

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

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Song

**Blessed be the everlasting God,
The Father of our Lord;
Be his abounding mercy
praised,
His majesty adored.**

**When from the dead he raised
his Son,
And called him to the sky,
He gave our souls a lively hope
That they should never die.**

**What though our inbred sins
require
Our flesh to see the dust;
Yet as the Lord our Saviour
rose,
So all his followers must.**

**There's an inheritance divine
Reserved against the day;
Tis uncorrupted, undefiled,
And cannot waste away.**

**Saints by the power of God are
kept
Till the salvation come;
We walk by faith as strangers
here
Till Christ shall call us home.**

Watts

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EDITORIAL

SIN



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

The subject of sin has been upon my mind for some time. therefore I feel a need to write something concerning it. This is a subject far too vast for any man to cover in a short treatise; for even volumes could be written if one is blessed of God to do so; yet I will attempt to set forth a few thoughts for your consideration, and pray that God will guide my every thought.

That the world is filled with sin and sinners I think no one will dare deny, yet there is much contention concerning the author of it, why it is in the world and the effects of it. I do not know who or how nor when the term "author of sin" originated, but I have never found it in the Holy Scriptures. The word "author" is found only in the new testament, and that only three times. 1 Cor 14:33 reads, *"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."* Sin is the cause of much confusion, and often brings war instead of peace. I believe there would be more peace among the people of the church if the term was never again used. In Heb 5:9 we read. *"And being made perfect, he (Christ) became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him,"* And in Heb 12:2 we find that *Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. Christ was delivered for our offenses (sins), and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Rom 4:25 & 5:1).

We know that God hates sin, and all of his holy wrath is against sin: yet we know also that sin could not be in the world if God had no purpose in it. In Rev 4:11 we read, *"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."* Every thing that God created or made was very good for the purpose it would fulfill; even Satan, who was formed by

God's own hands. ***"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."*** (Gen 1:31). Sin, however, is not a thing made or created. for it is only a transgression of God's just and holy laws, as John wrote in 1 John 3:4, ***"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."*** James tells us, ***"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."***

God did not make or create sin, but he did provide the way for it to enter the world, which was by man. God made man subject to vanity, he put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden, he commanded Adam to not eat of it, and he purposed that the serpent should be there to deceive Eve. Had any one of these things not been done Adam would be in that garden today as upright and sinless as in the day he was created, and he would still not be a fit subject for heaven and immortal glory; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and he was only flesh and blood; and we are only Adam multiplied in the flesh. In Heb 9:27-28 we read, ***"And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many."*** Adam knew neither good nor evil, there was neither sickness nor pain, all that he wanted to eat was in abundant supply, and he had communion with his Maker. There was nothing that he needed or wanted that

he did not have, therefore he had no reason or need to worship, praise, offer thanks or cry unto God for any thing. But in the counsel of our three-in-one God man must do these things, therefore sin must enter that Adam should die; for the wages of sin is death. ***"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death is passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."*** (Rom 5:12). God did not make Adam transgress his holy law and die, but he knew that he would, for he said, ***"In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*** He did not say, ***"If thou eatest thereof,"*** but, ***"In the day thou eatest thereof."*** When Satan deceived Eve and she ate of the forbidden fruit she gave also to her husband and he did eat. Being a figure of him that was to come (Christ) Adam was not deceived, but because of his love for his bride he died that he might be with her, for he had no power to redeem her. Jesus also loved his bride, the church, whom his Father had chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and he would die to redeem her from her sins. Jesus said, ***"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father."*** Jesus came into the world to redeem his bride only and not the whole world. His bride had sinned, and being her husband he must pay the debt incurred by her. She, being

his church, is also his body, and he is the head of the body. In Eph. 5:38 Paul wrote, *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."* In 1 Cor 12:27 he wrote, *"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."* And in Col 1:18, *"And he is the head of the body, the church."* This establishes the vital unity we must have with him in order to have eternal life, "for in him we live, and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28). If we be what we hope to be, the chosen children of God, the bride of Jesus Christ, then we have a life in him, a life that was given us before the foundation of the world, but is only made manifest to us in the new birth. As sure as God chose a people in Christ, there must be also a people he did not choose. In the Scriptures his chosen children are called saints, sons, sheep, bride, a peculiar people, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, the election or elect, etc., and Jeremiah said, *"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."* Jesus said, *"No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up again at the last day."* All of the seed of Adam who were not chosen in Christ are described as a generation of vipers; workers of iniquity; of your father the devil; natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed; cursed children that cannot cease from sin; dogs; sorcerers, etc. These are

those that 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: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. These are also those who stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed; whose names shall not be found written in the book of life, and shall be cast into the lake of fire with death and hell. (2 Thes 2:11, 1 Pet 2:8, Rev 20:14-15).*

This is a hard doctrine and will not be accepted by the fleshly, carnal mind of anyone. *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be."* *"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."* Those who have not the Spirit of Christ will tell you that God would be unjust to chose some and leave others to perish, and not give every one a chance to be saved. Praise be unto God that salvation is not left to chance, nor to the will or works of man, and may he forbid that his children should ever call him unjust, for every thing that God doeth is holy and just: there is no unrighteousness with him. All men are dead in trespasses and sin until born again of the Spirit of God. How, then can a dead man do any thing? There must be life before there is action. Also,

“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.” I would also ask, Would a mind that is enmity (hatred) against God chose to have God save him? Of course not. The Scriptures tells us that God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Does not God have the right to do with his own exactly as it pleases him? He is the potter that hath formed all men from the same lump of clay; one unto honour and one unto dishonour. Shall we then say unto him, Why hast thou made me thus? That would be as foolish as asking why he did not make us angels. There are those who are vessels fitted to destruction, and vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory. If we then be among those prepared unto glory, and have been given a hope in Christ that we are so prepared, what better reason or motivation could we have for worshiping, praising, glorifying and loving God with all our heart, and soul and mind? which is the first and great commandment. But in the flesh are we any better than others? No, in no wise: for we are all under sin: as it is written, ***“There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that seeketh after God: all have sinned and come short of the righteousness of God.”*** The only difference between us (I hope I am included) and them is that we are ***“justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in***

Christ Jesus.” All of our sins were imputed unto Christ, and his righteousness is imputed unto us through faith (which is the gift of God) if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Our belief in Christ is also given, for, ***“Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.”***

The redemption that is in Christ Jesus, as noted above, is in his pure and precious blood that he shed upon the tree of Calvary; ***“for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.”*** All the rivers of blood shed by animals and fowls in ceremonial sacrifices under the old law has never atoned for one sin, but those sacrifices were only patterns of heavenly things, pointing to the sacrifice of Christ, ***“and by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”*** Who are the sanctified? They are God’s chosen, ***“Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”***

“The sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” ***“And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death”*** Paul said, ***“For I was alive without the law once: but when the law came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained unto life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me,***

and by it slew me." This is one of the deaths that is precious in the eyes of the Lord. *"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."* The other death is when he calls his saints home to heaven to be with him forever. Brethren, if God has put his laws into our minds, and written them in our hearts, then we have also been slain by sin. We have become dead unto sin, but alive unto God. Therefore Paul exhorts us to, *"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."* Brethren, let us pray that God will give us grace to do these things, working in us to do those things that are pleasing in his sight, because we know not how: *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."* John tells us, *"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."* Paul tells us of the old man which is born after the flesh and is evil; and of the new man which after God is created in righteous-

ness and true holiness. The old man is not changed with the new birth, and his works always have been and always will be evil; which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, wrath, strife, etc.. But the new man is Christ in you the hope of glory: and by his Spirit will lead you: *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* *"Now the fruits of the Spirit are these: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."* The old man and the new man occupy the same body, therefore we have a continual warfare, *"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. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law."* Paul tells us that if we live after the flesh (the old man) we shall die; but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. In another place he tells us. *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."* And, *"So with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."* John said, *"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this*

life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life." Again Paul said, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"* And in Rom.4:6-8 we read, *"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whom the Lord will not impute sin."*

Brethren, seeing that we have been freed from the law of sin and death, and are now under the law of life in Christ, let us pray daily and continually that the Spirit of Christ will lead us in the path of righteousness, and cause us to worship him in spirit and in truth.

This was written in the spirit of love to the beloved children of the most high God. Should you find any part of it not in accord with the Holy scriptures, cast it aside; and put a mantle of charity over this poor sinner. I would suggest that you read and study especially the 6th, 7th, & 8th. chapters of Romans for a much better description and understanding of the law of sin and death, compared with the law of life in Christ Jesus. May the grace of God be with you always. Your prayers of faith are needed and desired by this poor sinner.

Elder C.C. Wilbanks

ARTICLES

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. (Col. 1:13).

Jesus told Nicodemus, ye must be born again. Except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Jesus told Nicodemus ye must be born again, and we see now why a man must be born again, and we see why a man must be born again, because it is a Spiritual kingdom, things of the spirit and things of the flesh don't mix. Since it is a spiritual kingdom a man of the flesh cannot enter in, nor can he see or understand the things of the spirit. Because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. 2:14.

Nicodemus, who I believe was a well educated man, couldn't understand this one spiritual truth, ye must be born again. When a man is born again, there is the seed, a spiritual seed, born into the very heart or soul of a man, which grows and had conflict with the natural or fleshy man, causing much tribulation, teaching this man to lose dependence or trust in his own work or ways for salvation, and to trust in the work of the Saviour. This belief in Jesus is known as faith, without which it is impossible to please God. This faith is wrought in you by the work of this new spiritual being, it is called and rightly so a God given faith, we believe this belief and

this doctrine is what we know as justification by faith. Volumes could be written on this subject alone, but I will move on with saying, this could not happen without the new birth. Another thing about this spiritual birth is this. 2 Cor. 4:7 We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. Think about a treasure, can you even in a small measure, think of any treasure near so great. See a spiritual birth means a spiritual man and you are given to believe Father, and that you are a son of God. Consider the richest family on earth, what it would mean to be their son, but it would be nothing compared to this. Like Moses of old, the riches of the world was no value, compared to this. As the poet wrote, a child of Jehovah, a subject of grace. I'm of the seed royal, a dignified race.

This treasure we now have in earthen vessels, think about that thing, when people have what they consider a treasure, they seek a safe place for it, such as a bank, a vault or such. But this treasure has been placed in the hearts of men of flesh, and we all know the weakness of the flesh, even as we also know the power of God. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. This is the wisdom and power of God, such is his wisdom, same people live here, are blessed with this spiritual birth, the conflicts and blessings which comes with it, and their close friends know nothing of it. They may notice a change in a man, the things he now likes in comparison to what he used to like, his everyday actions, his talk, but there is no way he can see or understand the peace, the deep personal feelings when blessed with a crumb from the Father's table. God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom and can only be seen and entered by one who has been born again.

I often think about the difference between the great masses of people who are attending church regularly, and like the Pharisee, offer their own works, their own self-righteousness and know nothing of the inner peace and blessings of one, blessed with faith in the sacrifice of God and sees the great salvation which is theirs.

Now we see the men I have been writing about, those who have been born again, who have been blessed with this God given faith are now translated into the kingdom of his dear son Col. 1:15.

However this doesn't mean translated into the glorified kingdom where saints will spend eternity with their blessed saviour. This will be a part of the kingdom of God here on earth, which the believer can feel and enjoy, but the world knows nothing of. This doesn't mean the body will be translated as with Enoch, but more like moving from one office to another, like now their citizenship is in heaven, while their body waits for the day the Lord has determined to remove them from this world to be with him in glory. Now we see this believer as a person we could call a misfit, living here on earth, in a body of flesh, tied to this world with natural ties, but at the same time a citizen of heaven. His heart and desires, the things he wants and loves are no longer things of the flesh, but spiritual things of heaven. He has been blessed to taste of the love and tender mercies of heaven so now that is his desire. He now feels as the part did when he wrote, this world is not my home. He can't hasten the day of his departure, but he now has a God given faith to wait for and trust in God.

He has been translated into God's kingdom, delivered from the power of darkness, and waiting for the day of redemption, to leave flesh and troubles of this

world behind and realize and enjoy the blessings of heaven in their fulness.

May we be blessed with more faith and understanding of God's love and tender mercies, toward his bride, the children of God.

A brother, I hope
Frank Hunt

VOICES OF THE PAST

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

PREACHING THE CROSS
October, 1954



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

Paul says in his first letter to the "Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ"; "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). The preaching of the cross is far more extensive than proclaiming that Christ was crucified on the cross on Golgotha Hill almost two thousand years ago. May God reveal unto us and inspire us to grasp a little of the "greatness" of the subject of the cross.

The construction of two pieces of timber so that one crosses another

results in a cross. Two lines drawn so that one crosses another is said to be a cross. Figures of the cross both in nature and craftsmanship are too numerous for you to count, even from where you are now sitting. One principle contradicting another principle creates a cross. Trials and tribulations are crosses because they are the result of conflicting principles. When life comes into contact with death there is suffering which manifests a cross.

Proclaiming the contrasting characteristics of Christ would be preaching the cross of Christ. The subject of the cross of Christ would necessarily embrace all His life from the time He was born as Son of man until the time He was resurrected from the tomb. Paul was inspired to write in Ephesians 2: 15, 16, "For to make in himself twain one new man, so making peace: and that he might reconcile both unto God by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." It was befitting that the final climax of Christ's sufferings be on a cross. He took up His cross when He was made lower than the angels. When the Son of God took upon Himself the character of the Son of Man the cross was made manifest. The new man was the cross-breeding of God and man. We must proclaim the dual characteristics of Christ to preach the cross. When we preach Him as God-man, Divine-human, King-priest, Master-servant, abased-exalted, and crucified-resurrected, we preach the cross. When we declare Him to be possessed of both strength and weakness; flesh and Spirit; us and Him, and, the Cre-

ator and creature we are preaching the cross.

He being both divine and human, He was possessed with the cross of wills. The human will prayed, "*If it be possible let this cup pass*"; yet the divine will said, "*Not my will but Thine be done.*" Jehovah was the Father of Jesus and Mary was His mother. As the Son of God, He lives eternally; as the Son of man He had a timely existence which began to be made manifest when He was born of the virgin, Mary, and ended when He died on the cross. Did the body of Jesus come to an end when He died on the cross. Did the body of Jesus come to an end when it was placed in the tomb? No! No! No!

There was a dissolution of His body and Spirit on the day of crucifixion. His Spirit was commended unto His Father; the body was laid in the tomb. This same Spirit raised Jesus from the dead on the third day. He became the "firstfruits." His body was the first human body to be clothed with immortality. The Man, Christ Jesus, was raised from the dead! This was accomplished in His resurrection. He being a cross of Himself and us, we being in Him, He being raised from the dead, gives us the basis of our hope of the resurrection of our bodies by the same Spirit. (See Romans 8:11).

Jesus Christ was King-priest. He was ruler over His own body. He was the first and only one born of woman who was able to keep His body under subjection to such extent that He did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. His composition being such,

His body was an acceptable sacrifice and gift to the Father for His people. We find in Hebrews 5:1 that the duties of a high priest were to "*offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.*"

This High Priest forever perfected His people in the sight of God by offering His own blood as a sacrifice and His body, the life He lived here, as the acceptable gift unto His Father. He is our King-priest. He is the sole head and governor of the church, those who are called out by Him. His divine generation, His royal descent, His perfect nature, His wonderful offering, all this well qualifies Him to atone for His people. It further qualifies Him as the perfect King and Priest to illuminate His people with His light and nourish them with His wonderful gifts of grace and peace. He blesses them with that consoling peace that the world knows nothing about. He orders His people to walk in paths of righteousness. He leads them and holds them steady with His hand. When they falter and fall by the wayside, His eye is ever on them and His hand beneath them so that He gently picks them up and encourages them with the wonders of His power and grace. He purifies their souls with the washing of regeneration and promises purification of their bodies. He intercedes for them to the Father within the Holiest of Holies. Priests before Him could only offer sacrifice of the blood of animals; He offered Himself. It was necessary for high priests before Him to offer sacrifices daily. He offered Himself once. They offered for their own sins as well as the sins of

the people; He being without sin, could offer Himself for the sins of His people only. He entered once into the Holy Place and obtained eternal redemption for us by His own blood which could take away sin; they could only enter into the shadow of the Holy Place in the worldly sanctuary by blood of goats and calves which could not take away sin. The maneuvers of the high priests of the Levitical Priesthood were only shadows and types; His was the real and true.

We must preach Him as being both Master and servant if we preach the cross. As master His demands were that the law be kept to a jot and tittle; as servant, He perfectly fulfilled the law. As master, He demanded that the sinner be punished, as servant, He took upon Himself this punishment in behalf of His people. As master, He instructs His people; as servant, He comes into their hearts and enables them to carry out His instructions. He orders them to perform and performs for them that which He orders.

He is great and small. He is so great that all His people are in Him. He is small enough to dwell in the heart of one of His little ones. He is strong enough to have power over all flesh, yet weak enough that He said while upon earth, *"The Son of Himself can do nothing."* *"The Father worketh hitherto, and I work."* He was rich and poor. He was so rich that He owns all things; so poor that He said, *"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head"* (Matt. 8:20). He expe-

rienced all the crosses of opposing characteristics and experiences. We must preach this in order to preach the cross.

Dear ones, is it not a comfort to you to realize that your Savior knows how to sympathize with your cross? You have never felt grief more than He. Your temptations have never been greater than His temptations. You have never experienced being forsaken to a greater extent than He experienced. Is He not a wonderful sympathizing Savior? He knows by experience your every trial and sorrow.

Preaching the cross includes not only the Cross of Jesus Christ but also the cross of His people. We read in Matt. 16:24, *"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."* The cross of two opposing characteristics consisting of the flesh and the Spirit must have been the cross under consideration. Each child of God *"takes up his cross"* when he is born of the Spirit. He is not familiar with the cross before this time because all he knows is his carnal natural desires, thus he is in fellowship with himself. He is in perfect agreement with himself before this miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit takes up its abode in the soul of an individual he begins to experience the cross the world knows nothing about. A child of God soon learns, *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit"* (John 3:6). We learn by sad experience that

we cannot spiritualize the flesh nor "fleshilize" the Spirit. (Pardon the newly coined word, but this is the only way I know to make it plain.) There is no blending the two together in this world, thus, the cross. The flesh shall be spiritualized in the resurrection. The soul is spiritualized in being born of the Spirit in this life. We cannot reform nor renovate the flesh so that it can agree with the spiritual, neither can we bring the Spirit down so that it can agree with the flesh. Paul said in Galatians 5:17, *"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: [the cross] so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."* Those born of the Spirit are possessed with dual contrary characteristics and experiences. No wonder we are strangers to ourselves!

