When thro' the earth destruction
spreads,
For what shall injure you?*

*When storms or tempests rise,
Or sins your peace assail,
Your hope in Jesus never dies—
'Tis cast within the veil.*

*Here let the weary rest,
Who love the Saviour's name;
Though with no sweet enjoyment
blest,
This covenant stands the same.
Kent.*

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NOTICE

NOTICE TO OUR
SUBSCRIBERS AND READERS

The article entitled, "ISRAEL," that was published in the November, 1997, issue of the Signs of the Times, Volume No. 165, issue No. 11, @ pages 245-261, was an editorial by J. M. Mewborn, that appeared in the "September-October, 1986" issue of Zion's Landmark.

Editors

PSALM 50:2.

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

EDITORIAL

HANDS



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

The subject of hands in the Scriptures is so vast that many volumes might be written on it, but I have in mind, if God be willing, to

write only a few words on it, and pray that God will direct my every thought that I might write something to his praise, honour and glory, and to the comfort and edification of his beloved children.

In the natural realm man uses his hands to accomplish his works or the things he desires to do, but we find many times we do not have the knowledge, wisdom or power to do as we would. This applies to all men regardless of how wise and strong they may appear. When we would do good we find not how to do it; and there is no power but of God, for the powers that be are ordained of him. Rom. 7:18 & 13:1.

The true and living God as revealed to us in the Scriptures is not limited in any way, though many men declare it and desire it to be so, believing that they have power to save themselves and also others. God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, and *"he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him,*

What doest thou.” Dan. 4:35. God created the heavens and the earth and all things therein, and for his pleasure they are and were created. Rev.4:11. He made every thing exactly as it pleased him, including man, and we cannot say unto him, Why hast thou made me thus? Does not the potter have power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour? Rom. 9:20-21. Surely God is our potter. God made the Garden of Eden, planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil therein and commanded the man, saying, *“Of every tree in the garden thou mayest eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* Gen. 2:16-17. God also made Satan, the devil, that crooked serpent. *“By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.”* Job 26:13. That serpent, the father of lies, was in the garden of Eden to accomplish the purpose of God, and Eve was deceived by him, for she was made subject to vanity. as was the man, for she was in him in the creation. Eve ate the forbidden fruit, gave unto Adam, and he did eat, and sin entered the world, and death by sin. *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world. and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”* Rom.5:12. Surely God had a holy purpose for sin entering the world or he would not have provided the way. To deny this is to deny God’s sovereignty, his power and wisdom;

for his beloved Son Jesus Christ stood as a Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. This was accomplished when he entered the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, and laid down his life on the cross of Calvary to atone for the sins of his children and redeem them from the curse of the law which said, *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”*

“Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.” Ps.89:13-14. God uses his mighty arm and hand to accomplish his every purpose under heaven. And, *“to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.”* Eccl.3:1. *“The LORD of host hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass: and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.”* Isa. 14:24. Again to deny this is to deny his sovereignty. All things are his: shall he not do with them as it pleases him? *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”* Rev. 4:11. God did not make man wicked, but he became wicked when he transgressed God’s holy and righteous law. *“Lo, this have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”* Eccl. 7:29. Until Adam and Eve transgressed they knew neither good or evil, but when they fell from their upright estate into a state of sin and

death all mankind was involved, for Adam is the federal head, and Eve the mother of all living. They became corrupt, and Jesus said, *"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."* We are as David; *"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."* Ps. 51:5. Is not Eve the mother of all? Gen. 3:20. There are numerous scriptures that might be quoted to prove that all men are sinners by their Adamic nature, but the above should suffice.

"Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God." Ps. 53:2. What is the difference between the workers of iniquity and those who are called of God, my people? His people call upon him, but the others do not. Why? Because they know him not, and therefore cannot believe in him: for *"it is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."* John 6:29. Jesus said, *"-and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."* Matt. 11:27. Again Jesus said, *"Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."* Matt. 7:33. Again he said, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."* How different shall be his words unto his children! *"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."* Matt. 25:34. Is it not a wonderful thing to be given a

hope that we shall inherit that kingdom! These blessed ones are they who have been washed in the cleansing blood of the Lamb of God. *"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."* Dan. 12:10. Though they did not know that they were fulfilling the purpose of God, Jesus was crucified and slain by the wicked hands of men. This was the most heinous crime ever committed, yet it served the greatest purpose: the salvation of God's elect people. The wicked always serve the purpose of God, for they are his sword and his hand. Ps. 17:13-14. Does not God have complete control of his sword and his hand? Surely he has complete control over all things: nothing can be left to chance nor to any other thing or man. If not, how then could his people know that all things work together for their good? which it does. Even the wrath of man shall praise him, and the rest he will restrain. Ps. 76:10.

Jesus told his disciples there would be wars and rumors of wars and that these things must be. Matt. 24:7. Who shall be the ones to start these wars? Are they not the kings of kingdoms, and the rulers of nations? Yet God is in control. Prov. 21:1; *"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."* *"For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"* Pharaoh was a wicked king

when the Israelites were in Egypt, and the scripture saith unto him, *“Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout the earth.”* Rom. 9:7. After Pharaoh had fulfilled God’s purpose for him, he and all his host were destroyed in the Red sea, and the children of Israel were saved from his hand.

The Lord took the Israelites by the hand and led them out of Egypt and blessed them with every thing they needed. Yet they made idols and worshiped them, and they forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth. The anger of the LORD was hot against them and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers and sold them into the hands of their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said and sworn unto them, and they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. Judges 2:13-16. Time after time the Israelites broke his statutes and kept not his commandments and he visited their transgressions with the rod and their iniquities with stripes. Nevertheless his lovingkindness he never took from them, nor suffered his faithfulness to fail. (See Ps. 89:30-33.) And in the 23rd Psalms David said, *“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 death, I will fear no evil: for thou art*

with me; thy rod and thy staff the comfort me.” This applies to all his children from then until the end of time. In the 12th chapter of Hebrews we read, *“My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 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; – but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”* *“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”* In Ps.37:23-24 we read, *“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.”* Who is a good man? surely not the man of flesh, for in the flesh there is found no good thing; but if the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in us his righteousness is imputed unto us, and we walk in the ordered steps of the Lord: *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* Eph. 2:10.