The Spirit is spiritual and the flesh is natural. The flesh is carnal and the Spirit is holy. The Spirit is immortal and the flesh is mortal. The Spirit is righteous and the flesh sinful. The Spirit is living and the flesh is dying. The regenerated mind serves the law of God but the flesh serves the law of sin. We experience the cross of life and death, joys and sorrows, good and evil, abased and exalted, humility and pride, forsaken and owned, and many, many other conflicts too numerous to mention.

Hart was inspired to write many hymns in harmony with the strange conflicting crosses of a child of God. He wrote:

*"How strange is the course that
a Christian
must steer,*

*How perplexed is the path he
must tread!*

*The hope of his happiness rises
from fear,*

*And his life he receives from the
dead.*

*His fairest pretensions must
wholly be waived,*

*And his best resolutions be
crossed;*

*Nor can he expect to be perfectly
saved,*

'Til he finds himself utterly lost.

*When all this is done, and his
heart is assured*

Of the total remission of sins,

*When his pardon is signed and
his peace is*

procured,

*From that moment his conflict
begins."*

How strange that one must lose his own life to find it! He must feel himself to be lost before he can be saved. He must die in order to live. He must fear before he hopes. The righteous views himself as sinful and the greatest is made to feel *"less than the least."* The way up is down.

The text says, *"The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness."* It has a reverse effect upon those who perish. Those who are not born of God cannot receive the things of the Spirit. Preaching the

cross "cuts them to the heart" while it "pricks us in the heart." It antagonizes them and comforts us. It drives them away while it draws us. It edifies us and confuses them. It is to us, "the power of God"; to them, "foolishness."

It is foolishness to them because they feel capable of performing righteousness, atoning for their little mistakes, reforming and renovating themselves, dedicating their lives to God, and making heaven their home; so, why the cross? Why was it necessary for Christ to perform righteousness and it be imputed to them? Why was it necessary for Christ to die on the cross considering they are able to take care of themselves?

Why is it necessary for the Spirit of God to directly work in their hearts when they feel capable of performing the work required with the spirit they naturally possess? Why is the Spirit of God a cross to the spirit of the carnal or natural mind when the natural mind itself seems to them to be sufficient to choose God and work righteousness? Why are they not in strict agreement?

The aforestated questions above I know to be in harmony with the thoughts of the unregenerated mind. Preaching the cross was to me foolishness for years after I was ordained by man to preach! I religiously preached the power of man and the wisdom of man to make heaven his home! I have no stones to throw at them because I was as conscientious and honest in my convictions as anyone could be. I had not experienced

the cross; therefore, I could not preach it. I know that something occurred to me one night as I closed a discourse on the subject, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." This mighty something that took hold of me crossed everything I had ever known and brought to nought all I had thought myself to be. I trust this was the Holy Spirit that manifested my righteousness as filthy rags in His sight. I trust that I was given the Holy Ghost conscience which was a cross to my natural conscience. My life since that time has been full of conflicts and crosses. I have been convinced that it is through hell we enter heaven, and by the cross we obtain the crown.

"But unto us, which are saved, it is the power of God." God's power caused us to look to the cross of Christ for remission of sins. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin. It is through the power of God that our sins are remitted because it required the blood of His own Son shed on the cross to justify the remission of our sins. It is through the power of God that we are given His Spirit which is so contradictory to our natural carnal spirit that it is neither desired nor can be obtained by the power. The things we naturally love the cross causes us to hate. The things we naturally consider wisdom the cross manifests as foolishness. What a cross between the natural and spiritual mind! What a rugged cross experienced by those upon whom the power of God hath wrought a work!

Sometime ago at a funeral the choir sang, "*The Old Rugged Cross.*" As

they sang the words, *"I'll exchange it some day for a crown,"* my mind was deeply impressed upon that grand exchange. A crown of immortality awaits the mortal. A crown of righteousness awaits the enlivened sinner. A crown of glory is laid up for those who feel so low and insignificant. A crown of eternal life will swallow up those who die in the Lord. The incorruptible crown shall clothe the corruptible body. We experience the cross here, but beyond this sphere of time we shall realize the crown.

It was said of Jesus in Hebrews 12:2, *"Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."* We are to follow Him. Because of His accomplishments, that joy is set before us. We press towards the mark of the prize of the high calling when we shall be called upon high to sit with Him. Should we not be emboldened to endure the cross and be encouraged to run the race that is set before us seeing that such a crown is our reward and prize at the end of the race. May God give you strength and courage to endure the cross with patience and persevere in the race with faith. May He grace you with the gifts of His Spirit so that you can fight as a good soldier the foes that dwell within. May you be supplied with all your need so that at the end of the way you may say with Paul, *"For I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept*

the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: not to me only, but unto them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. 6:6-8). May God bless these thoughts to your comfort and edification.

Elder E.J. Lambert

WHAT IS PRAYER?

In the preceding number of the SIGNS, sister Gentry asked for our opinion and for the views, of others, on the subject of prayer. The subject of prayer has occasioned us much reflection at times, for the last forty-five years, and yet we have been so dull a scholar in the school of Christ, if indeed we are a pupil of his school, that after almost half a century's tuition on the subject, we have not to confess the humiliating truth, that we often ask and receive not, because we ask amiss; and to this day we know not how to pray as we ought. In the year 1811, when but young in our profession, we resolved to be much engaged in prayer, and, as we had read somewhere that,

*"Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his
knees,"*

we were fully resolved to make him tremble continually. We supposed

then that prayer consisted in periodical forms, in which we were required to humble ourselves before God, and ask of him whatever we were in need of. To our inexperienced mind there was much virtue in prayer, that is, in the form and language of prayer, and it was our impression that the poet was right when he said,

*“Restraining prayer we cease to fight;
The weakest saint upon his knees,”*

we were fully resolved to make him tremble continually. We supposed then that prayer consisted in periodical forms, in which we were required to humble ourselves before God, and ask of him whatever we were in need of. To our inexperienced mind there was much virtue in prayer, that is, in the form and language of prayer, and it was our impression that the poet was right when he said,

*“Restraining prayer we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the christian’s armor bright,*

And we verily thought, by our constant praying, we should avoid temptation, and live above doubts and fears. We should keep the old tempter so terrified with our devotions, that he would not dare assail us with any wicked suggestions. But we soon learned that our prayers were not the right kind to keep Satan at bay, for it was not long before it really appeared

to us that we were much more annoyed with his company when performing our solemn devotions, than at any other time. Often, when the hour of prayer, which we had set, came, we were either inflated with pride that we were so devout, or crushed down with such a sense of our sinfulness that it seemed wicked and presumptuous to call upon the name of the Lord. Sometimes, when about to rush into the presence of the Lord like the unthinking horse into battle, we found our thoughts, like the fool’s eyes, were wandering to the ends of the earth, and we have been unable sometimes to utter one word of supplication. Self-abased before the Lord, we have risen up from our knees, and left the place, concluding that we could not pray, and perhaps in reality praying, or breathing forth the heart-felt and heaven-inspired desire of our inmost soul, that God would manifest himself as our God and portion and give us grace whereby we might serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

These earnest desires breathed forth to God, we hardly dared to call them prayer, for we have imbibed the idea that prayer must have more formality about it, that we must go into some closet, or secret place, literally, and fall on our knees, or prostrate our body before the Lord, and then and there utter our prayers in an appropriate utterance of words. Often like sister Gentry, we have been in great heaviness because we could not pray, or rather because we were unable to satisfy ourself that we had prayed. But

we are now led to believe that the most fervent prayers we have ever offered to God, were indicted by groanings which we could not utter. There have been times when it has really seemed to us that the Spirit truly helped our infirmities, and made intercession for us in that way, and we were made more sensible of our entire dependence on God, than we could have been if we had believed that we had ability to pray when and as we pleased.

Volumes might be written in reply to the inquiry of our sister, "What is prayer?" without exhausting the subject. But in this short article, we can only touch briefly upon the subject. Secret prayer, or that prayer of the saint which is poured forth as a communion between God and the individual worshiper, we believe is often made when we may be in the open field, on the public highway, or when lying upon our bed, but it is always when none but God, who seeth in secret, knows the emotions of the suppliant's heart. And this is what we understand to be entering into our closet and shutting the door; here it becomes a matter between the God of heaven and that saint on whom God has graciously poured the spirit of prayer and of supplication.

Social prayer is that in which a number of christians are led by the same spirit to call upon the name of the Lord, and in which one is mouth for them all; such praying must necessarily be audibly uttered, so that all who are present may understandingly unite in the prayer. This public or social devotion is as important in its

place as the secret aspirations of the praying saint in the closet. But all vain show and ostentation parade should be avoided. We are to remember that God is in heaven, and we are on his footstool, and it is becoming that our words should be few, for his people are not heard for their much speaking, nor for their loud speaking, nor for the sanctimonious tone in which the words of prayer are uttered. In the public assemblies of the saints, we do not find that every praying soul has been distinguished with the gift to be mouth for the church, but all the saints are blessed with the gift of prayer, whereby they may unite in the petitions offered, so far as they are indicted by the Spirit of God.

In regard to the answers of prayer, we are not to expect that there is either power, merit or efficacy in our prayers, in themselves considered, to entitle us to the things which we pray for. God, who has all things needful for us, either for time or eternity, in store, gives the spirit of prayer to his children, and that spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God; it knoweth what is the will of God, and it invites within us the desire for what God designs to bestow in answer to prayer. So, instead of our bringing the Lord under obligation to bestow blessings on us for our prayers, here is an additional dependence on God, not only for the things that we need, but also for the spirit to ask him for them. And when we speak of our children and neighbors being quickened and born of God, in answer to our prayers, we mean to be understood that God

has not only made bare his holy arm, and revealed his salvation in the conversion of sinners, and in reviving his church, but that he has made his children desire, and by the spirit of supplication, has led them to pray for the accomplishment of all these things. There are many things connected with this subject, on which, at this time, we cannot dwell. Among others, faith is indispensable. Not a faith of human origin, that we can create or exercise, but that faith which is the fruit of the Spirit and the gift of God; that faith of which Christ is the author and the finisher, and which is called the faith of Jesus Christ, by which we live spiritually, and that faith which is of the operation of God. He that cometh unto God must believe that he is. How can we devoutly pray to a God, the existence of whom we doubt or disbelieve? And if we believe there is a God, how can we ask of him for blessings, unless we have faith to assure us that God has them in store for us, and that he will freely bestow them upon us through Jesus Christ our Lord? Without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith lays hold on his promises, and gives us confidence that they shall all be fulfilled. Faith looks to Jesus as the only medium through whom we may approach the Father; for he says, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." He is also the only medium through which spiritual blessings are sent down from heaven upon the saints. God has blessed his children with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the

foundation of the world; so we have no reason to expect any spiritual blessing out of Christ, or in any other way than according as he hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world.

Middletown, N.Y., April 1, 1856.

Elder Beebe

From the book "The Hope and Calling" written by A.P. Mewborn.

I have a desire to write some of what I hope to be the dealings of the Lord with me, and if I do, I must have a starting point. When I was seven or eight years old, I was fascinated when I could be in the presence of my Grandfather, especially if there were other ministers present, and there often were, to hear them discuss the scriptures. He was gifted in prophecy, and when they would discuss the things that must surely come to pass, I would be both horrified and completely enthralled with their conversation. I remember on one occasion when he became irritated because I had used his bible, and lost a place he had left a marker in, he requested my Daddy to take him to town. When he returned, he came to me and said, "Albert it came to me that if I would give you a bible, you would let mine alone." My first bible, oh what a treasure. I firmly believed in that hour, that before I was a man I would completely master it. I really believed that any person who would apply themselves properly, could indeed know the bible

and all things taught in it. I began to study and have studied in my own way ever since, but all I have learned is that if God does not reveal the sacred truth therein contained that no one can really know the bible, or any part of it. I am also convinced that at the age of seven or eight years, I believed and hoped in the same conception of Christianity that I love and believe in today. I am also persuaded that I did advocate in a small way, the very same doctrine I try so hard to preach today. Sometimes I am comforted by some of the experiences of my youth that strengthens my hope even now.

As a child, I was sometimes very impressed with the scripture, 1st Corinthians 13-11, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." We hope to hear Paul preach the above as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. What I heard often made me wonder if the ambition to become a man is not opposite of things that would bring joy, happiness and pleasant living to us.

We hear by faith our Lord Jesus Christ speak of children, Luke 18-16, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Also He teaches Matthew 18-3, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

When I was a child of eight years old, I remember many things I wished for. I could not wait to become a man, but tried to describe these desires to

an adult, who the neighbors looked up to as a profound Christian, I was told by him that my conception of heaven was childish, that I was looking for something for nothing, and that heaven was for only those that were willing to work for it. He intimated that one can become a child of God only by sacrifice, giving, christian works and christian living. I remember thinking, "But I thought as a child." The description of a Christian that he gave me was certainly filled with high ideals, and was truly a coveted position, but again I wondered, where is the child of GRACE? Where is the child of MERCY? Where is the repentant child? But alas, I could not then, even as I cannot now answer the numerous questions that plague my mind. However, I was admonished just to wait until I became a man, and these childish questions that I asked him would be answered. Oh how I wanted to be a man! I needed some answers. I was enshrouded with a dense cloud of darkness and the weight of it kept pressing me down, down, until I was sure the cloud would never lift, until I became a man, and was able to put away childish things, as the neighbor "man of God" promised I could. I visited him again, (although right now, I wonder why), and was told to "go to work, search the scriptures and in the cloud of darkness, I would be instructed by God to find my way, and then I could see for myself what I must do."

About this time I continually sought for a formula that would make me feel like a man, so I could perform the

things the Arminian neighbor and his Evangelist has instructed me to do, assuring me that I too, could become a Christian if only I would, "Study to show myself approved of God, a workman who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." But even as he instructed me, in the back of my mind I could not help but hear, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." But alas, as I compared to this minister, I was yet a child and to him this kind of thinking would be indeed childish and I did not want to be a child, but a man with enough knowledge and prestige to advise "children" like me to grow up and be kind of Christian and citizen they wanted to be.

I began to study the Bible to try to find a doctrine I could prove, that would allow one to become a man, who was able to stand on his feet, and hold up his head, and know that he was a Christian, and be able to point the unsaved in the right direction. The more I searched for the light, the more darkness I beheld. I branched out with my study, I began to read all the books I could get about religion. My Grandfather, who was a Primitive Baptist Minister, had not long ago died, and he had a good library of religious books, and I began to read them, but the more I studied his books, and the Bible, the more I doubted the advisability of becoming a man. As I read after ministers like Gill, Huntington, Cowin, Hardy, Cold, Pittman, the Hassells and too many more to name here, I became more confused than ever.

It appeared to these men to be a wonderful thing to be kept small and dependent as a child, helpless and needing always the "Father" as a counselor and looking to Him, not for help, but for every good that was given them. I tried to talk to my parent's pastor, and he seemed to turn away from my questions. It seemed to me that no one knew and no one seemed to care about the fact that I could not ever be anything but a helpless child. Oh how I tried to pray that I might be like other children seemed to be, not concerned about death and the hereafter, but no relief came to me.

About this time in my life, I became stricken with acute Bright's Disease (uremic poison). As the Lord would have it, I over heard the doctor tell my Daddy that I could not live, and that my time could only be a few hours. At first this frightened me, and I remember waking each morning and feeling of my body to see if I were dead. The doctor ordered a special nurse (RN) for me. She was real good to me and tried so much to comfort me. She would each day, at my request, read to me from the Bible. One day as she was reading to me, it seemed to me that I was more convinced than ever about not being able to "put away childish things," then her voice sounding to me to be very far away was saying in the language of Jesus "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." Oh, I cannot describe the relief that flooded through me. How wonderful it was that God loved my being as helpless as a little child! My hope

was not dead! This was my first knowledge of a HOPE, it was so alive that right then I was not afraid to die. I wanted to shout this wonderful news to everyone, especially to those who felt to be helpless, and as a child, no longer was it important to me to put away childish things, because MY GOD loved children. But alas, I could not tell anyone of this joy. I was afraid my parents would not understand. I was afraid my brothers and sisters would not care. Somehow I felt it to be too precious not to share, but my lips were sealed, and the only joy that came from this hope was within me.

As my sickness grew worse, and continued on, I grew more and more despondent about living, and my only comfort came as God gave me to understand something of what the nurse read to me. I knew that those who loved me had very little hope for my recovery and I was convinced that if I could just pass away in my sleep, it would be better for all concerned. But just as I could not live, I could not die. I could not grow up to be a man and put away childish things because I could not live. I could not bring any relief to my wonderful parents, who worked so hard to support a large family, because I could not live, you see I was taught in that furnace of affliction that life and death is in His hand. I finally went into what the doctor called a "coma". He told my parents that I could not hear or feel anything, but I could. I could hear them talking, always seemingly in whispers, and I was immensely thirsty. I knew they believed I would die at any time,

and that was no longer important. I wanted water! I remembered that God had used water as an example of His love, and nothing seemed more beautiful to me than this water, a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal. I could see this precious water, but had no power to get to it. Nothing has ever been more beautiful or desirable to me than that beautiful water. I felt that if I could just get to that river of water, all my troubles would be over, and I would thirst no more forever. Here again, I was that helpless child, and had not the power to reach that water. Then again, I seemed to hear my nurse reading in that faraway voice, "Without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission of sin." It was about dark, or so it seemed to me, there were several visitors in the room, some I knew and some I did not, when suddenly without any effort on my part, I sat up in bed and blood came from my nose with such power that it went on the floor at the foot of my bed. My first thoughts were, now I can ask for water. My Mother has always been a beautiful woman, and a wonderful person to me, but she was never more beautiful than when she brought me a glass of that wonderful water. I could see the "Mother of the Church of The Living God," as she administered a "Cup of water to one of these little Ones," for it is life unto them. How wonderful are His judgements and His ways past finding out!

As I began to improve and to go about being a child again, I was oftentimes reminded that I had promised God that I would tell His people, "His chil-

dren," about that wonderful water, "LOVE," that He had given me. However, I am not different from other helpless creatures, and as soon as I was not thirsty, that water lost its wonderful value and it seemed again, I was shut up, my lips were sealed, and I could never say, "How great things God had done for me."

Not long after this, a mule kicked me and crippled me for life. Again, I was made as helpless as a child, and made dependent on some other power for every ministration of life that I received. I am now (69) sixty-nine years old, and since that time that has been the story of my life, something always comes along to keep me down, small and always dependent on a greater power.

Now organized religion says it should be our ambition to give up, become a worker, put away childish things, and to use our lives to teach others to turn from the error of their ways, and thus cause their manhood to be used for the glory of God. But when I remember that our Lord has taught, "Everyone that is exalted shall be abased," "I am persuaded that it is better for me to remain a child.

During the remainder of what men call "childhood," this still small voice continued to remind me of the promise I made to God to tell His people of His wonderful love, grace and the power to forgive sins for His humble poor. But I felt so unqualified, and knew my inability, and more than anything else that my ability to live in the way I felt that I saw the Lord's people live was completely nil. I know that I

was a man, about six feet, four inches tall and weighed about two hundred-fifty pounds, physically I felt second to none, but when I compared myself to the people who composed the membership of the Church of the Living God, I fell so short of what I was convinced was required. My eyes were opened, I was able to see myself as I really was, and am, so small, so insignificant, so dependent and more than ever a child needing the guidance of Grace, the comfort of Mercy and forgiving love of the eternal God, who loved children. My ambition was no longer to become a man and put away childish things, but to remain a child, even if a guilty and disobedient child, that with the presence of guilt should be kept small. The urge to tell people about this God who loved children, became stronger and more emphatic as time went on. Oh how I begged Him to relieve me of this burden, so many young and healthy men would appear to me as being so much more qualified for this sacred duty than I. But God would not hear me. I am convinced that my attempts to pray were selfish, but experience made me know that the Old School Baptists would not let anyone preach if they were not of the Church membership, and I knew that I was not a fit subject for Church membership, and even if I could offer, my Father, who was a deacon certainly knew me as a misfit and the Church could not grant me the much desired home.

About this time the Lord blessed me to meet the wonderful woman that He predestinated to be my wife, and soon

He gave her to me. A precious helpmeet to meet with me the joys and sorrows that came our way.

I was working in a merchandise store six days a week, and went fishing every Sunday. I loved to fish, loved the outdoors, loved the rivers, the creeks, the ocean and the sound I fished in. Now I felt I had the proper formula worked out. A beautiful, talented woman to love and live with, a job that required six days and on Sundays I could fish. I felt surely that would cure any urge to preach, my time was full, and as long as I fished on what I felt to be the sabbath, I could not go to Church, and then I could not join, and therefore I could not preach. I was sure in my little mind that with this formula, I would no longer need to worry about my ability or inability to preach.

About this time, Elder J.B. Roberts, my parents pastor saw me, and asked why I had stopped going to Church. I immediately told him I fished every Sunday, and needed to be outdoors because of my health. I was trying to justify myself, that because I worked six days a week, Sundays were the only time to be outdoors. I can still see the expression on his face, kind and tolerant, as he stated that in his opinion my suffering was a result of my disobedience, and the great physician could heal all manner of disease indoor or out. He questioned me further and asked if I felt fishing on Sunday was all right. I, being full of the powers of Hell, retorted to him, "If you can show me in the Bible where it is written, thou shalt not fish on Sunday

or the Sabbath, I will stop and go to Church." Today I know that at that time I did not know what the Sabbath is or when it comes. His answer was, "Son, I hope to love you for the gift I have seen in you, and I am not worrying about the gift. If you have it, you cannot exercise it or keep from exercising it, because God, the giver of every good and perfect gift will exercise you.

A.P. Mewborn

CHRIST'S INCARNATION
From Jonathan Edwards
(1703-1758).



Christ became incarnate or, which is the same thing, became man, to put Himself in a capacity for working out our redemption. For though Christ as God was infinitely sufficient for the work, yet to His being in an immediate capacity for it, it was needful that He should not only be God, but man. If Christ had remained only in the divine nature, He would not have been in a capacity to have obtained our salvation; not from any imperfection: for Christ, merely as God, was not capable either of that obedience or suffering that was needful.

The divine nature is not capable of suffering; for it is infinitely above all suffering. Neither is it capable of obedience to that law which was given to man. It is as impossible that One, who is only God, should obey the law that was given to man, as it is that He should suffer man's punishment.

And it was necessary not only that Christ should take upon him a created nature, but that He should take upon Him our nature. It would not have sufficed for Christ to have become an angel, and to have obeyed and suffered in the angelic nature. But it was necessary that He should become a man, upon three accounts:

1. It was needful in order to answer the law, that the very nature to which the law was given, should obey it. "Man's law could not be answered but by being obeyed by man. God insisted upon it that the law which He had given to man shall be honoured and fulfilled by the nature of man, otherwise the law could not be answered for men. The words, "Thou shalt not eat thereof," ect., were spoken to the race of mankind, to the human nature; and therefore the human nature must fulfil them.

2. It was needful to answer the law that the nature that sinned should die. These words, "Thou shalt surely die," respect the human nature. The same nature to which the command was given was that to which the threatening was directed.

3. God saw mete that the same world which was the stage of man's fall and ruin should also be the stage of his redemption. We read often of His coming into the world to save sinners, and of God's sending Him into the world for this purpose. It was needful that He should come into this sinful, miserable, undone world in order to restore and save it. For man's recovery, it was needful that He should come down to man, to man's proper habita-

tion, and that He should tabernacle with us: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

copy: (1984 Standard).

THE NECESSITY OF THE BLOOD From Robert Trail on "The Throne of Grace"

Let us consider Christ's death for encouraging us to confidence in coming to the throne of grace. This is the main ground of boldness in coming (Heb. 10:19): "Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Precious blood must be shed, or we cannot enter; we must see it by faith, or we dare not venture. We must "come to the blood of sprinkling" (Heb. 12:24). We dare not step one step into God's awful presence unless we see the way marked, consecrated and sprinkled with the Mediator's blood. How shall the unholy of sinners venture to come into the holiest of all, God's presence? Yes, saith the Holy Ghost, such may "by the blood of Jesus." Let us therefore consider what this blood of Christ does and speaks in order to our boldness in approaching to the throne of grace.

This blood satisfies justice, and answers all the claims and charges of the law against us. What mars boldness like fears of a standing controversy betwixt heaven and us? God is holy, we are vile sinners; God's law is strict, we have sinfully broke it, and deserve hell most justly. No answer can be given but by this blood. What would the law have, but Christ gave? Would the law have a sinless man to answer it as it was first given to sinless Adam? "Lo, I come," saith our Lord Jesus, without all sin;

a Man against whom, for Himself, no charge or challenge. Would the law have perfect sinless obedience? Christ did perform it. Must the law have life and blood for every breach of it? Christ never broke the law; but the burden of millions of breakers and breaches of it lay on Him, and His blood was shed for them: and hereby He fulfilled the law, "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9: 26); "finished the transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, brought in everlasting righteousness, sealed up the vision and prophecy, and anointed the most holy" (Dan. 9:24).

You can never have boldness at the throne of grace unless this blood is applied. "Christ is set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood" (Rom. 3:25). The propitiation is in His blood; faith in it makes it our propitiation.

Copy, Dec. 1992, Gospel Standard

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR OCTOBER 1995

- In memory Mr. DeWitt D. Ray, Sr.
 Ms. Amy Heppler, AZ 32.00
 Mrs. Lessie S. Sladky, NC 10.00
 Mrs. Nannie C. Trevathan, NC 2.00
 Jerry P. Cockman, NC 15.00
 Mrs. Kelly Watson, NC 2.00
 Mrs. Lovie A. Thompson, NC 2.00
 Charles F. Pratt, NC 2.00
 Mrs. Minnie Ledlow, AL 10.00
 In memory Mr. DeWitt D. Ray, Sr.
 Shelby R. Stratton, MS 22.00
 Eld. C.M. Haygood, TX 2.00
 Mrs. Geneva Pettis, LA 5.00
 H.P. Conner, VA 2.00
 Thomas C. Nichols, VA 2.00

- Mrs. O.W. Parks, LA 2.00
 Ms. Annie Malone, AL 2.00
 Don & Ron Parker, NC 2.00
 Mrs. Jesse W. Ray, NC 2.00
 Tommy Middleton, NC 2.00
 Ms. Delphis McDaniel, VA 2.00
 G.W. Carter, NC 2.00

OBITUARIES

LINWOOD COKER

It is with sad heart that I attempt to write a respect for my brother, both in the flesh and the church, Linwood Coker. Brother Linwood was born April 19, 1910 and died August 14, 1995, making his stay on earth 85 years. He was blessed to join Tarboro Church on December 3, 1982 and attended as long as his health permitted it.

Brother Linwood was the twin brother of Elder Leslie Coker. He was a strong believer of Salvation by the Grace of God. He was a humble, kind person and to know him was to love him. Linwood loved to have company and to tell about the mercy of God and how he was blessed in so many ways. He was blessed to have five children who saw to it that he was well taken care of.

We, the church at Tarboro, resolve that three copies of this respect be made: one for publication in the Signs of the Times; one for the family, whom we send our sincere sympathy; and one to be placed in the church records.

Written by his brother that loved him dearly.

John H. Coker

Signs of the Times

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

1012 Bennett Circle, Keeling, Virginia 24566

SONG

WHO?

*Who flung the stars out into space,
And holds them in their proper place?
Who, like a curtain, stretched the sky
To make a place for birds to fly?
Who sends the wind and sun and rain
To nourish fields of golden grain?
Who forms the seed that makes the wheat,
And gives us daily bread to eat?*

*Who, in the winter sends the snow?
Oh, tell me who, if you should know;
Who has designed each lovely flake?
What wondrous power did it take?
Who made the never ending sea?
Who formed the grass, the vine, the tree?
Who made the cattle on the hills,
And creeping things in rocks and rills?*

*Who holds all things within His hands?
Who owns all houses, fields and lands?
Who keeps our souls each passing hour?
No man has this almighty power!
It is the Lord and He alone!
Man has no glory of his own!
We have no goodness we can claim,
So let us publish His great name!*

*He takes a sinner vain and wild,
And makes Him as a little child;
Subdues his will and guides his feet,
And draws him to the mercy seat.
Let all creation lift its voice,
And in the Lord let us rejoice!
Let all His works praise and confess
The glory of His righteousness!*

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EDITORIAL



ELDER KENNETH R. KEY

The following is an article written a long time ago by Sister Mary Ellison of Topeka, Kansas. I want to present it to you as

our editorial for this issue. I hope you will be given to enjoy the sweetness and the similitude of the days of a tree as the days of the Lord's people. Please read on.

"They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of

a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." (Isaiah 65:22).

I have thought that the "tree" here spoken of represents Christ, who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as his days so shall the days of his people be. As I lay back, with closed eyes, I seemed to see a little tree in all its verdant, springtime beauty, clothed with leaves and blossoms. In the warm sunshine and gentle breeze it waved and beckoned with its spreading branches, and how sweet to rest beneath its shade, enjoy its fragrant bloom, and reflect on the prospect of fruit to follow. So shall the days of my people be. Where is the similitude of the days of a tree and the days of the Lord's people? Let us go back to the early experience of a child of God,

"When converts first begin to sing, Their happy souls are on the wing; Their theme is all redeeming love, Fain would they be with Christ above."

Oh what lovely blossoms, and what a sweetsavor of Christ they send forth as they call and beckon to us to "come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein." The trees of the field do clap their hands, the cedars of Lebanon (the older brethren) bow at

his feet, and praise him in fullness of joy, resting in the blessed promise that the Lord will not leave himself without witnesses. Perhaps the little tree had stood unnoticed, apparently dead, until the little leaves began to grow and the signs of life involuntarily began to appear. What rejoicing now that we see it is not dead, as it appeared, and now we hope to see the sweet fruits of the Spirit evidenced later on, for they shall take root downward and bear fruit upward. But, as the days of a tree, by and by the sun does not shine so brightly, clouds appear, and oh how dark it becomes. A storm arises, and in the raging the poor little tree sways and bends, the lovely bloom is beaten off and swept away, or covered with earth. The storm passes, and the little tree is left standing, not so proudly, perhaps, but of a more sore dignity, as, the promising bloom gone, the fruit buds begin to appear, and as the fruit buds begin to appear, and as the fruit increases in the upward branches the root is taking deeper hold in the earth. So are the days of my people.

*"It is not long before they feel
Their feeble souls begin to reel;
They think their former hopes
are vain,
They're filled with sorrow, grief
and pain."*

Cannot every child of God go back in memory to the time they thought they would always go on their way rejoicing in the bloom of their earliest love, believing the enemies of their

carnal nature were all slain, and would never vex or annoy them any more? But alas, the little clouds begin to arise, vexations come, and the lovely bloom is beaten off as the sorrows of the world worketh death to the sweet spiritual enjoyment, perhaps leading them as far as Peter, to even deny the Lord, saying in doubt and unbelief, that after all it is only a delusion, and they were deceived and had deceived others. Where now is the blessedness ye spake of? The beautiful promising bloom which looked so pleasant is gone from their view, swept away and buried in the storm of earthly cares and sorrows that has so unexpectedly fallen upon them. *"But the root of the righteous shall not be moved."* The storm passes, and they find themselves still standing in the faith of God's elect, cast down, but not destroyed. Oh then the fruit buds begin to appear, as in humbleness they are brought to see that it is not in their own strength they stand. *"I am the root and the offspring of David"* This is the Root that extends downward in the earthen vessel of mercy. Each can say, O Lord, *"my goodness extendeth not to thee,"* but his goodness does reach down to every vessel of mercy. The strong downward Root holds firm, and will not let them be overwhelmed. They are made to realize that *"the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit,"* which is borne upward in praise and thanksgiving to God for deliverance from the storm. The many storms of affliction and sorrow, trials and tribulations, perils and persecutions break and beat upon the

“trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord,” until they bow and bend, so shaken in mind they fear they cannot stand; no, not another day.

*“I fear at last they I shall fall,
For if a saint, the least of all.”*

Yet when the storm passes, and the Son of righteousness once more beams forth, then in this light, and not their own feeble sight, they see it is not in their own strength they still stand, but the Strength of Israel has held them. Not by works of righteousness which they have done, not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. Much more of the cherished fruit is gone. But when blooming youth is gone, and old age comes on, we are made to realize that it is the bitter, gnarly fruit of self-confidence and fleshly ambition that is being beaten off. It came from earth, and must fall back from whence it came, for *“Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up,”* but the *“tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord,”* its fruit shall remain. One by one we see every earthly hope and joy beaten off and swept away, but the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace and fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, oh nothing shall ever be able to separate us from that. How gladly we should have the gnarly, poisonous fruits of the flesh pruned away, so that we might shine forth as the morning, with not a cloud to intervene between us and our Rock, who shelters us in their weary land of

storms and trouble. As the tree grows older, as the growth in grace and in the knowledge of truth increases, the poor tempest-tossed child of God seems to gain strength in the storms, often stands more firm, and is not so easily tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine; does not so lightly bow and bend to the lo heres and lo theres, but the sweet fruits of the Spirit are borne upward to him, the Strength of Israel, the Root of David, in the earthen vessel, has kept him from falling, and enables him to say, I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. If it is his will that I shall weather another storm he will give the old trunk, stripped of all the foliage of youthful hopes and ambitions, every branch of earthly aspirations and joys broken off, strength to endure. But oh the weakness of the flesh. How we do shrink and dread when we see the storm coming, though there is a *“needs be”* for it all, and we know that

*“Not a single shaft can hit,
Until the God of love sees fit.”*

How we do feel the need of the prayers of all saints, for it does seem at times that this flesh and heart will surely fail. Oh may he, by the power of his might, when the adverse winds do blow, give me strength to still stand in the way, ready for whatever is in the counsel of his will to come next.

“As the days of a tree.” How often have we seen the tall cedars, the sturdy oaks, beaten by the storms of many seasons almost to the ground, nothing left but their bare old trunks, and

to all appearance have lived their time and served their purpose, yet they do not quite fall; not yet, their downward roots have not yet parted from the earth, they must wait the appointed time to fall. So shall the days of my people be. Old age is come, the bare old trunk is stripped of every alluring earthly joy, until there is nothing left to live for, and *"I long to lay my armor by, and dwell with Christ at home,"* for

*"Surely like a withered tree,
No fruit to me is found,
Why do I live, O Lord, I cry,
A cucumber of the ground?"*

*"When a few more days I've
wasted,*

*When a few more scenes are o'er,
When a few more griefs I've tasted,
I shall fall, to bloom no more."*

But not yet. The downward Root has not yet parted from the earthen vessel, and though I often feel, especially in the heart-rending trials I have endured of late, that there is no fruit borne upward from such a withered and weather-beaten old trunk, yet all the days of my appointed time I must wait until my change comes.