If we have experienced a new birth, then we can walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Our flesh is not changed with this new birth, and our fleshly lusts remain; *“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and*

the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal.5:17. When we yield to the lusts of our flesh then we are chastened by our Heavenly Father. He does not chasten us in wrath, but in love, for he dealeth with us as sons. This draws us near unto him with filial fear, and *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."* Prov. 9:10. Therefore, brethren, when we experience the chastening of God let us not despise it, nor faint, but rejoice, for this is clear evidence that we are the sons of our Heavenly Father.

Psalms 139:9-10, *"If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."* There is an highway, and a way, which is called The way of holiness. By the leading hand of God the redeemed shall walk there. Isa. 35:8-9. Our hope is that we are among those who have been redeemed by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

There is no end to this vast and marvelous subject, and I have written only a few of the many beautiful thought that have come to mind. May they be to his praise. honour and glory. May his hand be upon us to lead us in the path of righteousness, and his rod and his staff comfort us.

Elder C.C. Wilbanks

VOICES OF THE PAST

REVELATION 22:14

Dear Brother Beebe:--Will you gratify me, your unworthy brother, by giving your views on Rev. 22:14? "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." More particularly on the *city*. What city? Where is it? And when do we enter it?

Yours, as ever,
Hiram Campbell.
Brunswick, Maine, Oct. 31, 1861.

REPLY: The names and description of the city as given in the connection, leave no room to doubt that the city mentioned in our text, is the holy city, New Jerusalem, which descended from God out of heaven, and is a presentation of the church of the living God, which is also called the bride, the Lamb's wife. It is also called the tabernacle of God, with men, in which God dwells, owning the citizens as his people and manifesting himself to them as their God; wiping away the tears from their eyes, and shielding them from sorrow, crying, pain and death. In this case we have a singular combination and blending of figures. A city, a bride, a wife, a tabernacle, etc., all of which are elsewhere in the Scriptures used to represent the church of God in her union with and subjection to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We should not forget that figures familiar to us are employed by the Spirit to set forth and illustrate to us things of a spiritual and heavenly character. The figure of a city presents the subjects of grace as a congregation of the Lord, in their congregational capacity, as fellow-citizens in the church or city of God, and of the household of faith, and all under the regulations of a well disciplined community, under the same government, protected by the same walls and bulwarks which fortify and defend all who have the privilege of citizenship. And in this city are the common provisions which are so amply provided, for meat and drink, for light and comfort, for protection and safety. In this city the laws of naturalization exclude dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie; admitting only those who are blessed of the Lord, and who as a manifest evidence that they are blessed, cheerfully take Christ's yoke on them, and show their allegiance to him by doing his commandments. As he said, Then are ye my disciples indeed, if ye do whatsoever I command you: and for a more manifest token to all, if they obey his new commandment: for, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. As citizens they all have certain rights of citizenship, such as the right to the tree of life, which is in the midst of the street of the city, and on either side of the river, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruit every month; the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. Instead of be-

ing forbidden and kept back from the tree of life by the cherubim and flaming sword, which turneth every way to keep the way of the tree of life, as under the legal dispensation, in the earthly paradise, or in the Jerusalem which is in bondage with her children, in this New Jerusalem all who are written among the living in Jerusalem, whose names are registered in the book of life, have a right to the tree of life, and to the pure river of water of life, which is clear as crystal, which proceedeth out of the throne of God and the Lamb. For unto all such the Spirit and the bride saith, Come, and they have the privilege of taking of the water of life freely. While as citizens they are a multitude which no man can number, as the bride, the Lamb's wife, they all make but one bride, one church, one body. For ye are all one in Jesus Christ. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are all called in one hope of your calling. Here then is identity, Christ himself is the Head of the body, the church, and the church is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. As the bride of Christ, her creation was in him, as the creation of Eve, in the figure, was in Adam. She is one with him, They twain shall be one. Bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh; and she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. She is not merely the bride, but the married wife of the Lamb. For thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer is the holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. The testimony of John the Bap-

tist, when he identified and pointed out the Husband, saying, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, was, He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom standeth and rejoiceth because of the bridegroom's voice; thus my joy is fulfilled. This city is the city of God, and Ezekiel says, The name of the city shall be, The Lord is There. And God has said, by Isaiah, And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord. And thou shalt be called sought out, a city not forsaken (Isaiah 62:12).

From this last mentioned passage we learn that the city is composed of the redeemed of the Lord, whom the Lord has not only redeemed, but whom he has sought out; he found this people as he did Jacob, in a waste-howling wilderness, and led him about and instructed him, and kept him as the apple of his eye. These are redeemed from among men, out of every kindred and tribe of mankind, and they are redeemed to God, and made priests and kings, and they shall reign with Christ on the earth. They shall all of them come with singing to Zion, the holy city, and they shall sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and they shall sing this song, We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and for bulwarks. God himself is a wall of fire round about, and the glory in her midst. This is the city of which God has said, Here will I dwell forever; for I have desired it for an habitation. He will abundantly bless her provisions, and fill her poor with bread. The Lord

God is her Sun and her Shield; he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God will help her, and that right early. Truly, glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God: not one of her stakes shall ever be removed, not one of her cords shall ever be broken.