One night as I lay thinking of the trials and conflicts of the Lord's peculiar people these words came to my mind with force, *"I see men as trees walking,"* and I thought how like a tree is the walk of the Lord's people. None can see men, nor the people of God, walking as trees, until led out of the town, or world, as was the blind man, by God's own hand, and how

short the time until made to see that as the days of a tree, so are the days of the Lord's people. He sometimes lays his hand heavily upon us, showing us what great things we must suffer for his sake, until we cry, *"Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me."* Whom he loves he rebukes and chastens, and it is his chastening hand that makes us look up, until we see clearly every man, every child of God, walking the same path, every one enduring the same storms and afflictions, for if ye be without chastisement, then are ye bastards and not sons. There is no place of rest for us in the town, or world; we cannot go back there, or tell to any in the town of the things we see clearly. They know nothing of the reproach of the cross, and have no sympathy for the mourning people of God. But to our own house, there we may freely go, sure to find there the sympathy and fellowship we crave. There all speak the same language, weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who do rejoice. Here we see men as trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, walking the same road, buffeted on every hand by storms without and within. The same storms that beat and bend one old tree beat upon all, and though one may feel that the storm has brought him a little lower than the rest ever get, yet all the rest feel the same way: less than the least of all saints. But in this is our fellowship and our love made perfect, and we often find the lowest tree bears the sweetest fruit, as the

apple-tree among the trees of the wood. What a comparison. The low apple-tree is the one that bears the fruit. The ones that stand the highest are not always the most fruitful. But *"as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons."* *"Though the Lord be high, yet has he respect unto the lowly."* His loved ones among the sons of earth are lowly. A proud look he hates and abominates. The proud he knoweth afar off. But the fruit of his love on the lowly trees is sweet to our taste; yes, sweet, because when we are made to look up we see that his banner over us is love, and know that, *"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me."* *"Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."*

As the days of a tree, so are my people. As the tree falls, there shall it lie. It falls to earth, and returns to the dust as it was, and so shall it be until the bright morning of the resurrection, when the Lord shall bring again in power that which fell in weakness, and will clothe it again in the beauty of holiness, then shall we be satisfied. Every idol that now intervenes between us and our love will be swept away, and we shall see his face, and never, never sin. No more storms of darkness and sorrow falling upon us, no more crying of pain and anguish, no more griefs and heartaches, no more trouble and mourning, no more losses and crosses, no more wars and fightings, the conflict will be over, our warfare ended, and God himself shall wipe the tears from off all faces,

for, *"as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."* Then shall we see him as he is, and be like him. *"As the days of a tree [He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief] are the days of my people."*

Elder Kenneth R. Key

CORRESPONDENCE

October 30, 1995

Dear Editors:

Just trust all is well with you, I am renewing for "Signs of the Times". I sure enjoy reading last of the month (when it comes.)

The older writers are good so are the younger ones.

We have lost loved members, but we feel they are at rest, I think it was end of their journey here on earth.

I enjoyed two associations in Sept. one in S. Arkansas ours in La., my membership is at Rehobeth, El Dorado, Arkansas.

In 1st Timothy 2 Chapter 19th verse is found - nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having the seal-The Lord knoweth them that are His.

And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Remember me when at the throne of Grace.

A sister I hope,
Jane Carroll

VOICES OF THE PAST

THE SOUL OF MAN

Brother Beebe: - Why is the soul or spirit of man immortal? Or, in other words, why did it not die when the body dies? Be assured, I remain yours with my best wishes.

Wesley Spittler

Reply - The question proposed by our esteemed brother involves a mystery quite beyond our depth. We have never been able to define the soul of man, nor to tell the whys and wherefores of its interminable existence. Aside from divine revelation, very little can be known of the soul or spirit that distinguishes the human family from the rest of the animal part of the creation of God. But the scriptures supply to us that instruction which human physiology is altogether incompetent to afford - *"God breathed in man the breath of life and man became a living soul."* And Paul has testified that the first man Adam was made a living soul. Again we are instructed by the words of inspiration in regard to the spirit of man that goeth upwards, in distinction from the spirit of the beast that goeth downward. However impossible it may be for us to comprehend the soul and spirit of man, we all feel a consciousness that we possess both, but why the soul shall survive the dissolution of the body and continue to be in happiness or misery

forever and ever, to our limited mind admits of no satisfactory answer short of the light of divine revelation. God has condescended to inform us of the composition of man as a mere human being, of distinct elements of his composition. The material substance of the man was made of the dust of the earth, but it was not until God breathed in his nostrils the breath of life that man became a living soul. As the union of these elements constitute us living beings, or living souls, so the separation of these component parts is called death; but not, as we understand it, to signify the cessation of existence of vitality only in relation to the body which is composed of the dust of the earth. When the Redeemer died on the cross he committed to the hands of the Father his spirit, and as he said to the dying thief, *"This day shalt thou be with me in paradise,"* we conclude there could have been no suspension of vitality in the soul or spirit of either Christ or the penitent thief to whom this consoling assurance was so graciously given. The soul identifies the man, for man became a living soul, and in the common language of the scriptures, men are called souls. The assurance to the thief could not relate to the body of the thief, for his body was not laid with that of his Redeemer in the new tomb, nor was it preserved from seeing corruption. It was therefore something apart from his body that was with Christ in paradise. The body being of a material substance, we can trace it to its silent resting place in the bosom of its mother earth; we can watch the

process of decomposition until the perfect accomplishment of the decree, ***"To dust shalt thou return."*** We see it so perfectly returned that it can no longer be distinguished from its kindred dust. Were it not for the light of revelation we should there bid it an eternal farewell, without any hope of its resurrection. But the departed soul and spirit we can, by nature's light, trace no farther than the time of its separation from the body, and were it not for inspired instruction, we might conclude that it dies with the body, ceases its vitality and discontinues to be. But, God be praised, the words of truth assures us that the spirits of the just are made perfect, that they are with the Redeemer in the paradise of God. Paul when speaking of his departure from the body spoke of departing to be with Christ. That there is really a separation of soul and body in death we are certain from many declarations of the scriptures - among others the words of our Lord concerning the rich man. To him it was said, ***"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!"*** ***"Fear not him that can kill the body, but after that have no more power; but fear him who is able to cast both body and soul into hell."*** The material bodies of the guilty sons of Sodom were probably consumed with material fire which God in righteous judgment rained from heaven upon them, but these very inhabitants of Sodom are now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. From all of these considerations with many others presented in the scriptures we

conclude that in death there is not only a separation of soul and body, but that the soul immediately on its separation enters a state of paradise, or sinks to a state of interminable woe and misery. The spirits of just men are made perfect in glory, and the spirits or souls of the wicked are cast into hell.

Brother Spitler and our readers, permit us to remark that the scriptural word immortal with its derivatives, as used in our version of the Bible are not used in the scriptures simply to express the idea of interminable existence. The wicked must continue to exist in hell under the wrath of God, where the smoke of their torment shall ascend forever and ever, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched; but still this state of their existence is denoted by another word of very different and opposite meaning from that of immortality, which in scripture is synonymous with the words eternal life, and Christ only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, and it is only in him that the saints have immortality.

For this is the record that God hath given us of eternal life, and this life is in his Son. This is the true God and eternal life. This life is hid with Christ in God, and they unto whom it is given shall never perish, but because Jesus lives, they shall live also.

The order of the final resurrection of the bodies of the saints at the last day presents a strong confirmation of the position we have taken. For when Christ shall descend from heaven at the last day to raise the dead and to

judge the world, according to the scriptures, he shall be revealed personally, from heaven with ten thousand of his saints; that is, as we understand it, with all the spirits of his saints now made perfect. *"For when he who is our Life shall appear,"* says Paul, *"then shall we appear with him in glory."* The dead in Christ shall rise first, and those saints who shall then be living on the earth shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and these raised up bodies, raised with spiritual and immortal life shall meet them in the air and so shall they be ever with the Lord. These are the children of God which are born of incorruptible seed by the word of the Lord that liveth and abideth forever. *"He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?"* So spake Jesus to Martha. On another occasion he said, *"He that eateth this bread that came down from heaven shall never die."* There is that then in Christians that cannot die, cannot cease its vitality, but that something is not the vile body, or the mortal body, or the Adamic nature born of the flesh, for all flesh must die, and return to the dust. But that which is born of God is incorruptible and secure from death. The earthly house of our tabernacle must be dissolved and fall; but the children of God have a house which is not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The outward man decayeth; but the inward man is renewed day by day.

In regard to the bodies of the wicked, it is sufficient that our dear Lord has told us not only that the saints shall rise, that he will raise them up at the last day, but he has also said that the hour shall come in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and they shall come forth, they that have done good to life eternal, and they that have done evil to resurrection of damnation. And God will judge the world in righteousness at the last day, by that man whom he hath appointed, and that according to Paul's gospel.

We would not be understood as confounding the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, with the natural soul of man; for all men have natural souls, as we have attempted to show, but all men have not the new man described above. All who are born of God in the new birth receive an implantation of spiritual and incorruptible life. But the soul which is quickened by this implantation and the life implanted in the soul are distinct things in their nature and origin, but identified in the person of the regenerated, in whom Christ is formed, the hope of glory. So at least the subject appears to us. If we are right, may the Lord have all the glory; but if we err, may he forgive us, and may our brethren be blessed with patience to bear with our weakness; for if we know the desire of our own heart it is to utter only the truth as it is in Jesus Christ our Lord. Brother Spitler and brethren, in our experience we feel an internal consciousness that we have a soul that must survive this poor frail body, and that it

must exist after the earth and seas shall have passed away. This soul, as well as this body, we found, to our sorrow, was defiled with sin. But the holy law of God spake in thunder when it said to us, "*The soul that sinneth it shall die.*" And until Christ was revealed to and in us we were in bitterness of soul in view of our guilty, helpless and as it seemed to us, our hopeless condition. But --

"When God revealed his gracious name,

He changed our mournful state."

Then great joy and gladness sprang up in our heart, and our sorrowing and sighing, at least for a time, fled away. We have seen the time that we souls gladly have believed that we had no soul to live after the death of the body; but as well might we seek for repose and comfort on a bed of embers, as for a release from the strong conviction that we had a soul all stained with guilt, that must suffer the righteous judgments of God, when time shall be no more, unless God should reveal a way that his justice and truth could be maintained and salvation abound to the chief of sinners. But why it is so that the soul must so exist in wealth or woe forever, we can only solve upon the ground that it was even so because it so seemed good to our Creator to organize us. It is now enough to know that it is so, and to rest assured that God in making man a living soul had an object worthy of himself. And however dark and mysterious the footsteps of our God may seem to our

very limited understanding; we desire to be still and know that he is God. May we be preserved from vain speculation on this and on all subjects; may we rejoice in all that has been revealed, and trust him for all that he hath seen fit to withhold from our understanding.

Middletown, N.Y., June 1, 1854

Elder Beebe

"The Hope and Calling
of Elder A.P. Mewborn"

(Continued from last issue.)

Elder J.B. Roberts, my parents pastor saw me, and asked why I had stopped going to Church. I immediately told him I fished every Sunday, and needed to be outdoors because of my health. I was trying to justify myself, that because I worked six days a week, Sundays were the only time to be outdoors. I can still see the expression on his face, kind and tolerant, as he stated that in his opinion my suffering was a result of my disobedience, and the great physician could heal all manner of disease indoor or out. He questioned me further and asked if I felt fishing on Sunday was all right. I, being full of the powers of Hell, retorted to him, "If you can show me in the Bible where it is written, thou shalt not fish on Sunday or the Sabbath, I will stop and go to Church." Today I know that at that time I did not know what the Sabbath is or when it comes. His answer was, "Son, I hope to love you for the gift I have seen in you, and I am not worrying about the gift. If you have it, you

cannot exercise it or keep from exercising it, because God, the giver of every good and perfect gift will exercise you.

Needless to say this did not comfort me at all, this was, if it were true, an upset of all the planning I had done. I could not help but wonder who had told him of my fears, or my promise to the Father to tell His people of His wonderful love and mercy. I had told no one of my promise and I could not see how he knew so much about the things that were true in my life that I had never told anyone. He closed the conversation by asking that I pray for him, and now I knew he needed looking after, because I could not possibly see how one who was as wonderfully blessed as he was could ask such a rebel worm as I to pray for him. I left him for fear he would see the tears running down my face. I had no desire to discuss religion with him anymore. As I left him feeling so miserable, I remembered an instance not many years before when Elder Pollard and Elder Yopp had spent the association time at my parent's home. It was the custom of my Father to ask the ministers present to preach and pray for our family at these meeting times. I usually enjoyed this a lot and Elder Pollard was a favorite minister of mine. Elder Pollard spoke of Joseph and his brethren, and one point I have never forgotten is that Jacob could not go to the King's house and enjoy the wonderful things therein contained until he was convinced that Benjamin, that last son of his old age, the last thing he could depend on, was dead. The

last idol was gone. Now he had nothing of his own left. Now he was willing to go. Oh how I enjoyed that wonderful servant as he exercised the sacred gift that God gave him. I was so lifted up in my feelings, that I really knew how it is to shout the praises of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Brother Yopp at that time was liberated and when He was called on, I felt sorry for him. I knew that to follow such a wonderful discourse must be horrible for anyone and especially for one not ordained. He rose to the floor and stated he did not have a scripture to read. He told us his mind was continually asking him, "Is there not yet another?" My love ones, I feel the heavens were opened for me and I was made to see, if Jesse could not hide his shame, Son, (David) from Samuel the prophet, then how could I ever hope to hide my shame from God, who knows all things, lo the deep things of God. I ran from the room crying aloud, hoping to go to sleep and forget all that had been said. But alas, I could not rest or sleep. My lovely Mother came to me, trying to comfort me with the promise that tomorrow we could go and hear more good preaching. Now with Job I could say, "Oh miserable comforter." I had no thoughts of going to the association the next day, or ever again going to Church any place. I knew God as a God of wrath, to whom I had lied repeatedly. I felt to be lower than the dogs we kept in the back porch, and I knew that when one of them died they would go to the woods and die alone. I went quietly out of the house and into

the swamp, wishing I were dead, but afraid to die. I felt the need to pray, but the only words I could utter were, "Lord have Mercy." I don't know how long I stayed in this condition, but only one scripture came to me and the balance of the entire Bible was blank I remembered that on one occasion, when a servant faced death and the terrible wrath of God, that he was granted an extension of time, as a reprieve from death. Oh I felt that if He would just be that merciful to me, just give me one more chance, I would go indeed unto all the world telling His precious children of His wonderful Mercy, His abounding Grace, His terrible wrath and His loving kindness that is indescribable and full of Glory. I promised that I would go without price and tell about the riches of His Glory and that He does not need us for anything, but loves His people just because they belong to Him. I begged, I cried, I promised while lying on my belly in the muddy swamp, that I too might be given another chance. How little I knew! Suddenly a feeling of relief came over me, and this is yet indescribable and full of Glory to me! I went back home and into my room and have never slept more soundly or more restful or peaceful in my life.

The next day I went back to the association, but I heard no preaching. A new song was put in my heart, and was being sung to me. I had another chance, this time I would not forget my promise. I would preach and be happy all the rest of my life. Here again, I must inject, "How little we know." The disease (sin) was gone,

and I did not need the remedy, I was not suffering, and I promptly forgot all the promises I had made to God. I was convinced now that it was all a figment of my imagination, and I like those of old, in His absence went fishing. Again I felt no guilt about fishing on the day men call the Sabbath.

There is no way I can write about all the experiences of my life. This is not the purpose of this instrument. Neither do I expect to write of all the troubles that caused me to quit writing. Now after fifteen or twenty years, I am trying again. I hope to continue to write what I hope to be the calling and some of the experiences of a corn field uneducated preacher.

I went back fishing, it was the best formula I had. I joined a group of three of my friends, who shared the cost, and enjoyed fishing. We went every Sunday, summer and winter. When I remember the neglect that this behavior brought my precious wife and my sweet children, even today, I am so ashamed. We continued to fish and I suffered the vengeance of God. My health went from bad to worse, I could not sleep or rest at night, my work was not at it's best and when I was not fishing, I wanted to be alone. I really hoped that my wife and parents did not know of my suffering. I hoped that they did not know of my troubles, and certainly I did not want them to know what caused them. I know now, and probably did then, that man cannot run or hide from God, but I continued to try, it seemed the only option I had. I believe now, and I believed then, that

God works all things and caused them to be, and as I look back at the disobedience in my life, I can see the chastisement of the Lord, and continue yet to feel it.

On third Sunday in September, 1952, I of course went fishing. The group and I set out early, and when we stopped to get breakfast, a feeling came over me that hurt so bad the others could see I was in trouble. They offered to bring me home, but I refused, not only because I did not want to be a bother to them, but because it would defeat my purpose. I was determined not to surrender to this awful feeling that I needed to be in Church. We went to Core Creek on the Inland Water Way, and the fish would not bite for anyone but me. Everywhere I fished, and anyway I fished I caught a beautiful drum or trout. This was a fisherman's dream come true, but there was no thrill for me because every fish I caught looked exactly like Elder J.B. Roberts frowning at me in a condemning way that I had never seen on his face. I quit fishing on the boat; I felt something terrible was going to happen to me and I didn't want anyone else hurt because of my disobedience. I lay on an oyster bed; threw my hook out baited with oysters and I still caught fish. No one else had caught anything and they were disgusted and ready to go home. I agreed, and as we approached the pier to tie up the boats, I shouted, "LOOK!" We saw a car full of people approaching a barricade at a goodly rate of speed. The bridge was turned; a boat was going through, and nothing to stop the car except the two

barricades across the highway. I said, "That car is not going to stop; its going over and they will be drowned." One of the group retorted, "Ap are you a damn fool? You know they will stop." But they didn't; they crashed one barricade then the other and plunged into water thirty feet deep. We rushed to the place they went over and I began to undress to dive in and try to help. A Marine grabbed me and forcibly held me, and told me the under tow in that water, with the wind and the tide as it was would break my body to pieces. I could only look as the air bubbles came to the top as each occupant of the car died. Now I was a murderer, I really felt these people had to die in this manner because of my disobedience. Although I knew the courts of this world would not try me; I was already, "Tried in the furnace, and found guilty." I could hope for no reprieve; God had already granted me one, and now I felt that any hope I ever had was completely and finally gone. I told the boys on the way home that I would not go with them anymore; that I would pay my part until they could get someone else to take my place. They could not understand the guilt I felt, but assured me to get someone else would not be a problem. I got home and put the fish down in the yard. This was not like me; I had always dressed the fish I caught; I was trained to do this while a lad by my Daddy, but I didn't want them. Loraine knew something was troubling me, but she said "Carry your Mother and Daddy some fish; they love trout and drum." I knew she was right, but I did

not want them to see me. I was afraid they would be able to see I was a murderer, because now I felt I could hide my guilt from no one. I took the fish and went to the farm and I saw Elder Robert's auto in the yard, but I felt I had to deliver the fish. I went in the back door and put the fish on a counter by the pump, and went into the back bedroom to enter the house. As I entered I heard Elder Roberts say, "He has been preaching for twenty years." I knew he was talking about me and I left. I did not go where they could see me; I just went home. Loraine had cleaned enough fish for us and I gave the rest away. I had never known guilt as I felt it then. I was not fit to be with my precious family or any other people. I just wanted to die and face the horrors I knew I must face and not hurt anyone else.