**"Her ancient walls appear to be
The workmanship of Deity.
Founded in grace, they still appear,
Without a flaw or chasm there.**

**Oft has this city's strength been tried
By mighty foes on every side;
But all in vain it yet hath been,
She baffles Satan, hell and sin.**

**Count ye her towers, how high they rise,
Her golden spires, they reach the skies;
Her golden streets are fair to view,
Her palaces and bulwarks, too.**

**Then round her walk, her turrets tell,
Mark all her brazen bulwarks well;
Spread far and wide her deathless fame,
Her pearly gates, and walls of flame."**

Much more might be written in answer to the first inquiry of brother Campbell, What city? But we trust enough has been said to show that we understand the city mentioned to be the holy city, New Jerusalem, which John saw in his vision, coming down from God out of heaven, and which he describes in and throughout the last two chapters of the New Testament, and which is designed to describe her in her glory organization and primi-

tive purity, as the spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Second. Where is it? We reply, it is where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name. It is in all places where God has revealed his name. It is in the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. Of her locality the psalmist has said, Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north. Her locality is marked by stakes that shall never be removed, and confined by cords that shall never be broken. The sacred records of eternity show that God has been her dwelling-place in all generations. She dwells in the secret place of the Most High, and abides under the shadow of the Almighty. Her life is hid with Christ in God. Her place of defence is the munitions of rocks. The eternal God is her refuge, and underneath her are the everlasting arms. We find her in the eternal, immutable love of God; she is found in his decrees, wrapped up in the bundle of eternal life, which is in his Son. She has her place in the eternal purpose of God, which he purposed in himself before the world began; which purpose shall unshaken remain when the world shall be no more. She is found in the election of grace, chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world. She has her standing in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and in his justifying righteousness she outshines the sun, is more fair than the moon, and terrible as an army with banners. She inhabits the Rock, is in the secret

places of the stairs, and she sits in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

But in regard to the house of her pilgrimage, God has chosen her in the furnace of affliction. In this world she has tribulation, but in Christ she has peace. The place assigned her by the world is as the offscouring of all things, unto this day. Hated by the world, tried and tempted by the devil, opposed by the flesh, a jest and a by-word to all the children of the bondwoman. But her home is in Jesus Christ, and in the earth she has no abiding place or continuing city. As to her sorrows, trials, persecutions, and her triumphs and victories, she is sometimes encompassed about by the armies of God and Magog; but sometimes she is seen upon Mount Zion, with the seal of God indelibly marked in her forehead, or on the sea of glass, which is mingled with fire, singing a song which none but the redeemed can learn or sing. She has had a place prepared for her in the wilderness, to be nourished and protected from the serpent. Whatever of sorrow, affliction, persecution or tribulation may be appointed for her here below, she has the assurance that she shall ultimately triumph through the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony. For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Third. When do we enter the city? As we view the whole church of God, existing in Christ, and chosen in him before the foundation of the world, according to Eph. 1:4, we regard the

citizens as natives of the holy city. Sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus and called (Jude 1). Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (2 Tim. 1:9). Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all (Gal. 4:26). And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there (Psalms 87:5,6). Judicially the saints entered when they were quickened together with Christ, in his resurrection, when they were raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places. For they are risen with Christ and are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel (Heb. 12:24-26).

But in what we regard as the immediate sense of the text proposed (Rev. 22:14), the saints come when they do his commandments; and thereby manifest that they are the blessed of the Lord. This coming in through the gates is an experimental matter. Except a man be born again he cannot

see the kingdom of God; and, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:3-5). The city in which the tree of life yields her fruits is a spiritual city, and can only be entered by the gates which are called Praise (Isa. 60:18). The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob (Psa. 87:2). David says, *"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord."* (Psa. 122:1-4) As the tribes of Israel went up to the Old Jerusalem to worship, and entered the city by the gates of that city, so the tribes of the Lord go through the gates of the New Jerusalem, experimentally in their devotion, to worship the Lord in his holy temple in the spiritual Jerusalem. As the names of the tribes of Israel are written on the angels of the gates (Rev. 21:12), we learn that the ministry of praise, embracing gospel experience, gospel doctrine and ordinances, and all gospel privileges, belong to the tribes of the Lord, to the children of God, and to them exclusively. The gates of Zion which are called Praise, are used to signify wisdom, honor, power, counsel and peculiar privileges. And when the hearts of God's people are led by the Spirit in their heavenly exercises of worship and praise, they enter into the spiritual privileges of the kingdom, into

the counsels of wisdom, and contemplate the glory of their Redeemer's kingdom, and talk of his power. *"In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."* (Isa. 26:1,2) The gates of the holy city are only open to the righteous nation, for who else can enter by the gates of Praise? They are not accessible to those who love and make a lie, but to the righteous nation that keepeth the truth.

**"Those holy gates forever bar
Pollution, sin and shame,
None shall obtain admittance there,
But followers of the Lamb."**

"Blessed are they that do his commandments." The commandments of him who says in the preceding verse, *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."* Who also says, in verse sixteen, *"I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."* He is the King of Righteousness, the King eternal, and our only wise God and Savior. His commands are proclaimed from his throne in the holy city, and are applicable to all who are under law to Christ. Their faith and obedience are the evidences that they are his disciples, and that they have a right to the tree of life, and to enter into their peculiar privileges through the

gates of the city; for the gates are open to the righteous continually, and his blessed people who know the joyful sound of his voice, shall go in and out and find pasture. They have right to the tree of life, and eat of its fruits freely, and live forever: for their right is a birthright, it is their inheritance, and it is their Father's good pleasure that they shall inherit the kingdom. There is a manifest entering into the holy city, by the gate of christian recognition and fellowship, not only when the new born babes in Christ declare in Zion what God has done for them, and when they publicly espouse his cause and take on them the profession of his name, and by the gate of baptism, declare their allegiance to Jesus as their King.