I stayed home until fourth Sunday. My Mother was sick, Loraine and the children had gone to Norfolk to see her sister, who lived there. This was planned while I was fishing every Sunday; thus it offered no problem. I was going to go and stay with my Mother while my Daddy went to Church. When I arrived at my parent's home, Elder Roberts had come to visit Mama because she was sick, and was praying as I entered the room. I was glad to see him and hear him pray because you see I was not going to the meeting. The Lord of Host had decreed it different; my Mother said she was better and insisted that I go with Daddy to Church. Again I was afraid, however, I felt I had to go. I was as obedient to my parents as I could be. We went to

the Meadow; Elder W.C. Edwards was there and brother C.L. Coker, who had recently joined the Church, (he was later ordained to the ministry), and about the usual crowd. Sister Sallie Mercer had joined the Church a month ago and I was especially glad to see her. Elder Edwards opened and spoke first. I don't remember any part of his sermon. Then Elder Roberts read the scripture about Joseph and his brethren; as he preached I was so interested in the sermon that I forgot to be afraid, but as he closed and told us Jacob could not go until Benjamin was no more for him, I was astounded. Elder Pollard had preached the same thing many months before; and again I was afraid. The meeting was over; I had made it again and I did not know if I was relieved or not; I wanted to join, but knew I had no right to ask. It was quarterly meeting and when my Daddy went into the back room to get the communion basket I felt that I would go outside to wait for my Dad where it was safe. As I moved to go out; I went to the table in front of the stand and as I approached Elder Roberts I looked and brother Isaac Horton also approached the table. I had not seen him and he had not seen me until we met at the table and Elder Roberts took both of us by the hand. He presented brother Horton to the Church first, who stated he wanted to be a member, that the Meadow Church had always seemed like home to him, and he wanted to live with the Church. Then he presented me and I told them I was in a storm and wanted so much to come into their house and stay. I fur-

ther stated that I had nothing to offer the Church except my life and my corrupt body; I was a guilty sinner and felt all alone in my sins, and wanted so much to live and die with them. They received us both unanimously, and Elder Roberts wanted to know when we wanted to be baptized. I told him I had never had any thoughts about baptism, but I was ready right now. We agreed to be baptized at 2:00 p.m. that day, and Elder Roberts said he would be able to baptise me. He had to be helped into the pulpit that morning, and I knew he was not physically able, so brother Horton and I agreed to ask Elder Edwards to do it.

My wife, as I have stated, was gone to Norfolk; my Mother was sick and I wanted them to be with me so much. Brother Coker and perhaps some others went home with my Daddy, and I stayed for lunch, but all I could think of was, "What have I done?" I did not want to bring the shame of the betrayal I felt on the Church and my precious family. Brother Coker wanted to come with me to change clothes. Mama said she could go if Papa would get her close to the water so she could see. I did not want a large number of people to be there, and felt there would be just a few, but God fixed it different. Friendship Church, a FWB Church in our neighborhood had a baptizing just before us, and a tremendous crowd of my neighbors were there and stayed. I was in a daze speaking to the people, who were offering their congratulations when I felt they should be offering me their condolences. I don't really know what went on in the services

on the bank but I remember them singing, "Children of The Heavenly King" as we went into the water. Brother Horton had joined first, but he baptized me first. This is the custom practiced among many of our people. Brother Edwards had no trouble putting me under the water, or bringing me up, but when he tried to dip brother Horton under; he did not get his head under. He tried again with the same results. He then looked at me in panic and said, "Brother Mewborn, what am I going to do?" Without thinking I said, "Say those words again," and as he said them, with much ease I put our brother under the water and lifted him on his feet again. Brother Horton exclaimed, "I mean I went under that time!" I was happy; I was so elated that I felt I must be indeed wearing the "Golden Slippers" I had heard our people describe. As I approached the car I heard sister Mary Lang, who was sitting with my Mother say, "Ap has already baptized his first candidate. "I lost my "Golden Slippers" right then and there! Again, I was afraid! What reason or excuse could I give to God now? I knew I would be expected to go to the meetings because I was a member, so in despair I could only cry, "Lord have Mercy." As I had these thoughts; I looked toward the highway and believed I saw my beautiful family coming home. How could I tell her what I had done? She knew me better than anyone else, and would know positively I had no business doing what I had done. She confirmed later that it was them who had passed, and started to stop and see who was

baptized but did not and went on home. As usual she was kind and seemed happy for me and told me she hoped we could be very happy now.

Elder A.P. Mewborn

VOICES OF THE PAST

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

"I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHICH STRENGTHENETH ME" (Philippians 4:13)

January, 1955



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

Did you ever try with all your strength for days to do a certain thing and utterly fail? You tried so persistently that you became mentally and physically exhausted to such extent that your hope fainted? If so, you know what I have gone through in an attempt to write an editorial. I concluded this morning that it had been proved I am a miserable failure and all my exercises of preaching, praying, singing, writing and conversation with saints were vain imaginations and hypocritical actions which had come to an end! The fact that I had failed in this attempt climaxed the proof. Deep, grievous, heart-searching meditations proved that I did not have one qualification that I had been called into this work! No one has ever been so weak

as I! Then, as lightning suddenly flashes into darkness, came these startling words, "*When I am weak, then am I strong, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*" The words of Christ followed, "*My strength is made perfect in weakness.*" This soothed my aching heart and calmed my troubled breast. It need be that I be shown many times "*That the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them*" (Matt. 11:5). It does no suffice just to tell the children of God these things. They must be shown again and again. They must experience it time after time.

I cannot see when left to my own natural resources. When Christ opens my blind eyes and give me spiritual sight then I *can see*. The fact that I can see now does not suffice for tomorrow. Today, I may see that all things work together for good including my troubles and trials. Tomorrow, I may be persuaded that all things are against me. Yesterday, I was persuaded that my entire life had been wasted, all my efforts useless, and that it would have been better had I never been born into this natural world. Today there is new light to lighten my pathway so that I have hopes for the morrow. I trust Christ has opened my eyes to see that God has provided for me all through my life, sustained me with His grace, and will not let me fall finally away; but will uphold me with His hand through the severest of trials and finally raise

metriumphant over it all through Christ which strengtheneth me.

I cannot walk upon volition of my own will, by my own ability but must realize that I am lame. I must be shown that the lame walk through Christ which strengtheneth. *"I can walk through Christ which strengtheneth me."* *"A man's heart deviseth his way but the Lord directeth his steps,"* is not learned by reading the sixteenth chapter of Proverbs, but by actual experience. When the strength of Christ is imputed to the individual he is not lame but strong in the Lord, walking, taking the steps that God directs certainly and steadily. His strength is not somewhere afar off, just being accredited to our account, but it is imputed to us, strengthening us to walk in paths of righteousness. He has placed our feet upon the rock and *established our goings*. We are far from sitting on the stool of *"do-nothing"* when we are blessed to be in this state. We are walking in His steps. We suffer, become humble, believe, confess, pray, repent, love, and hope through Christ which strengtheneth us. I can do the seemingly impossible through this strength which is imputed to me.

A few months ago, I was deeply impressed to accompany Elder Rhodes on a tour west to visit Elder T.R. Jefferson and wife and the brethren in Washington, Oregon and California. I was unable financially, physically, and in every other way to make the venture. It seemed as though I was pressed against a wall that could not be pierced. I was so depressed and

everything looked so gloomy that I said to my wife before leaving, "Dessie Mae, let us ask Elder Rhodes to pray for us." We knelt in our home and Elder Rhodes was wonderfully inspired to pray God to divinely strengthen, direct and protect us on this trip. While he was praying the wall disappeared, my troubled breast was calmed, and I was strengthened to such extent that I enjoyed that trip as much as any other venture I had ever made. I have gone into the sacred stand many times trembling because I was so weak, being void of spiritual thoughts, that I could not see how I could speak intelligently on anything. My mind would be so confused that I would think it impossible to have connected thoughts on any subject. I verily believe the mind of Christ has been imputed to me on such occasions that the meditations of the mind and the flow of words came calmly and fluently with all ease. *"I can preach through Christ which strengtheneth me."*

Some time ago a church called me to serve it in the capacity of pastor. The first thought came into my mind and I expressed it thus: *"I cannot serve you."* *A thought followed and I expressed it also, "I can serve you as pastor through Christ which strengtheneth me."* Is it not a wonderful, mysterious thought that it is the blind who are blessed to see; the lame are blessed to walk; the unclean are cleansed; the dead are raised; the deaf hear, and the poor have the gospel preached to them? Jesus performed all these natural miracles here

while in this world as types of miracles more sublime. The imputation of His spiritual strength by His Word is much more sublime! *"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life"*; says Jesus as recorded in St. John 6:63. When Jesus speaks directly to you it enlivens you because He imparts to you His Spirit and life. It works in you *both to will and to do*. It is Christ in you who walks.

A sister, whom I was blessed to baptize in the state of Washington, wrote me an inquiry on the subject of predestination relative to the objection that it tends to suppress action. The fact that some who professed to believe in the doctrine of predestination were at ease, being content to sit on the "do-nothing" stool, justifying their inactivity upon this point of doctrine, disturbed her because of her impelling desire to study the Scriptures and tread the steps of the faithful. I quote a part of my reply.

"Did you know that the idea of predestination has spurred people to action in the face of many difficulties?" Instead of causing them to be content to sit on the stool of 'do-nothing' it has rather encouraged them to persevere to action to make their desires a reality. You feel impressed to do something, you feel this impression is from God, you undertake it with the thought that you can because God has predetermined that you should do it regardless of so many obstacles that seem to be in the way. You are impressed that God is for you and nothing can be against you. If God be for you, you will realize your ambitions. Your desires and your actions are as much predestinated as your home in heaven as one of God's elect family. In

Romans eighth chapter, the thought expressed is that God has predestinated us to conform to the image of Jesus. He does this partly in this life by conforming our desires and characteristics of the inner man to that of Jesus. He will perfect it in the resurrection when the outer man will be adopted into the family by the immortalization of the mortal body. May I add, this conforming to the image of Jesus is the imputation of His strength to us.

When our natural thoughts are brought to a state of confusion and vanity, it is an appropriate moment for Christ to strengthen us by imputing His thoughts to us. When this is done, our thoughts are conformed to the image of Christ; our minds are upon godly things. Our desires are for a closer walk with Him. I can think through Christ which strengtheneth me. These thoughts are sublime. These thoughts conform the will to the will of Christ because this will is worked in us. *I can will through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

God's people must learn by sad experience that the will alone is not sufficient. If you read the account of Peter's denial of Christ, you will find that he had to be converted to this fact. You must be converted in the same manner of Peter's conversion. Did you ever have a godly desire and find that all your efforts were unsuccessful and vain? Were you ever fully persuaded in mind to do something that would be becoming to a child of God and then have your thoughts entirely changed so that instead of doing that which you were impressed to do, you did the opposite? My experience is such so much of the time, that I have been made to know many times

the necessity of the *do* being worked also. Manytimes I can say with Paul, "*To will is present with me but how to perform that which is good I find not.*" Do you know why Paul said this? He had searched and tried all of his resources and all of them had failed. All our resources must be tried out and proved as vain before Christ imputes His strength unto us. When He imputes His strength is when I can truly say from the heart, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*"

It is Christ who strengthens the weak hands, confirms the feeble knees, and says to them of a fearful heart, "*Be strong, fear not.*" He says to the fearful, "*Fear not.*" He makes the lame to leap as an hart and the tongue of the dumb to sing. (See Isaiah 35). If Christ be speaking through me, then I can say to you as the writer to the Hebrews said, "*Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees. Make straight paths for your feet.*" You can lift up the hands that hang down, confirm the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, when Christ imputes His strength to you. I have often been so low and discouraged that I could not go on. A brother would notice me when in this condition. He would say comforting words of kindness and encouragement to me and I would be immediately strengthened. My hands would be lifted up and my feeble knees confirmed by these words of my brother. Could it have been Christ in my brother speaking to me? The words of Christ are *spirit and life*. The words of Christ are strengthening. I have been persuaded that Christ speaks often to me through

my brethren because of the strength that has been imputed to me while under the influence of these words.

Have you ever visited the sick and seen their countenance brighten when you enter the room? Have you ever visited people and hear them say so enthusiastically, "*I am so glad you came, your visit has meant so much to me*"? You have administered to those who were in need and have witnessed their being strengthened by this ministration. They have seemed to want to give you the praise for it and you have conscientiously told them that no praise was due you and advised them to thank God for any benefit they had received. Your kindness indeed strengthened them and the appreciation manifested by them strengthened you. "*I can strengthen others through Christ which strengtheneth me.*"

David prayed, "*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, uphold me with thy free spirit; then, will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee*" (Psalms 51: 12,13). One great epoch in my experience came to me while being enhanced by the preaching of an elder who was blessed to teach me how mercy could be given and justice satisfied. One of the qualifications of an elder is "*apt to teach.*" If there be no evidence that God's little children have been taught through a man's preaching, I am persuaded, that the man ought not to be ordained as an elder because he is lacking in qualifications. Paul was blessed to "*teach in every church*" (1 Cor. 4:17). Paul taught Timothy, his son in the ministry. He commanded Timothy to "*Command and teach.*" "I

can teach through Christ which strengtheneth me." I have been encouraged by many who have come to me and convinced me that many questions had been cleared up through my preaching. Does this have a tendency to exalt me in my estimation of myself? No! No! No! It humbles me instead. The thought that God has graced me, who am less than the least of all saints," with such ministration, causes me to realize more fully my littleness and dependence upon Him.

I have heard brethren discourage others from expressing to a minister their appreciation and enjoyment of his sermon on the basis that *"It might puff him up."* If such would *"puff"* one up, it would be better for the church to *"puff"* him up until he burst. I say, give vent to your feelings. If you have profited in a sermon and enjoyed it, express your sentiments to the speaker. Many of God's ministers, who grope along, battling with many doubts concerning their call into this position, have been strengthened by words of encouragement from the hearers. You, no doubt, have felt impressed to go to your pastor and let him know how much you appreciate his efforts in visiting, preaching, advising, praying, laboring for unity and peace among brethren, and his readiness in administering in all other duties of a pastor. You may have failed to do this, excusing yourself with the thought, *"What I may say to him would be of no benefit."* Your pastor is your servant. A servant is always benefited and strengthened by kindness of his master! A true pastor considers himself less than the least; thus, esteeming the least as greater than he. He sees Jesus in you

but cannot see Him in himself. *I can strengthen my pastor through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

It pleased God to give us each other. The words that we speak and the things we do have their effect upon each other. Words and deeds are not without effect. They either discourage or encourage, please or displease, lift up or cast down, yea, weaken or strengthen. Jesus said, *"Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone be hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea"* (Matt. 18:6) May we be given to pray God that we be strengthened in conversation and deed that we may say appropriate words and do the things that are becoming to God's little children lest we offend one another. May we be strengthened to give thanks unto God for each other. Paul was bound to give thanks unto God for his brethren. My brethren means so much to me. I have been made to thank God for their *"labor of love"* seeing their labor is stimulated by love instead of hope for reward. The doctrine John talked about was the doctrine of love. The commandment received by the direct operation of the Spirit of God is love Him and love one another. This commandment comes to us by the imputing of Christ's love into our hearts. When we are strengthened by the love of Christ we can love Him and our brethren. *I can thank God for my brethren and love them through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

Space will not permit us to write upon the many other things that have come into our mind relative to this great text. I trust God will strengthen the reader to

enlarge upon these gleanings with many precious thoughts of Christ and His imputed strength unto us. Bear in mind that it is the *weak who are strengthened by Christ*. If we felt we had the ability to perform anything of ourselves we would not feel the need of the strength of Christ for this thing. If we felt we could do one thing without Christ then we would be strong enough that the language of Paul as expressed in the title of this article could not apply to us for we would have to say, "*One thing I can do of myself but can do all other things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*" Realizing my weakness to so great extent that I cannot do just one thing godly of myself, then I must depend upon Christ's strength to perform all things. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Elder E.J. Lambert