Finally, whenever the saints are enabled to worship God in the spirit, to rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh, in their social songs of praise, their prayers and supplications, in their love and fellowship, union and communion, in walking in the ordinances and order, the doctrine, discipline of the house of God, then we conclude they enter in through the gates, and enjoy their right to the tree of life.

We have been somewhat lengthy in our remarks, and perhaps have failed to meet the wishes of brother Campbell, but if any of our readers are edified or comforted in what we have written, our labor will not be in vain.

November 1, 1861
Elder Gilbert Beebe

CHARITY.

"And we believe," says the *Christian Watchman*, "the time is not far distant when a man's standing as a christian and a good citizen will be measured by the amount of his charities." The *Cross and Journal* enquires, "Is it correct?"

REMARKS.

NEW VERNON, N.Y., January 7, 1836.

We are mistaken if these learned editors, in their use of the word *charity*, do not wish to be understood in a popular and not scriptural sense. The bible connects charity with faith and hope, and ascribes to it the pre-eminence; and as the less important are the fruits of the Spirit of God, and utterly beyond the command or control of mortals, so of course the greatest can only be possessed and enjoyed by such as receive it as a sovereign favor from God, who is the giver of every perfect gift. By charity in a bible sense, we understand the love of God, and in this view of the subject it is easy for the christian to conceive the comparative superiority it holds over faith and hope, the former being the cause, and the latter being but effects. And again, God's love in its nature possesses a superior excellency; it is eternal, immutable, almighty and sovereign; eternal, it had no beginning, and can never terminate; immutable, fixed from the ancients of eternity upon its objects. "Neither life nor death, 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 them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. vii. 38-39. It is invincible; nothing can withstand the power of the love of God, many waters cannot quench it, floods cannot drown it, sin, death and hell combined could not subdue it. It is omnipotent in its operations; the stoutest hearts in all Adam's wretched family have bowed in subjection to it; yea, we are told it is stronger than death. It is sovereign, who can command it? Who can produce it? Surely no one. Jehovah has set his mercy on whom he would, for he has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. He says, "*Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*" View the love of God in any other light than sovereign, and where would be the obligation of gratitude to God for it. If the possession of it in our hearts does not depend exclusively on the sovereign pleasure of God, then we must possess and enjoy it, if at all, independently of God, and who would not tremble at such an idea.

This charity or love of God is communicated by the Holy Ghost to the redeemed of the Lord in their new birth, and in its operation on their hearts produces love to God. "We love him because he first loved us." It produces love to his truth, love to his ordinances, his laws, and to his people and makes them kind and affectionate one towards another. This charity, or love of God, when shed abroad in the hearts of God's people, gives them bowels of compassion and mercy one towards another; it is not productive of ostentatious shows which are common among the Gentiles; it does not blazon the liberality of its

possessor through the press to earth's remotest bounds, but rather teaches and enforces the command of Jesus, not to let the left hand know what the right has performed. It leads its possessor to visit the widow and the fatherless, and to do good as much as in them lies unto all men, but especially to the household of faith. The love of God does this and more; hence in answer to Mr. Stevens, of the Cross, we answer: The christian is to be measured by the charity he possessed, but we see no connection between his christianity and his qualification for good citizenship in this world.

But we are led to conclude that the editor of the *Watchman* intends popular or modern charity. This is altogether another thing, very different in nature and in effect. It is any principle that will lead men to appropriate their money, wealth and influence to the service of the institutions of modern benevolence. If a man would in a popular sense be charitable, let him join all the fashionable religious societies of the day; let him patronize every scheme which men have devised and still are devising to convert the world, and if he has funds he can become very charitable. This kind of charity is very splendid in the eyes of an adulterous generation; it is sounded far and wide; it rings from the pulpit; it is echoed through the press. This charity regards no other qualification on the part of its patrons than a well-filled purse and an open hand to deal it out at the call of the clergy. This charity will also visit the widow and the fatherless, not to relieve their pressing wants, but to extort for professedly pious purposes the "widow's mite," and the hard earned

dollar of the orphan boy. If the widow or the fatherless are in distress, and pinched with hunger, or chilled for want of clothing, modern charity will perhaps send her agents to the sick haunts of wretchedness, commissioned to say unto them, "Be ye warm, and be ye clothed," and perhaps in the plenitude of their kindness they will give the despairing widow or the starving orphan-- what? A loaf of bread, a bushel of grain, a suit of comfortable apparel?

Oh no! They will give them a tract, from which they may learn that these pious agents are about evangelizing the -- world, and are in want of money to carry on the enterprise. Yes, verily, this popular charity will creep into widow's houses, and lead captive silly women, as saith the scriptures of truth.

If we understand him, this is the kind of charity the editor of the *Watchman* intends, and there is perhaps more truth in what he says than his brother editor is willing to admit; indeed the time has already arrived in which "the vile person is called liberal, and the church said to be bountiful," while every one who refuses to acknowledge or patrolize their schemes are denounced as illiberal and covetous. It is considered charitable in these days to be in fellowship with all denominations of professors of christianity, who will unite in the common cause of modern mendicancy, to persecute non-conformists, to brand with infamy, if possible, the latter and measure the christianity of the former by the amount of his charity measured in dollars and cents.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." S. S. 2:1.

Many deep and fathomless mysteries are in the Book. Things that are hard to be understood (2 Peter 3:16) are found from the first to the last. I suppose that if it was not for the influence the flesh has in our judgments we would see clearly, but we have that to contend with from the days of our youth (Eccl. 12:1) even down to old age (Deut. 28:50). This being true we have much writing and preaching that must be given the scriptural test before it is fit: for nutriment to the church (1 John 4:1; Gal. 1:8). This is why things are a mystery to us and will continue to be as long as time lasts. A rose and a lily are not alike. One of them grows in one place and the other in a different kind of place. We must remember that this is one person talking. The marks of the rose and the marks of the lily belong to them. Some have ascribed this beautiful language to the church. With this thought I cannot concur. The church does not say such sublime things about herself. The Son of God has the right to speak thus of himself, and also to speak with such endearing terms to his bride, but for her to take such liberty--never! When she speaks concerning herself it is an acknowledgment of her many shortcomings. (S.S. 1:6; Mat. 3:14; Mat. 26:75; Rom. 7:15-25).

"I am the rose of Sharon." This is spoken by the Head of the church, and the only one in and of the church that has the prerogative to say, "I am." Not any such foolish expressions as "I

want to be," Or even that "I will be," but this speaker has the power and right to speak of future things as already so, and of things and times of the past and present and future as taking place now. If this had been the church speaking she would not, and, moreover, could not have taken unto herself the authority belonging only to her Beloved. A rose is a flower of great beauty and is known over the country of Sharon. Not that He is a rose, but *the* rose. There is only one Savior. There is only one name that has power to save, (Isa. 43:11; 46:21; Acts 4:12) and be was, and is, and evermore shall be the only one that saves. Heb. 13:8). Sharon is a country of plains and the word means that. Jesus is the plain that his brethren must come to. Things are not in common when some are on the mountain and some in the valley, but it is here on this Plain (Sharon) that the Lord's people all find him as everything they need. (Act 2:44-47). Is here that people of every nationality in the world can meet together, and feel at home. What a lovely flower! What a calm, easy resting place! On this plain with the sweet fragrance of this Rose all wars cease; it is here that divisions never come; it is on this common level that fault-finding, back-biting, bickering and strife does not come; it is here and here alone, that the rich and poor, bond and free, young and old, high and low meet in peace and prosperity in a church capacity. It was on this plain (Isa. 40:4) surrounded by salvation (Isa. 26:1; 60:18) with the Rose of Sharon in her midst (Psalms 46:5), that the church came through

the Civil War in 1861-65. Although it may seem a digression, let me say here, that there is not a place on this globe that can have said about it what can be said, both from a scriptural and a profane historical standpoint, about the Old Baptists. The late Civil War did not divide them. The Missionary Baptists, Methodist and Presbyterians did divide. They were not an equal, North and South; they did not esteem each other better than self; they did not have all things in common. But look at the church. There was not a Northern and Southern Primitive Baptist body. When our brethren from down South were in the Northern prisons they were ministered to by our brethren up there, and it was the same with our Northern brethren in the South. You young readers remember this and you old ones take new courage.

On the plain of Sharon where fruit, abounds, the rose has become the plant, of renown. Only on this plain does Christ have all pre-eminence; only on this plain are the inhabitants in complete unity, seeing each other as better than self. "I am the lily of the valleys." Only one lily and many valleys. This word "valleys" means a different place. People talk about conditional, salvation, but how absurd to speak of volunteering to enter a difficult place! Yet the children of God must go there. It is a blighting thought to think that the time must come when we must go into the valleys. We so much dread the going down because we have been over the route going up. Going up we have heard the rich, strong voice of the Shepherd as he led

and called us onward und upward, but when we could no, longer see to follow him we soon were on the hazardous, circuitous route down and we felt that we did not have any guiding hand and voice. There is not any stopping going up or down. We must go all the way up in deliverance; our baptism in water and in tribulations is down into the water and completely submerged in the trials and afflictions of the Christian's life; our dying in Adam was all the way down into death but up by the resurrecting power of Jesus Christ. Dear readers, we, must go all the way down into these valleys. How dark and cheerless they seem; how our memory goes back to former days when our zeal was likely and we were so interested in talking of the blessed One; ah, how black and rolling the tempest-laden clouds, what despair and gloom seized our tortured souls; ah, dear pilgrim, how dark and foreboding the caverns of evil we found there. The questioning and the groaning of our soul was for another glimpse of light, but the dark, heavy clouds had darkened the sun so that we could scarcely hope for it again. We had sunk so low that we wondered how that we ever had hoped in the Lord. In such an extremity and in our anxiety and ordeal of soul we began to see again ourselves. Are we the person that has gone before the church of Jesus Christ and ask for a home? Are we the one that has set in the assembly of the saints? Ah, what a deceiver we have found ourselves to be. In this dismal, low and gloomy valley the waters of destruction come. How we

struggle to keep going but we cannot. Hope seems to be going. David along with all of God's children, knew all this. ***"Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me."*** ***Psalms 69:1-2.*** Paul experienced dying daily as does all the family of God. (1 Cor. 15: 31; 2 Cor. 4:10-12). "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." ***Psalms 116:15.*** Many times we refer to the corporeal death when we speak of this scripture but I think it is applicable to this daily dying. If so, then this is a precious sight to him who is the lily of the valleys. Remember, dear reader, that salvation is of the Lord. It is here; in these valleys, shut in by mountains of sin and dark clouds overhead, that we get to the ends of the earth. It is here that Jesus, the lily of the valleys, comes up from out of the mire and flooding waters to rescue every perishing lamb. We were not looking for him in a place like this; we had been taught by men that he was God of the light places; they had taught us that he came to them, that sought him; some had told us that our condition was because of our conduct, but every idea and opinion and doctrine of men must be drowned in the surging waters; all powers of mortal man must be brought under subjection, and he must come to the end of the resources—to the end of all the earth. There, out of ground that he thought could not produce, the lily comes up; he finds that not only is God the God of the light, but

that he is the ruler in the dark (***Psalms 139:12***); he finds that he cannot go to Christ, but that Christ comes to the poor, lost and ruined sinner; that the dark clouds were not dark at all, but only his vision was bad. (1 Cor. 13-12). What a precious sight to see the coming up of this lily. What a sight for the dear children of God to behold this beautiful lily in its purity, innocence and glory. The mind is unable to express the adoration and praise due this glorious One, but the time of singing has come because he has left the ninety and nine and gone into the mountains seeking the poor sinner that has become lost there. (***Mat. 18:12***). He takes him out of the horrible place of mire and places him on a rock, establishes his goings, giving him a new song.