February, 1945

IF I MAY BUT TOUCH HIS CLOTHES

Matt. 9:20; Mark 5:25; Luke 8:43



his episode in the ministry of Jesus is interesting for meditation. Let us approach the scene and gaze in wonder and admiration at the lowly Nazarene as his disciples hover 'round him and the multitude stand in awe at such as the world had never been blessed with prior to this time. He is going from place to place preaching the gospel of the kingdom. With their diseases, trials and troubles the people come to him. Have you ever noticed the condition of those that

come? They are not people that are able to do things for themselves, but rather they are people that have exhausted their power and they come to him because there is nowhere else to go. Just such a case is this woman that we desire to notice. In the first place she is a certain woman. In the kingdom of which Jesus is the King nothing is done in a haphazard way. Not the least detail is left to chance, but rather all things have order and precision to them. Just any woman of the multitude would not do, but it must be that one whose heart has been searched and displayed to her. Her disease was a dreadful malady and is worthy of comparison to sin, that dreaded devastating disease that Adam's children are all partakers of in its worst form. It had gotten such a hold on her that she had sought a remedy. Had she just looked for one a little while? Had she given just part of her worldly goods to stay the terrible flow? No sir! this poor woman had been hunting and looking for twelve long years. She had suffered many things from many physicians. So it is to every child of God when sin revives (Rom. 7:9) and starts that flow. We begin to try to stop it. After we have tried and tried and tried we find that we are unable to cope with it. If this is not a "can't-help-it" I wonder what kind of language it would take to describe one. We can well understand how we would go to this clinic and to that hospital; to this physician and to that specialist if we were suffering from some such malady. Nature would force us to do just that. There is not a condition in the world that this matter is hinged on. Some of our people get scared to death of a little too much doctrine and long and

yearn and plead for our preachers to preach a little less doctrine. Very well, may God give me grace to write experience. Let us look close at this woman and her experience. Do you suppose she volunteered to take this disease? No sir! this woman did not (and is not) a volunteer. She found out one day that she had a terrible malady. Oh, what pain, misery and discomfort it caused her. Tell me that it will not cause a person to move, and in the same breath I will tell you that the movement of the Spirit in showing sin to a child of God will not cause movement because the Savior used this woman to teach us our travel in the spiritual kingdom. After she had spent all she had did she still have something left? Oh, how destitute and helpless the Lord's people become in trying to arrest sin! Now brethren this is experience and if it is not the hardest kind of a doctrine I confess that I do not know it. She spent all she had. How descriptive of God's people not allowed to keep back a thing. If a thing is kept back then she was not a fit subject of salvation (see Mark 12:44; Luke 15:14). But I am glad that she spent her living; that she was not improved; that she was getting worse. If this is not a helpless, destitute, undone woman I know not the use of words to convey ideas. This is all I care to preach. I just hope that God will always bless and keep me to declare to my precious kindred that salvation is of the Lord. If preaching abases the creature and exalts the Lord I love it, and when blessed to that end I enjoy it. Now this woman is ready for the manifestation of Jesus' healing power to her. She is in the crowd at this particular time. If she had been in a crowd around the

Savior earlier she would not have been a fit subject of salvation. She would not have had all her living spent, but the glorious set time to visit Zion has come. Here is Jesus being shown to her. Here he is in his garments; here he is in his glorious apparel and traveling in his strength, mighty to save (Isa. 63:1). She is drawn to him, faith is given her and she has a desire to touch his clothes. That faith is moving faith. This woman did not have the conditional brand of faith, in fact the Scriptures do not mention that kind, but nevertheless we hear much about it and that among people that profess to be the church. At long last she reaches him and touches his clothes. Jesus felt it as he feels all the movements of his dear, little children. At that moment she was healed. The flow of blood stopped! What is more she felt it. Oh, my dear readers, how did you feel when you came in touch with him? Sin was stopped, brought to a standstill, held in abeyance, but let us linger a little longer. Let us draw nearer for this man is going to speak. Remember that Peter, that bold apostle is there as well as all the others. The Savior feeling the touch asks, "Who touched my clothes?" Brethren is that to find out who did touch Him? Did Jesus not know everything that went on around him? If he could read their minds and know all their thoughts surely he knew the movement of the multitude. To me this woman is the church. It is represented here by this woman. He is talking to her, he is asking her the question. He knew Peter could not tell him. Just listen to his meek explanation. Oh how weak are all of our explanations unless the Spirit leads. but again, who touched me? Ah, little one,

has he asked you that soul-searching question? He knows and she knows. Peter (preachers) knew nothing about it. How wonderful the union between Christ and his church. Often-times they are in communion and those closest by nominal ties know nothing about it. She knows that her every movement has been under the closest scrutiny. She has nothing to hide because she realizes her insignificance. Notice her approach. Is there anything suggestive in it? Does your mind look back to that set time when the Lord asked you, who touched me? She comes fearing and trembling and falls down before him and tells him all the truth. My precious readers, I trust I am comforted as I write these lines to you. What a scene we have beheld! It was in some degree of fear that we looked on, but now our souls leap up, and we have found our own experience being unfolded before our eyes and now we are indeed glad. The church is always glad to hear another come to her and tell her all the truth. If nothing depended on Jesus after having been healed she acted the hypocrite in coming to him, fearing and trembling, falling down before him and telling all the truth. For me I believe she told him how gracious he had been in healing her, but I am not content with that, I believe she, at that time, realized her helplessness for the future as well as the past. The disease came on her unexpectedly. It might come again unless he keeps her healed. She told him all the truth. The church is telling all the truth now and will forever.

Elder W.D. Griffin

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR NOVEMBER 1995

T.T. Hall, NC	2.00
Alan Terry, VA	2.00
Mrs. Norma Smith, VA	2.00
H. Nelson, WV	5.00
Wilton L. Sutphin, VA	2.00
Maurice Webb, IL	7.00
Mrs. Bernice Greer, VA	2.00
Troy G. Shepard, NC	10.00
Mrs. Elva Martin, VA	2.00
Mrs. Doris Rowland, VA	2.00

OBITUARIES

RUSSELL THOMAS HOLLEY

I is with a feeling of sadness and unworthiness as I attempt to write an obituary of this humble man. He was born December third 1905 as the son of the late Charlie Lester Holley and Susan Brumfield Holley. He died February twenty-second 1995 making his stay on earth eighty nine years.

Brother Russell joined Danville Primitive Baptist Church June thirteenth 1953 and was baptized the third Sunday of June by his Pastor Elder Robert Todd. He was elected clerk of his church August the seventh 1954 and served well the office for forty years. His church felt to see a gift in Brother Russell, and he was ordained deacon October the ninth 1954.

He served as a deacon with love, caring, and humility. He was always there to accommodate those without

transportation and carry such to the meetings. He always was eager to have all things done in order in this Church. Brother Russell's health began to fail, and he gave up the office of clerk.

He was married to Mary Oakes Holley who still survives. They celebrated fifty years together several years ago. They had four children born to them and three still survive. Their son, Raymond, died in September of 1994. their daughter, Peggy Holley Nolen, of South Carolina and sons, Calvin and David, survived to witness Brother Russell patiently await his departure from this world of trial, tribulation and sickness. There are also several grandchildren who survive along with great-grandchildren.

He left also one brother and four sisters, Brother Irving Holley, Sister Inez Hollie, Sister Gladys Stigall, Viola Davis, and Mabel Wilson. These were soon visited by death again in their loss of Mabel.

The funeral was conducted by Elder Julian Williams and myself, and his body placed in the tomb to await the time when he can share in the victory over death. His church requested I write his obituary and yet, I could not touch upon his many merits.

May those who are left, especially his wife and children, be blessed to think of what they were blessed to have, rather than what they lost.

Humbly submitted as a token of love and esteem for Brother Russell and the Church and his family.

Elder C.B. Davis, Jr.

JULIA MAE HUNDLEY POTTER

Sister Potter, daughter of the late Daniel W. Hundley and Sallie Donley Hundley, was born January 10, 1911. She passed away July 24, 1995 at Martinsville, Virginia.

She married Brother Willard Paul Potter January 12, 1929. Sister Potter was preceded in death by a daughter, Sister David (Frances) Mason. She is survived by her husband, Willard Paul Potter, two daughters, Sister Lois P. Gunter and Rebecca P. Farrar and three sons, Willard L. Potter, Perry G. Potter and Posey S. Potter. She is also survived by three sisters, twelve grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Sister Potter Joined the church on September 19, 1948 and was baptized October 1948. Her funeral was conducted by Pastor Elder Lane Carter. She was buried at Roselawn Burial Park in Martinsville, Virginia, there to await the resurrection day, then her hope will be fulfilled.

Sister Potter was a gentle person who loved her church and family. She was weak and in poor health for a long time. She was a faithful member and enjoyed her meetings very much.

May the Lord bless her family and give each of them peace and comfort and love as only the Lord can give.

I was given a love and fellowship for Sister Potter that we feel only Zion's children know. We loved her but feel the Lord loved her best.

Written by request of brother Willard Potter.

Elder Lane Carter

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SONG

*The congregation of the Lord,
As they did journey here;
Tasted the wilderness of sin,
God's glory did appear.*

*There was no water there to drink,
No place to plant their seed;
There were no vines, or figs to eat,
They found themselves in need.*

*There was no comfort for their souls,
As they did plead their case;
And wherefore have you made us come,
Unto this evil place?*

*When Moses and when Aaron fell,
Their faces to the ground;
The glory of the Lord appeared,
And mercy there they found.*

*Hear now ye rebels ye must fetch,
Your water from this Rock;
Then Moses lifted up his hand,
And with his rod did smote.*

*Two times he smote the Living Stone,
Before their very eyes;
To bring the water from the Rock,
Amazing and surprise!*

*Yes, water flowed abundantly,
The congregation drank;
It was sufficient for their need,
When in despair they sank.*

*Oh! sanctify me in their eyes,
Our God commanded them;
To travel on the King's highway,
Until we're free from sin.*

*Prayerfully submitted,
By: Elder V. B. Linn,*

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EDITORIAL



ELDER R.H. CAMPBELL

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said "Let there be light and there was light."

These three verses, the first three verses of the bible, set forth the doctrine that the Primitive Baptists believe in this day and age and upon

which all of the inspired writers have declared in the generations following this declaration. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost one eternal God who pre-existed everything that has been, is, or ever shall be, by the greatness of his own power and infinite wisdom spoke everything into being and endowed them with all the characteristics that they possess. Just as he said, let there be light and there was light, he spoke and all the hosts of heaven and earth were, and he said what they would do to fulfill their allotted place in the plan which proceeded from the mind and purpose of God. Everything that was formed, in the day of creation will continue to perform according to that eternal will which gave them a being, originally, there can be nothing added to it nor anything taken from it.

This is the foundation upon which the faith of the children is based, the fact that God is of one mind and none can turn him and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. This is the substance of things hoped for in those who have been given to see and realize the weakness and unprofitableness of the flesh and have fled for refuge to the source of that light that shines around them in this world of darkness and sin.

There is no record in all the inspired writings of the bible that indicate that God has ceased, to any degree, to be the same supreme being that he was declared to be in the day of creation. Isaiah 46 vs 9:10 declares, "*Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else. I am*

God and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure:" No indication here of a loss of power at this stage of the game, is there? The same absolute power and control is manifested throughout the scriptures by those who were inspired with the same authority that Moses possessed when he penned the above scriptures, and the ancient times referred to by Isaiah was the time in which Moses wrote when all things were determined in the mind of the Trinity.

God inspires men to write and leave on record his doctrine, oracles and laws which are to govern his people as they journey in this low ground of sin and sorrow but God himself causes that light to shine into the heart and soul of those to whom these truths have been revealed. Just as the earth and the heavens would have forever been without form and void without the power of God moving upon them, to change them and commanding the light to shine upon them; even so, would all of mankind have forever remained in darkness regarding the truth and with no realization of the spiritual kingdom that is all around them. This light is not to all the world because God made a lesser light to rule the day and another to rule the night and to give light upon the earth for the natural man. The light referred to above is the one that shined around the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus, above the brightness of the

noon day sun, which showed him that his religion was with form and void of any substance and from this light came the voice of Jesus, the light of every heaven born soul.

For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. The same seal of authority here that was in the scriptures recorded in the beginning, no hesitancy, no conditions, no dependence on other things, no qualifications: just a positive declaration of the way things are going to be, and as in all instances, according to the will and purpose of God. This scripture and many, many, others are the foundations of the faith of the children of God, the confidence in the God who spake and it was done; commanded and it stood fast. They glory in the declaration of the words of the psalmist, "***Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord: and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance,***" because this is the only plan of salvation that can fill their need. If it was based upon the qualifications of the man in nature or their coming to God they realize that they would have ever been in darkness and without any hope or knowledge of these things.

God told Moses, the writer of the above text, "***I will have mercy upon***

whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Oh the comfort and the joy that fills the heart of those who have evidence of a work of grace in their lives to know that it is of God according to his good pleasure and cannot be altered or changed by things that may occur in the future.

I, Jesus have sent mine Angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. Surely this also, found in the last chapter of Revelation, is in reference to the light that God spoke into existence in the beginning; it is referred to in all of the writings and the source of that light is God, and the results is revelation to those whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. John 1 vs 4 in speaking of Jesus said, *"In him is life; and the life is the light of men,"* and the true light was to those who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life, and again, I am the light of the world.

The light that God created in the beginning, when he said let there be light, is the light that is still shining in the world to make manifest the works of God in the hearts of the chosen generation, for whom all things were created. II Cor. 4 vs. 6 *"For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the*

glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," to the vessels of mercy which were afore prepared unto glory, even at that time of creation: but as all things, the manifestation of the creation of them occur in what is called time, over many generations. They were just as sure and certain then, as now, but there is a trial of faith that must be experienced by all in this life, that are so exercised, to teach them patience that they may be perfect and entire realizing their total dependence upon their Creator for life and for salvation. As one Elder used to say, patience is endurance and they must all endure the fleshly life and trials before they inherit the spiritual life in its fullness. And praise and adore the giver of that good and perfect gift.

The world has what it calls the eternal flame which man attempts to keep burning. The light that God brought forth in the beginning is the only eternal light. It will light the way of the saints of God on earth and in the climes of Glory.

In bonds of Love,
Elder Richard H. Campbell

HEBREWS 13: 1-3.

Let brotherly love continue.

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

VOICES OF THE PAST

**"The Hope and Calling
of Elder A.P. Mewborn"**

(Continued from last issue.)



On Monday when I was at work, my boss (Mr. T.C. Turnage) called me to his office. He told me he saw me baptized and was happy. He believed the same gospel I did, but was never able to join. He told me he would prophesy that in a short time I would be preaching, and I must remember that my work must not interfere or prohibit me from any Church duties I might have, to do my work at times that it did not prohibit me from the duties of the Church. I was thankful for the stand he took but I felt there would be no preaching problems. He again said while he would be interested in what I was doing, I need not ask him, or anyone else, but go and do the things the Lord bade me. He also stated he would like to assist me in any way he could. Now again, I began to wonder who had told him anything about my fears of preaching. My Daddy told me when I asked him, that he had said nothing of his feelings to my boss. Sometimes I still wonder.

October was the association month, and I visited the Kehukee, Contentnea, White Oak and Black Creek. After this I continued to go with my parents and wife to the meetings around here.

Fourth Sunday in November, Elder Roberts asked me if I would open the meeting with hymn and prayer. I told him I had no desire to open the meet-

ing, and contrary to what he evidently believed, I had no burden to speak at all. What a liar I am! I found some comfort in the scripture, "Let God be true, and every man a liar," but I had still lied to my pastor, who I loved dearly. He looked hurt but said he felt sorry for me, and went on with the meeting.

I loved and felt especially close to Elder G.G. Trevathan and Elder W.E. Turner, and I am sure I plagued them often. I was seeking something, I did not, (and don't know now) what I was looking for, but I went to see them often. We cried together and agreed on the teachings of the scriptures, had good fellowship for each other, but these sessions accomplished nothing. Elder Trevathan's son, Fred, operated a shoe repair shop only about a half block from where I worked, and "Pop" his Daddy stayed with him a lot. Every day at my lunch hour, I went to his shop. I am sure brother Fred got tired of me going so often, but he was kind to me. I remember at one of these sessions, Elder Trevathan said to me, "Son, I can't tell you how to preach." My temper flew hot, I said too loud, "Hell, I don't want you to tell me how to preach, I want to know how to keep from preaching." I abruptly left by the back door; my head hung down and tears flowing. I felt I had lost him, and did not go to the shop again to talk with him. I felt I had no one I could discuss these things with. I remembered that Job had written, "The thing I feared the most has come upon me." This is probably not verbatim, but it is how I felt. I had insulted Elder Roberts

and Elder Trevathan and I felt they had passed on my rash behavior and insulting remarks to many of the brethren. I honestly tried to stop going to the Churches again; but that did not help. I worked on Saturdays and could not attend my conference meetings, and I felt this was just a little more evidence that I had no calling and no promise of God in the ministry, nor even in the Church. I felt that the only help or recourse I had was to visit other Churches any place where they would not believe I had any burden to preach, or know the fears that possessed me much of my time. I felt then I could enjoy the meetings, the singing; the preaching; one more time.

I went to Mewborns Church, my Mother's family Church, hoping to hear the ministers there, (Elder J.E. Mewborn and Elder W.B. Kearney) preach in a way that would comfort me again. I enjoyed meeting the people, many of them family, also the brethren. The singing was beautiful and Elder Mewborn preached first. I enjoyed him, but I don't know his text. I felt that this was indeed the right way to go, for I had no guilty feeling and was blessed to rejoice again at that certain sound that comes when one can really hear God's ministers bring His message to His saints. I should have left when he stopped, and gone home. Elder Kearney began to read the scripture. "*My people shall be a willing people in the day of my power.*" I don't know even now, how the others could continue to sit there. He spoke only to me, and if a poor worm was ever made to feel small, it was me. He

knew nothing of my sufferings, my doubts and fears; nothing of the pitiful plight I was in, but preached in such a manner, my poor mind was locked on the scripture that tells the experience of that poor woman at the well. "*Come, see a man, which told me all the things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?*" My troubles returned with such force that I could not hold the tears back any longer and kept begging from within, Lord have mercy on me!

I continued to go to the Meadow through some sense of duty. On two occasions Elder Roberts asked me if I had a mind to speak to the Church. The first time I told him no emphatically, the second time I asked him if he had lost his mind. He gently told me that he may have, but he was only doing what he felt he must do, and maybe he would ask me again some time.

He got weaker and very sick, and was confined to his bed. Elder Edwards served the Churches he was pastor of, and although I did not visit him; I felt condemned for not going. Then he asked my parents and Elder Edwards to tell me to come to see him, to pray for him so he could die in peace. I felt I had to go; the Lord knows I loved him, but I knew I could not pray before the others. On one occasion when I was younger; my Grandmother, who was real sick, asked me to pray for her and I had tried; so I felt I must go and try. The day before we were scheduled to go to his home; that night I was so burdened with a scripture I had not ever read, that I remembered but once. "*We have a little sister, and she*

hath no breast: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?" I knew nothing about it, but it would not go away. No answers came; just lots of questions. When we reached his home; he was in bed, not able to sit up and he was suffering a great deal. I felt my disobedience was the cause of all this, and I suffered also. My parents and Elder Edwards were there, together with him and his sweet wife. I sat beside his bed, completely ignoring Elder Edwards and all the others and began to talk to him. He caught hold of my hand and held it, and asked me to pray for him. I tried to pray; I could not refuse. There was nothing negative about me. When finally I could stop speaking in prayer; he asked if there had been any scripture on my mind, and I could not answer, because I was afraid to say no. I quoted the scripture and then automatically began speaking about my little sister, which depicts God's Church to me, and having no breast, could not feed her children, but was totally dependent on another, a higher power for her children's bread. When at last, (it seemed a long time to me) I quit speaking; he asked us to sing a hymn and Elder Edwards had a dismissal prayer. Oh, if I could only describe the feelings of the ones there, the tears and the remorse I felt, for I knew again most emphatically that I had failed.