Elder W.D. Griffin

SOLOMON'S SONG 2:1-4.

I AM the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE SCRIPTURES

By Elder H.M. Curry

I suppose that every one who professes to believe the Bible at all, looks for the fulfillment of the prophecies. To what quarter then are we to look for this fulfillment? How can those who deny predestination, either in part or in whole, ever expect the exact, timely and certain fulfillment of any or all of the prophecies of the divine oracles?

God has declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure. Part at least of this declaration he has made known unto us by the mouths of his prophets as recorded in the holy Scriptures. The events thus foretold must certainly have been foreordained or predestinated, and therefore must be fulfilled, each in its time and season. The Saviour said, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass, until all be fulfilled."*

When God says a thing shall come to pass, does he mean that he will bring it to pass? When he says a thing shall be done, does he not pledge his word for its performance? Were the prophecies of the Scriptures uttered upon any other authority than the authority of God's decree? Do they rest upon any vicissitude of time for their fulfillment that God's decrees do not embrace? Would mere foreknowledge, or bare permission warrant or even justify the expression, "It shall

come to pass?" or the expression "Shall," in any sense of the word? In this part of the country people read and notice Hick's weatherforecasts. When such changes come as have been prophesied, they will say, "Hicks hit it this time;" when the forecasts fail, they say, "Hicks missed it this time." Are we to look upon God's prophecies in this way? Are we to say, when we see the Scriptures fulfilled in this thing, God hit it this time? or when we fail to see them fulfilled in that thing, God missed it this time.

Are we to treat his prophecies as mere prognostications? One would say, O no, God knew all these things would come to pass, and so he was kind enough and thoughtful enough to tell us of them beforehand. This is a very puerile makeshift, a very fallacious and deceptive subterfuge, and involves the one accepting it in a difficulty far more serious and ungodly than he supposes the one to be which he is trying to evade, to wit, God's decree of predestination; for if God knew that an event would transpire, that event is inevitable, that is, it cannot fail to come to pass exactly as foreknown; if inevitable, then it has been determined, and if determined who determined it? If God did not, who did? The difficulty that I meet here, is an absolutely determined future, and with no determining power outside of God, and independent of him. This is fatalism, and the one accepting such a theory is a fatalist in the fullest sense of that word. So here is plunged into the very thing which he flattered himself that he was avoid-

ing. In endeavoring to shun an imaginary Scylla, he has fallen into a real Charybdis.

How often do we come upon the expression in the New Testament, "This was done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." When Herod sent forth and killed the little children in Bethlehem and all the coasts thereof, it was said then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "In Ramah there was a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not." Suppose Herod had not sent forth and killed the little children, then the words of Jeremiah would not have been fulfilled; if his word should fail in one thing, what confidence would his prophecies be entitled to in anything? But it is not Jeremiah's word which is at stake here, it is God's word that must be fulfilled. Herod's persecution also caused the flight into Egypt, and this was done that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "*Out of Egypt have I called my Son.*" On the return from Egypt, notwithstanding Joseph had been warned of God to take the young child and his mother and go into the land of Israel, he through unbelief, fearing Archelaus, turned aside and dwelt in Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "*He shall be called a Nazarene.*" Here not only the wicked persecution by Herod, but also the unbelief of Joseph alike fulfilled the Scriptures.

When the time arrived that Jesus should be betrayed into the hands of

wicked men, the betrayer was at hand, not as one who accidentally turned up in time of the emergency, but one who had been foretold by prophecy. David had given a pen picture of him hundreds of years before. It had also been said by the Christ that one of the twelve should betray him. Not only as the man marked out by prophecy who should do this, but it had also been foretold how much the traitor should receive for his work; and also what should be finally done with the money. The son of man truly went as it was written of him. He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and when Herod and Pilate and the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together against him, they were gathered to do whatsoever God's hand and God's counsel determined before to be done. (Acts 4:27, 28).

When the Saviour was crucified, he was put to death between two thieves. This was done that the Scripture might be fulfilled which said, He was numbered with the transgressors. Suppose there had been no thieves or transgressors, how then could the Scriptures have been fulfilled? It was the custom to break the legs of those who were put to death by crucifixion, but on this occasion they broke the legs of the thieves, but did not break the legs of Christ. This was done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled which said, "*Not a bone of him shall be broken.*" This prophecy was fulfilled in its reference to the literal body of Christ, but it still remains in force in its relation to his spiritual body, and must

be fulfilled to the utmost in this also. So this prophecy warrants the eternal security of all the redeemed family, for we are members of his body and of his flesh and of his bones; so not a bone of him shall indeed be broken. Instead of breaking his legs according to the custom and the request of the Jews, they pierced his side with a spear. This was done that the Scripture might be fulfilled. *"They shall look upon him whom they pierced."* When in his last agony he said, *"I thirst,"* they in their fiendish cruelty, gave him vinegar to drink. This was done that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *"They gave me vinegar to drink."* And after all, when they came to dispose of his raiment, they gambled for that, in order to fulfill the Scripture, *"They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture did they cast lots."* In the most exact way, the Scriptures were fulfilled in the life and death of Christ, so that it may well be said, He died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

Men are saved to fulfill the Scriptures. *"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion,"* is a prophecy that must be fulfilled; but for it to be fulfilled, the redeemed of the Lord must return and come to Zion. This prophecy cannot be satisfied as long as one for whom Christ died, is away from Zion. *"All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me,"* saith the Son. The righteousness, wisdom, power and grace of God are all engaged to fulfill these words, therefore there is no power or contingency that can ever

interfere with the timely and triumphant victory of all the election of grace over every enemy. On the day of Pentecost, when that great number of people cried out, *"Men and brethren what shall we do?"* was exemplified in the fulfillment of prophecy. A great number of these men were Jews, those who only a few days before had crucified the Son of God with wicked hands: they had spit upon him, had called him Beelzebub, the prince of devils; and to express their resolution never to repent, they said, *"Let his blood be upon us and our children."* But their obduracy could not hold out - God's prophecy must be fulfilled. The redeemed of the Lord must return and come to Zion. When Abel offered unto the Lord a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, this prophecy lay at the root of the matter. In the days of Seth, when men began to call upon the name of the Lord, the words of the prophet, *"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion,"* was being fulfilled in them. One might say that this prophecy had not been written in the days of Seth. It had not been written upon parchment, but it had been written in the book of God's decrees, and experienced in the hearts and consciences of men. All the prophecies of Jehovah are from eternity, and are yea and amen in Christ. Every poor pilgrim, whose anxious heart and weary footsteps seek that city whose builder and maker is God, is upheld, forwarded and guided on his journey by the immutable decree that the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion; and through the

certain fulfillment of God's word, he shall reach the holy city and rest forever in her sacred palaces.

Men are lost to fulfill the Scriptures. Is this a hard saying? Can you not hear it? I am not responsible for the saying, however hard it may appear to be. The Saviour said to the Father in speaking of the twelve, *"All of them have I kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled."* (John 16:12) Had Judas not been lost, the Scriptures would have been broken. The thoughtless and presumptuous man would say, If Judas had to do what he did, he would have been exempt from crime; he would have had no sin. Upon what ground would he have been without sin? What law would exempt him? According to whose judgment would he be innocent? State the law and name the judge, and if it be the law of God and God himself be the judge, then I will agree that the conclusion is the correct one. Jesus, who is himself is the embodiment of all law, and the judge both of the living and dead, said with regard to this matter in reply to Pilate, *"Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."* Instead of the judgment of Christ in this matter concurring with the judgment of men, that under such circumstances of a man would be without sin, he declared that for this very reason, he had the greater sin. Here is a question of responsibility for some of the champions of that cause to settle.

And here is another one: Christ said to the Jews, *"Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of righteous Zacharias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."* (Matthew 23: 34, 35) The Saviour here declares that these men should fill up the measures of their fathers. He also designates the crimes that they should commit in order to do this, not only generic crime but specific crimes; and the end to be answered thereby was that upon them might come all the righteous blood that had been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel to the blood of their most recent victim.

Now upon what principle of justice and judgment could four-thousand years of crime be required at the hand of one generation? Let some of the champions of free agency solve this problem from their favorite standpoint of accountability. I have been accused of denying human responsibility, but in this as in many other things, I have been willfully misrepresented. I have only denied that the atonement of Christ left any responsibility upon his people: and further, I have denied the foolish, imaginary, sentimental and ungrounded conclusion that predestination relieves men of accountability and acquits them of crime upon

principles of equity and justice, and that therefore in order to be accountable, a man must be what men are pleased to call a free agent. I have here referred to these things to show that in the fulfillment of God's decrees according to his word, a deeper principle of justice is involved, than human standards set forth, or human pleaders comprehended.

Again it is said of some in the divine record, that they were before of old ordained to this condemnation. Now if they were before of old ordained to condemnation, when the condemnation came, did it not come in fulfillment of a decree? Who made the decree? Some would say that God made it, but he made it upon conditions. This they think necessary in order that the character of God stand above reproach in the judgment of men. They admit that the decree of election unto life is unconditional, but that the ordination of condemnation is conditional, and that the subjects of this decree are endowed with a free agency whereby they are permitted to work out their condemnation. This notion involves a monstrous absurdity, and that absurdity is this, That God has denied to man the freedom and ability to righteousness whereby we must be saved, but that he has endowed man with that freedom and ability whereby he may and can work out a sure and foreknown condemnation. And this is resorted to in the vain imagination that the character of God is thus vindicated from the charge of unrighteousness, and be justified in his ways to man. Peter in speaking of certain

ones, says they were appointed to disobedience and stumbling. (1 Peter 2:8) Now if they were appointed to disobedience, must they not fulfill the appointment? This they must do, even though God sends them strong delusions to accomplish it. (2 Thess. 2:11)

Many are ready to exclaim now, If this be true, who is to be blamed? This is an old question, and I will give an old and authoritative answer. I will first state the question in its ancient form: *"Thou wilt say unto me then, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?"* Reader, do you recognize your question? If you have never seen it before, if you will read the ninth chapter of Romans, you will find it. I will now give the ancient, time honored answer: *"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?"* Do you recognize the answer? If not, read the ninth chapter of Romans and you will find it. This is not your question; this is not a question of this age only. This question was asked two thousand years ago. Neither is this my answer. This is God's answer, and I am satisfied with it. This question comprehends everything that the cavilers of all ages have urged against the doctrine of God's sovereign decrees. Is not the answer of inspiration plain and decisive? If the solution of this problem is to be found in exceptions to God's decrees, and in making ex-

cuses for him, would he not have put a very different answer in the mouth of his inspired apostle? Is not this the place above all places for such an excuse to be given? Is not this question sprung here for the express purpose of giving a decisive and unequivocal answer? Is not such an answer given? Shall we receive it as final and decisive, as coming from God himself, or shall we seek another, which, although necessarily false, is more pleasing to our pride and presumption, and more acceptable to ignorance and unbelief?