The next meeting time was second Sunday at Damascus. I went only because I felt if I disobeyed God one more time I would die, and wanted to live with my precious wife and chil-

dren. On Wednesday night before this I had a dream. I dreamed I was at Farmville Church and it was people there, who in my life in the Church, had never been there before, and some of those who were regulars were not seated in there usual place. I saw my Aunt Lula Mewborn, who had been turned out of the Meadow Church, and when she begged forgiveness, asking to be reinstated, my Grandmother refused. I saw Herbert Kemp, who seemed to hate the Primitive Baptist which a passion. His wife is a member at Farmville and her family are all of the primitive belief. She worked with me in a dry goods store and we were close because we had a strong belief in the doctrine of the Church. For the first time, her Mother, sister-in-law and brother were there, and Herbert with them. I enjoyed the meeting in my dream, but did not know the preacher and could not retain anything he said. I told sister Sybil about my dream, and she laughed and said, "It certainly was a dream; for you will never see Herbert in an Old Baptist Church except perhaps at a funeral." The house was about two thirds full, which was a large gathering for that meeting. Sister Sybil got a good laugh as I told her my dream, but to me it was so real, that it was not funny. She asked who was preaching, and I told her I did not know. She asked if I enjoyed the preaching and I told her I believed what I heard, but I did not like his delivery because he seemed so afraid. I promptly forgot my dream and life went on. I wanted to

go to the Churches, but was afraid to go to the Meadow.

On second Sunday, I asked Loraine if she was going to the meeting with me, and she said she would stay home and prepare lunch. I went unafraid; I knew they could not embarrass me there for I was a member at the Meadow. As I entered the Church; I saw my Daddy and the other deacons hovering around Elder Roberts. I looked and could tell he was sick and I wanted to take him home. He would not agree to go, and I quickly asked where Elder Edwards was. He had gone to Red Banks Church; they had no pastor and he was filling in for them. About eleven o'clock, Elder Roberts cried out, "Jonah, don't let my people die, its all right if you and I suffer for your disobedience, but don't let my people die!" I immediately told him I could not speak here; I was a member at the Meadow. He retorted, "All the deacons from the Meadow and Damascus are here and if it is agreed on by them, it is in order for you to speak now. I looked in despair at the congregation and nearly fainted! This was the people I saw in my dream, sister Lula Mewborn and her sons were there, brother Owens and sister Julia, and "Ma Hales", and with them were sister Sybil and Herbert Kemp. Now I was truly afraid; for I knew I could not preach, and I told Elder Roberts I couldn't. He said, "Son, just open the meeting with hymn and prayer and I will be satisfied." I opened the hymn book to "Love Divine" (number 10) and read the hymn and got on my knees behind the table and tried to

pray. When finally I could stop; I rose to my feet and glanced down at the Bible the deacons had placed on the table. It was open and my eyes were drawn to the scripture Isaiah, forty, the first verse. I found myself saying, *"God was speaking to someone, when He said comfort ye, comfort ye my people saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received at the Lord's hand double for all her sins."* I don't recall anything else I said for about thirty minutes, then I was returned to myself, and said, "Let me sit down."

I had left the table and was standing in front of my Daddy and Elder Roberts, who were sitting on the first pew at the front. I was exhausted, frightened and weeping. Elder Roberts got up; went into the pulpit and said to the people, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, a more beautiful and more comforting sermon, I have never heard." Sister Kemp's mother came through the crowd saying, "I went to see the young preacher. "Herbert Kemp had tears in his eyes: he embraced me; turned and left the Church.

When I could get out; I went home. I related the events to my precious wife, who loved the Church, but did not want me to preach. I told her that she had no cause to worry; for I had failed and I was sure I would not be called on again.

This was second Sunday; I stayed home on third Sunday, and on fourth

Sunday, the Church went in conference and agreed to liberate me. Brother Pasper Dupree made a motion that I be given liberty to speak wherever I felt to be called. This motion was seconded and with a standing vote the membership voted in agreement one hundred percent. Liberty? I found no liberty, but felt bound, and where ever I went I was called on to preach, and I got an obsession to go to Church, enjoy the singing, the fellowship and the preaching without being called on.

In the beginning of this epic; I wrote of the remedy I concocted for this, but like most remedies it was not a cure. After about thirty-six years I have not learned how to go before the Lord's people without much dread, fear and trembling. There were times I felt He blessed me, but I never knew if He would come back the next time.

I don't know how many times I have tried to preach. My grandfather, Elder D.A. Mewborn, kept a diary, showing where he went, the text he read, and the contributions he received. I have a copy of this diary and prize it highly. I set out to do the same thing, keeping a record in much the same manner that he did, but it was not for me.

In 1955 I had surgery on my leg. I signed a paper giving my permission to amputate it, but the doctor decided to try to repair it instead. It took 97 stitches to sew up the incision he made and then he felt for a long time I would lose it. Now thirty-two years later; I still have the leg. I have suffered in a way that I cannot describe, but I can still walk. While I was in the hospital at Chapel Hill; I remember

very little of what went on. I knew they were fearful of death, but some how I was not concerned about it. I remember while lying in my bed there, (I still don't know if I were dreaming or not) I saw in a large room all the people I had baptized seated together. It was such a pretty sight I cried out, "Now Lord, show me the ones I will baptize," and He took them all away. I have not made an entry in the diary since. It was shown me; they belonged to Him not to me. Then the scripture came to me, "My witness is in heaven and record is on high," and I know that I cannot keep that record.

Elder A.P. Mewborn

BORN OF GOD

Excerpts of Sermon

Preached in Rochdale Road Chapel,
Manchester on Lord's Day Morning,
June 29th, 1862

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1: 13.)

I he immediate connection in which these words stand is as follows: Our Lord Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, *"came unto His own, and His own received Him not."* By *"His own"* we are to understand the whole of the Jewish nation, which are nationally His peculiar people; He came unto them, but they received Him not, but conspired against Him, and said, *"This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours."* Peter charges the horrid deed upon them;

they ***"killed the Prince of life;"*** but ***"as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name."*** None ever did, can, or will receive Christ, believe in His name, and enjoy their relationship to a covenant God as His sons, but such as are ***"born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."***

Paul draws a line of distinction between natural and spiritual Israel: ***"They are not all Israel which are of Israel, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called;"*** a remnant according to the election of grace. So that whether Jew or Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free, if they be the sons of God, by eternal adoption, they must in God's time and way be born again, ***"not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, but of God."***

In endeavouring to make a few remarks from the words we have now read, to the Lord's honour and our spiritual comfort and consolation and establishment in the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, we would notice three things.

I. ***The necessity of the new birth.*** The necessity appears from the solemn, important, and interesting conversation which took place between Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Nicodemus comes and speaks of the great miracles that the Lord had wrought, which were evident displays of His eternal power and Godhead. Our Lord makes no reply to Nicodemus in reference to the miracles that had been

wrought by Him, but directs his attention to a great work, in which there is a greater display of His almighty power than in these miracles to which Nicodemus refers; and at once insists upon the new birth: ***"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."*** John 3:5)

Here the Lord insists on the necessity of being born again, and follows it up: ***"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."*** The kingdom of God is a kingdom prepared by our heavenly Father, in which all His saints shall be landed safe, and appear for ever in His presence. And this kingdom shall be given to none but to those for whom it is prepared; and while the kingdom is prepared for a people, the people that are to be put in possession of it are prepared for the enjoyment of it. Hence we read of ***"vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory."***

This preparation for immortal glory, commences in regeneration, in being born again, ***"not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."*** It is impossible in every sense of the word, for an unregenerate person to enter heaven; it would be no heaven to him. He sees beauty, no glory in, no need of, a precious Christ. The spirits of just men made perfect would be no company for him; he could not enter into their joys; there would be no comfort, no happiness, no bliss, no blessedness, no joy in heaven for him. I can recollect the time when the company

and conversation of God's people, when the assembling of His saints, and the preaching of His gospel, were a burden to me. When I was compelled to attend, and be confined in the chapel, it was a prison to me, and why? Because when we are in a natural state we have no spiritual feeling, no spiritual desire, and see no beauty, no glory, no comeliness in a precious Christ. And, had we died then we had indeed died in our sins, not prepared for heaven, but prepared by our transgressions for destruction.

So, it is those who are born again by the Spirit of God, made new creatures in Christ Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit to see and feel the need of Him, to believe in Him, to glory in His Person, triumph in His finished salvation. These are the people who are born again, who love each other as members of the household of faith and have a hidden melody in the heart, and can sing, "*Hallelujah to God and to the Lamb,*" and can also join in the chorus, "*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*"

Before I dismiss this branch of the subject, beloved, a solemn thought presents itself. Death and eternity are before us. Some of us are advanced in years; there can at the most be but a short space between us and the grave for the body, and eternity for the soul. The question arises in much solemnity, Are we, or are we not, born again of God? Are we, or are we not, in a

prepared state for death and the kingdom? How frequently, when musing on this important subject, do the following lines drop into my mind:

*Prepare me, gracious God,
To stand before thy face;
Thy Spirit must the work perform,
For it is all of grace.*

II. The power by which the great change of being born again is effected. The evangelist in our text speaks particularly of this power, and in order that the transaction may shine the brighter and appear the more distinct, he couples three negatives with the positive declaration. Let us first notice the negatives, and then proceed to the positive. We shall say a little upon the *negatives*.

1. "**Which were born, not of blood.**" God's grace does not run in the blood from father to son. The abominable and filthy thing, sin, that our God hates, is hereditary; it runs in the blood from father to son. Adam begat sons and daughters in his own image, as a depraved creature. How explicitly David speaks of it. He says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." How frequently is it seen that gracious, God-fearing parents, parents that are born of God, have profligate sons and daughters. See it in Eli; behold it in David; and in many among ourselves. On the other had, there are the most profligate parents, whose offspring, born in actual sin and transgression, have been, by the grace of God, regenerate and made new creatures in the Lord Jesus Christ. See Abijah in the

house of an adulterous king, even Jeroboam. So that the Lord has mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and compassion upon whom He will have compassion. Our religion is therefore not of blood, but by the teaching of the Holy Spirit of our God.

2. *"Nor of the will of the flesh."* What are we to understand by the will of the flesh, this portion of God's Word? Paul, speaking of this subject, says, *"I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh."* His desire was that they might be saved. As a Christian and a man of God he had great desires for the spiritual and eternal welfare of those who were allied to him by nature. We see this desire shine very prominently on a very memorable occasion. Behold him declaring what God had done for his soul in the presence of King Agrippa and a splendid earthly court, before which he had to appear as a witness for the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks of the miraculous manner in which he was converted and called to his apostleship; of the revelation of Christ to his soul; of the preciousness of Jesus and how he was commanded to proclaim the glorious glad tidings of salvation to perishing sinners. He also reviews the birth, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, and His ascension to glory; and he declares these things are the records of heaven, and puts it all to King Agrippa, who believed the prophets, and knew

that these things *"were not done in a corner."* Paul's powerful language has an effect upon the king's mind, so that he exclaims, *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."* Now mark the feeling of Paul's mind. And Paul said, *"I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."* Now we see the fleshly feeling and desire of the apostle was such that he would, had it been in his power, have regenerated the king and all that were then with him; but he could not reach the case; it required a greater Power.

Let us bring this down to our own feelings. Where is the minister that stands up to preach, that is concerned for the salvation of his hearers, who would not, if he could, carry the Word with power to their souls and convert them to God? Where is the God fearing man, who has a wife that knows not the Lord, but is concerned for her to know God as her God? And where is the wife that has an unbelieving husband, but is concerned for his salvation? Where are the God fearing parents who are not concerned for the salvation and welfare of their children? This is commendable so far as we view it subservient to the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush. We can do nothing without the Lord; it must be the power of God alone.

3. *"Nor of the will of man."* A great deal is said of man and of his free will, we unhesitatingly grant; but what is that will free to do, while in a state of unregeneracy? The will is one of the faculties of the mind, a depraved fac-

ulty; so that men willingly drink in sin, like thirsty oxen drinking in water; they lie down, as thousands do as some of us did, in the sink of sin, and wallow in it and delight in it like a sow wallowing in the mire. Man's free will in a depraved sinner leads him from God in the broad and downward road; it leads him to eternal destruction, if not prevented by the free and sovereign grace of God.

"O," says one; "has not a man a will to choose the good and refuse the bad; to turn to God, and repent, and believe, and be saved?" We answer the question in the Lord's own way, and propose this question as a reply: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" No; it is impossible; for, if so, "then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil," So then, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Our salvation, our regeneration, is not to be traced to the will of man, but to the sovereign will of God. Mark the notable passage: "*Of His own will begat He us.*"

Now let us look at the positive declaration. "But of God." O that we could pronounce this short sentence with the gravity and solemnity that its nature demands. "But of God." All human power must sink and die, "as a dim candle dies at noon;" and the great and almighty power of Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth, be exalted; for He is King of kings, and Lord of lords above all praise and power, and above every name that can be named; and at the name of Jesus

every knee shall bow, and tongue confess, that He is Lord.

Whoever is born again of the Spirit of God is regenerate; and, mark it: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." There is a creation, a new creation. We ask the Christian, who can create but God? Man can perform wonders if you put something into his hand to work upon; but if he has nothing whereon to display his wisdom and demonstrate his handiwork he can do nothing. I was forcibly struck with this while walking through the International Exhibition in London. I beheld many things in the rough state as they were found in or on the earth, and I saw the wisdom and handiwork of man in bringing them forth to perfection, in a way that fills the mind with admiration. But had these man had nothing put into their hands to work upon, they could have displayed no power. So, none can create but God; and the same God, the same power displayed in the creation of the heavens and earth, is displayed in producing this new creation of grace in the soul of a sinner.

Paul, in speaking of this, says, "*according to the exceeding greatness of His power.*" O the exceeding greatness of His power in the works of creation, and in the works of providence! But there is a greater display of Jehovah's power in the regeneration of one soul than in all the works of creation and providence. When the Lord by His almighty power spake the world into existence, there was none to oppose; He spake, and the thing was done. But in regeneration of a

sinner, there is an allied power fighting against the power of God; there is Satan, the god of this world, in the sinner's heart; there are the allurements of the world, all uniting to prevent the Lord from accomplishing the good pleasure of His will. But when the appointed time comes, the stronger man armed enters the sinner's heart; makes him willing in the day of His power; brings down his lofty looks; abases his proud and hard heart; lays him in the dust and upon the dunghill, at the feet of a dear Redeemer; and He exerts His power, not by creature might nor by creature power, but by the power of God.

A sinner is born again by the power of God Himself. Sinners in a state of nature cannot take to themselves this power; they must be born of God. Lazarus had no power in himself to rise from the dead; neither had his sisters or friends any power to raise him. And we may further say, but with all solemnity, there was no power in the sighs, and groans, and tears of Jesus, as a man, to move Lazarus unto life. Where is the power then? In Christ's eternal power and Godhead. Then behold it; He speaks the word: "*Lazarus, come forth!*" and we see the dead come forth, bound hand and foot in the grave clothes. So, when sinners are converted to God, the word of the Lord regenerates the heart as on the day of Pentecost. If we are born again it must have been the power of God to begin the work; the power of God to maintain it; and the power of God to complete it. If we have not the power

of God, the soul is dead, religion is dead, and all is dead.

III. Now let us proceed, in the last place, to notice the marks and evidences of a sinner's being born again.

Is it not a subject of vast importance to know whether we are born again? We all know we must die and that after death is the judgment; and if we are not born again, eternal destruction will be our destination. Whatever we may know, whatever we may profess, if we are not changed by divine grace we shall never enter into heaven; for the word of the Lord is explicit here. We must keep to the metaphor. Some people will have it religion begins in joy, and love, and peace. I have not so learned Christ, neither did Paul, nor the thousands at the day of Pentecost, nor the Philippian jailor; but more of this as we enter into the evidences of being born again.

1. Look at it in the familiar style in which it presents itself to us. We must borrow from nature. When a child is born alive, as a token of its birth and the life of the child, it is heard to cry. When its cry is heard there is a token, an undeniable evidence, of the birth. Just so in a spiritual point of view. Men, before they are born again, may say prayers, make long prayers like the pharisees, or like Saul of Tarsus; but Saul never did cry, he never did pray spiritually, till Jesus met him on the way to Damascus; not with offers and overtures that if he would turn, and repent, and believe, and so on, He would save him. My soul abhors offers and overtures made in this way, because, in its very language it tends

to the exaltation of the creature and to the abasing of the mighty power of God. Christ met Saul of Tarsus with new covenant blessings in His own heart; such as, *"I will and they shall."* *"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest."* And the Lord reached his soul with power; His arrow was powerful; Saul was humbled, and lay down at Jesus' feet. Now here we see the power of God. The Lord directs Ananias to go and speak words of peace and comfort to him.

All you that are born of God are praying souls; the soul born of God cannot live without prayer. God's sword is two-edged, cuts both ways. O that it may be so this morning! Have I any this morning that are careless and graceless? Have I any that are content and satisfied with a form of prayer in words, that pray not in their hearts? If so, God is against you. But if you are born of God you are a praying soul; you have inward sighs and groans because of your sin and sinfulness; you have spiritual hungerings and thirstings after Christ, and you cannot live without pouring out your heart and soul unto God. The Holy Spirit pours down into your soul a spirit of supplication and you are enabled to spread your case before Him, and your prayer is the prayer of the publican; and it will be your cry on your dying bed: "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" "Lord save, or I perish!"