The unbelief of the Jews fulfilled the Scriptures. It is recorded by John that, although he had done many miracles, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias, the prophet, might be fulfilled: *"Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, that I might heal them."* (John 12:37-40) Here it is expressly stated that the reason they could not believe, was that Esaias had foretold their blindness and hardness, and further that this blindness and hardness of heart was given from God. The object of this blindness and hardening was to prevent them from being converted that he might heal them. This language seems to imply that there might have been a possibility of their believing and being converted, had not God's decree intercepted and cut them off.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, said Christ, but my word shall not pass away until all be fulfilled. Whatever the divine record says shall be, must be. The same authority that says, The redeemed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, has also said, The wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand. The same book that says, *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me,"* has also said, *"Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse."* The same God that opened Lydia's heart, that she attended to the things spoken by Paul, hardened Pharaoh's heart that he would not let the people go. The same God that works in his people both to will and to do of his good pleasure, has also put it in the hearts of wicked rulers to fulfill his will, and to agree and give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God be fulfilled. (Rev. 17:17)

When Paul was arraigned by the Jews for preaching what was to them an obnoxious and destructive doctrine, his defense was that he had preached nothing but what Moses and the prophets said should come. If I am censured for what I have herein written, I have but one defense to make, and that is, I have only written what Moses and the prophets and Christ and the apostles have said should be.

(The above is copied from the Signs of January 15, 1900. We feel that the subject is presented clearly and is worth the close attention of our readers. - Editors.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:7-11.

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them unto by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

MEETINGS

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union meeting will meet at Dan River Church, the Lord willing, the 5th Sunday in November. Song service will begin at 10 a.m. and preaching at 10:30. All lovers of the truth are invited to meet with us. We especially appreciate any ministers of our faith and order who have a mind to meet with us. Pleasantville Church will be host.

Elder Haywood Wray, Moderator
Sister Rachel Wray, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR SEPTEMBER 1997

- Mrs. Alpha Ramsey, VA \$7.00
- Mrs. Hazel Branche, VA 5.00
- Mrs. Kenneth Evans, AL 2.00
- Mr. & Mrs. Al Krewatch, DE 30.00
- Mrs. James Meadow, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Mae Hudson, VA 5.00
- James O. Whaliag, OH 2.00
- Mrs. Betty Southard, NC 2.00
- Mrs. Sylvia Conner, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Caroline Martin, WA 7.00
- Mrs. Anita Hash, VA 2.00
- Eld. W.H. Terry, VA 2.00
- A Friend, WY 50.00
- Mrs. Jean Moran, NC 7.00
- W.C. Lake, FL 2.00
- Mrs. Amy Heppler, AZ 12.00
- Troy Shepard, NC 7.00
- Floyd Oakley, AR 2.00
- Mrs. James Burgin, TX 2.00
- Jerry P. Cockman, NC 15.00

OBITUARIES

**OBITUARY FOR
SISTER VELIA STEWART**

We at Oak Grove Church bow our heads in humble submission to our LORD as He has seen fit to take from our midst our dearly beloved sister Harvelia (Velia) Regions Stewart. She was in the nursing home in Winnfield, LA for a long time due to her health, but she came to church as often as she could. We believe she is happy now, even though it is loss for us it is gain for her.

Sister Velia was born September 23, 1901 and she passed from this life October 17, 1997. She was married to Vardell Stewart November 15, 1921 and lived with him happily until his death 1988. Of this union God gave them one son Loyd (Pete) Stewart, two daughters, Rebecca Stewart Ruller and Ardell Stewart Takewell.

Sister Velia united with Oak Grove church May 15, 1946 and was received by her experience for baptism. She was certainly a mother to the church as through the years she was a great comfort to the new comers into the church. She well understood their trials troubles and tribulations as they walked through their journey here. She was church clerk for many years and looking through the age worn pages of church records one can well see that she was the best clerk that Oak Grove church ever had. She was faithful to the end. She fought a good fight. Sister Velia was survived by one son Loyd Stewart of Goldona, LA. two daughters, Mrs. Ardell Stewart Takewell of Bently LA, Mrs Rebecca Stewart Fuller of Tioga LA, 12 Grandchildren, 28 Great Grandchildren and 22 Great Great Grandchildren. Services for Sister Veila was conducted at Oak Grove church by Rlder David Godwin 2:PM Oct. 19, 1997. She was laid to rest beside her late husband in the Weaver cemetery, Chestnut LA to await the coming of her LORD.

Elder David Godwin, Mod.
Kate Mathews, Clerk

IN MEMORY OF
SISTER VIRGINIA SPENCER ZIEGLAR

She was born July 24, 1914, and departed this life July 18, 1997. She was the daughter of the late Joe Ben and Minnie Ingram Spencer.

She was preceded in death by her husband Henry Zieglar and also an infant daughter. Also a Sister Dorella Nester, half sisters Mae and Faye Snider, brothers Carl and Cecil Spencer, and half brothers Raymond and Akers Shough. She is survived by one brother Leo Spencer of Martinville, Va. two half sisters Rita Martin of High Point, N. C., Rada Durham of Bassett, Va., and a half brother James C. Shough of Patrick Springs, Va.

She was a member of Liberty Primitive Baptist Church for 36 years. She often spoke of how she loved her Church. Due to sickness and deaths she didn't attend Church regular for the past few years.

Her funeral was held at Howell's Funeral Home in Stuart, Va. On July 21, 1997, by Elder John Wingfield and Elder Bernice Joyce. Interment was at the Spencer Shough Cemetery, near her home.

Done by order of Liberty Church in conference on September 6, 1997. By Sister's in Hope, Clara Freeman and Iris Puckett.

Eld. John T. Wingfield, Mod.
Deacon Paul A. Puckett, Cler