2. Let me notice another of the evidences of being born again. The

apostle Peter uses the figure of a new-born babe: *"As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word."* The God of nature has implanted in the very constitution of a new-born babe a desire for the breast and milk of its mother. See her take the babe; and with a mother's heart she clasps it in her arms and blesses it. This is an emblem; for so in grace; as sure as a sinner is born again of the Spirit of God, in the very constitution of that regenerated soul there is a spiritual desire, an inward thirst for the sacred Scriptures, for the preaching of the Word of God, for the company and conversation of the saints of God. Hence "we know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

As sure as a poor soul is born again of God there will be a thirst for God; I speak it experimentally. When my father insisted upon my reading a chapter and insisted upon my going to the house of God, I say it to my shame, I felt as if I could have cursed him in my heart, and I said, "If ever I become twenty-one years of age I will have my own way." But, bless the Lord, He will not let us have our own way; no; He will bring us to His feet with weeping and supplications. When the Lord laid hold of me what a thirst I had for the Word of God and for the conversation of the saints. When we have a new heart, new desires, and new affections, we must walk in new ways.

See these marks confirmed by the apostle's declaration: "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away;

behold, all things are become new." What are these old things that must pass away, and the new things to come? When a sinner is born again he becomes a new creature; he cannot keep company with old companions any longer; he cannot walk any longer in his own sinful ways. O no; the grace of God has taken possession of his heart, and it never did and never shall fail to produce the effect God says it shall produce; namely, *"teaching us that, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."* The Lord hunts His people out, and brings them, with a broken heart and guilty conscience, to weep at His feet, and His words sound in their heart like an alarm: *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate."*

What a remembrance I had of this very passage last night. After tea I took a walk on Kersal Moor (where the Manchester races then took place); went round the church, and thought of former times when I tried to run away from God. I got up early in the morning and went to the races. I got on the race ground; but O the misery and wretchedness and great terror my soul felt! I could no more abide in the camp of the wicked than I could cease to exist; necessity was upon me, and I looked to find a field where I might be alone, and pour out my soul to God. Heaven-born souls cannot revel and delight in sin. Sin lives in them, but they hate it, and abhor it; for if any man be born again he is a new creature. They are not of the world; God has

called them out of the world, and they shall by the grace of God, show forth the praises of Him that hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Men regenerate of the Spirit of God have new views of themselves, and new feelings and new desires after Christ and His salvation, as the people of God, as His elect. The people of God appeared to me poor melancholy fools, men of no pleasure and no enjoyment; and their prayers and talk were a plague and torment to me. But after God had wrought this change in my soul, and I was made alive from the death of sin, and I saw my need of a Saviour, I cried, "I will go with you, for I have heard that God is with you." And O what delight I took in the conversation of these very people I had turned my back upon. Thus there are new connections, new feelings, and new desires; old things have passed away, and all things are become new.

3. Now we have another evidence, which will lead us into the marrow of the gospel. The regenerate soul has a spiritual appetite. We have each a body, and a soul inhabiting that body. Now our bodies are earthly bodies, sensual bodies, for we were originally created out of the dust of the earth. Hence it is that the food the earth produces nourishes and strengthens our earthly bodies. The labouring man following the plough, or whatever labour it may be, perceives his strength fail, and he wants dinner time to come, that he may sit down at the table, and be refreshed in his body. The food he takes strengthens and refreshes him,

and he is again able to follow his employment.

Look at one circumstance in the Bible. The prophet Elijah is fleeing from Jezebel; he comes to the wilderness, and sits down under a juniper tree, hungry and faint for want of food, and requested for himself that he might die; but the Lord sent His angel to him, with meat; and the angel said, "*Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat for forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb, the mount of God*" (1 Kings 19:7&8).

A man that is born again of the Spirit of God; can his soul feed and be satisfied with the luxuries the world produces? O no; let him have ever so splendid a table, and ever so much wealth, and heap upon him all the honours, titles, dignities, that a man on earth can bear, and in the heaven-born soul there is a vacuum, an aching void, that neither gold nor silver, nor wealth, nor dignities can fill. Do you want his song?

*Were I possessor of the earth,
And called the stars my own,
Without thy graces and thyself,
I were a wretch undone!*

What will satisfy a soul born again? We have a satisfaction, and that satisfaction is Christ. If we are born again of the Spirit of God, no provision will satisfy us but the Bread of eternal life, which comes down from heaven. Christ is the provision of the Father's house, and this provision alone will satisfy a heaven-born soul.

If you and I are born again of God we cannot be satisfied with the world and things of the world; and if you and I are born of God we are not, nor can be, satisfied in or of ourselves. I firmly believe from my own experience, that the longer a heaven-born child of God lives here, the more dissatisfied he will be with himself; the more he will sink in his own esteem; loathe and abhor himself, and repent, in his soul-feeling, in the dust before the Lord. On the other hand, if we are born again we shall feel a growing need of a precious Christ, of His glorious Person as the God-man and Mediator. We need Him as our covenant Head, and to feed upon Him as the mystery of godliness, God-man in the flesh, and we adore Him. We see Him fulfil the law of ten commands; we rejoice in His righteousness, and hunger and thirst after it. We also see Him in His bloodshedding; we see the work is finished, and our soul feeds upon a finished and complete salvation, all of grace, from first to last.

O, there is that in Christ that satiates the soul that is born of God. He is all and in all. It is of importance for you and me and every child of God to learn that He is our Saviour and Redeemer. We read in the prophecy by Ezekiel about a new-born babe being cast into the open field. O! How helpless it is! It can do nothing for itself; it must have all done for it. Now, if you are born again of God, you are yourself as helpless as regards saving yourself, and washing yourself from your sins, and clothing yourself in the robe of righteousness, and justifying yourself in a

spiritual point of view, as that little child was. If we are born again we are like the babe cast out, helpless and crying, bewailing our condition, knowing that no man can help us. But when the Lord passes by, He spreads His skirt over us, and feeds and nourishes us with the Bread of heaven, and gives us all that we stand in need of. Heaven-born souls can do nothing for themselves. Christ and Christ alone is all and in all. Amen.

John Kershaw

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

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS

Dear Sister Kennedy:



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

I received your good letter and was glad to hear from you. Dessie Mae had just written you. We planned to go to meeting at Rehobeth yesterday but the buses were snow-bound and we did not get to go. We have not been since last third Sunday and I am very anxious to attend again. Sister Kennedy, I will be very glad to send in your remittance to the *Signs of the Times* for you and I will do it as soon as I can get to it. I have been so busy lately that I have not had time for any correspondence. I like my work very well, but I have to work night and day and then it seems I never catch up. I am teaching science, but the trouble is that when I am

preparing for class I am thinking of the only true Scientist, "*Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.*" It was He who fixed the earth, stars, sun, moon, and everything else so that all things move precisely in their predestined paths. The minds and environment of all human beings, as well as animals, are so fixed that everything, act and thought, comes into reality just as God has fixed it. He has so arranged all this so that everything works together for good to those whom God has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the earth.

I am teaching arithmetic, but the trouble is that when I am preparing for the next class, I am thinking of how God enabled His little children to add to their faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, etc. I think of Paul's words that were addressed to Timothy when he said, "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" I think of how that God will multiply the peace and grace of His children. I think of how He will take away their sins, and will remember no more their transgressions. I am teaching typing, but the trouble is when I am preparing for an assignment I am thinking of the types and shadows of the Old Testament. I think of the Typist who makes no typographical errors, but who reveals the true meaning of these types to his servants whom He has qualified

and sent out for the purpose of making plain these things to His children.

I am teaching bookkeeping, but the trouble is when I am preparing for the next class, I am thinking of a partnership of Christ, and the church where all the assets are in Christ Jesus and the liabilities are in the people but the liabilities all sink into oblivion through the proprietorship of God, the Father; Christ, the Son; the Holy Ghost; dissolved into the church. We have no merits to list as assets. All we have are debts which were well disposed of when Jesus' obedience of the law was credited to our account.

I am teaching history, but the trouble is when I am preparing for the next lesson, I am thinking of the history of the world and church. I think of Adam, the first man, of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, David, Solomon, the flood, the old covenant, the new covenant, Jesus, the great Ambassador from the Father. I am also made to meditate upon the terrible chaotic condition of this sinful, warring world. Were it not for the confidence I have in the Upholder and Disposer of all things, I feel that I would sink by the wayside. I am made to be comforted with the thought that God controls every bullet, bomb, cannon and all destroyers. He controls all generals, kings, governors and presidents, as well as, each and every soldier, marine, sailor, WAVE, WAAC, and even the hairs of the heads of each and every one who is engaged in this terrible and awful war.

I believe God has a grand and noble purpose in each and every battle, and that He will take care of all His chil-

dren and nothing can befall them beyond His determinate counsel. I believe God's people will be brought closer to their Maker, and be made to depend entirely upon Him for all things. I believe the nations will all be made to bow to His majesty.

Now, Sister Kennedy, I realize that I have written far more than I felt that I could when I started, but I hope that you have not been too wearied reading this. I realize that it is very imperfect, but I hope you will at least forgive me for relieving my mind. It is late now, so I will let Dessie Mae finish the letter. Let me say, however, that it is always a pleasure to read a letter from you.

Elder E.J. Lambert

From Elder Lambert's book,
"Tried in the Furnace."

**SMILE AT DIFFICULTIES
AND PRESS ALONG**

*My dear friends, if you wish to succeed.
The journey is not smooth like a song,
All the power that you have you will need—
Smile at difficulties and press along.*

*All ambitious people have a goal,
Hardships seem to make them very strong.
Let us work with our might and be bold—
Smile at difficulties and press along.*

*Brace up friends, persevere with the fight
Even when everything seems wrong,
If you do your burdens will be light—
Smile at difficulties and press along.*

This poem was used by the author as the subject of "Graduation Address" delivered in graduation exercises.

March 26.

"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord."—ISAIAH liv. 13.



he teaching of God can only be known and realised by those who have seen an end of all creature perfection, and who are completely and experimentally destitute of all wisdom in the flesh. And God's teaching does not leave a man where it found him, dead, stupified, worldly, unfeeling, and carnal. If he is in distress, it does not leave him in distress; if he feels guilty, it does not leave him guilty; if he is in darkness, it does not leave him in darkness; but it lifts him out of these evils. Thus God's people are continually led to come unto him for his instruction, because they feel that without his special teaching they can know nothing as they ought to know. Nay, the more they have, the more they want to have; for no sooner is the light withdrawn, than the darkness is more sensibly felt. If any text of Scripture has been opened up to them, it makes them want to have others made known in a similar way; if they have had any consolation, and it is taken away, it makes them want it again. So that the more wise and spiritual God's people become, the more foolish and carnal they appear in their own eyes; the stronger they are in the Lord and in the power

of his might, the more sensibly do they feel the weakness of their flesh; and the more they are enabled to walk closely with the Lord, the more they discover the wretched wanderings of their base and sinful hearts.

Elder J.C. Philpot

June 8.

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



Ye suffering saints of God! ye tried and afflicted children of the most High! raise up your thoughts as God may enable you—lift up your eyes, and see what awaits you. Are you tried, tempted, exercised, afflicted? It is your mercy. God does not deal so with every one. It is because you are his children, that he lays on you his chastening hand. He means to conform you to the image of his Son in glory, and therefore he now conforms you to the image of his Son in suffering. 'O but,' you say, 'I cannot believe it is so!' No; if you could, it would not be much of a trial. This is the trial of faith—to go groaning on, struggling on, sorrowing on, sighing on; believing against unbelief, hoping against hope; and still looking to the Lord, though there is everything in nature to damp the hopes and expectations of

pectations of your waiting souls. Yet all will end well with the people of God. Their life here is a life of temptation, of suffering and trial; but heaven will make amends for all. And if our faith is now tried as "with fire," it will one day "be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." In that day when the secrets of all hearts will be brought to light, the faith of thousands will be found to be little else than presumption; but the faith of God's dear family will then be crowned with "praise and honour and glory;" and they shall see the Lamb as he is face to face, when all tears are wiped away from all faces.

Elder J.C. Philpot

PSALM 43.

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

FOR DECEMBER 1995

Staunton River Union

The Union meeting of the Staunton River Primitive Baptist will be held, the Lord willing, with Canaan Church the fifth Saturday and Sunday on March 30 and 31, 1996. The church is located on 844 in Pittsylvania County.

All who believe and love the doctrine of salvation by grace are invited to meet with us.

Elder J.R. Williams, Moderator
Geneva B. Searce, Clerk

FOR DECEMBER 1995

CONTRIBUTIONS

- Mrs. Allyne Page, TX \$7.00
- Buford E. Thompson, VA 2.00
- Carroll Cruise, VA 10.00
- J.H. Hershman, NC 2.00
- Mrs. Ruby Hawley, VA 5.00
- Mrs. Cliff Weaver, WA 15.00
- Cleo L. Underwood, VA 6.00
- Herman Webb, IL 7.00
- Mrs. Dora E. Vick, NC 10.00
- Mrs. Charles Lovell, VA 2.00
- G. Franklin Blalock, NC 2.00
- Mrs. Mae Dee Johnson, OK 2.00
- Mrs. Mildred Plaster, VA 2.00
- Herbert Dodson, VA 2.00
- Noel Lavinder, VA 7.00
- Dan Anders, AL 2.00
- Mrs. Jean Moran, NC 12.00
- Mrs. Peggy West, NC 4.00
- Lovie C. Hornaby, GA 2.00
- Mrs. Iva G. Quesenberry, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Charity Dowdy, NC 2.00

OBITUARIES

HOWARD FRANKLIN BRANCH

Glenwood Primitive Baptist Church bows in humble submission in the taking of our Brother, Howard Franklin Branch on November 12, 1995, of Tams Mt., W.V. He was born May 26, 1926 at Premier, W.V. the son of the late Thomas Green Branch and Lucinda French Branch. Also preceding him in death were eleven brothers, including Elder Ernest Branch and Brother Lemuel Branch. Surviving are three sisters and one brother. Brother Howard also leaves his wife Marie B. Branch, daughters Brenda Sue Parker, Sharon Kay Branch, Teresa B. Redden and granddaughter Ashley Beth Redden. Brother Howard was a 30 yr. retired coal miner.

Brother Howard came to Glenwood church by letter from Palm Bethel Primitive Baptist Church, Fla. on May 11, 1974. Brother Howard will be greatly missed by Glenwood church. He was a firm believer in Sovereign Grace, loved to talk on the Scriptures and sing the songs of Zion. Only illness prevented him from filling his place each meeting time. Toward the end of his long illness he still talked of the goodness of God, when it seemed he had little breath left for talking. He chose the songs to be used in his service, and longed to be released from his painful life on this earth. The Lord blessed him in his leaving, going to sleep that last night, to wake no

more. We feel our loss is Brother Howard's gain.

His service was held November 16, 1995 at Williams-Blue Ridge Funeral Home Chapel at Sophia, W.V. with Elder Larry Hollandsworth officiating. Burial in the family cemetery at Tams Mt., W.V.

Our sympathy is extended to all of his family and may God grant them comfort and submission to His Holy Will.

Done by order of the church in conference December 17, 1995, with copies to be given to his family, placed on the church book and sent to The Signs of the Times for publication.

Elder Larry Hollandsworth, Mod.
Sister Marilyn Shaw, Clerk

ERMA LEE BROACH

It is with sad heart that I attempt to write an obituary of our beloved Sister. Our Lord and Savior called her home on November 10, 1995 at St. Vincent Hospital at Little Rock, Arkansas at age 95 years. Born August 15, 1900 in the Pine Crest Community, she was the daughter of the late Isaac Alexander Barnes and Levonia Ball Sotver Barnes. She was a firm believer in the Doctrine by the Original Old School Primitive Baptist Church for 52 years. She asked for a home with the church on August 14, 1943. Was baptized by the Pastor, Elder J. T. Everett on August 15, 1943. Was Clerk from Dec. 1943 to Dec. 1971.

"Miss Erma", as she was known by family and friends, was a devoted

helper to her community and spent the last nine years of her life as a resident of the Dallas County Nursing Home.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Henry Broach Sr. who died in 1984.

Survivors include one son and daughter-in-law, Henry Broach Jr. and Joy Cox Broach of Little Rock,; three grandsons, Drew Ashley Broach and wife, Robin Peters Broach and daughter Flannery Peters Broach of New Orleans, La., Whitney Cox Broach of Dayton, Ohio and Desten Alexander Broach of Palo Alto, Cal.

Funeral services was held at the Pilgrim Rest Primitive Baptist Church at 3:00 p.m. by Elder Theron Jones Monday November 13. Burial was in Stoney Point Cemetery by Benton Funeral Home, Inc.

She will be missed by all that knew her; Family, Friends, Church Members. This was requested in Conference at Pilgrim Rest Church Dec. 1995.

Frances Townley,
Church Clerk

Sister Marie was born to the late Peter and Audrey Dobbins Akers and raised by an aunt and uncle, Eula and Omen Whitlock. She was married to Brother Harry Cannaday on December 26, 1942 and to this union was born three children: Brenda Gayle Cannaday, Harry Brammer Cannaday, Jr., and Roger Dale Cannaday, and five grandchildren.

Sister Marie and Brother Harry joined Mt. Olive Primitive Baptist Church on June 8, 1944 and were baptized by Elder Odell Thompson with their memberships at Paynes Creek Primitive Baptist Church in Floyd County. Both were firm believers in Salvation by Grace.

Sister Marie suffered through a lot of pain but as her body grew weaker, her faith grew stronger. Her funeral was held at Oakeys Funeral Chapel in Vinton on October 31, 1995. The service was led by her pastor, Elder Lane Carter before a large audience of relatives and friends.

We believe our loss is her eternal gain.

Ora T. Nichols

MARIE CANNADAY

It is with sadness that I attempt to write in memory of one I dearly loved, Sister Agnes Marie Dobbins Cannaday. She was born August 6, 1923 and died at her home October 28, 1995. She was preceded in death by her husband, Brother Harry Cannaday in 1988.

MAGGIE TILLEY JACKSON

Our Lord in his infinite wisdom has called home Sister Maggie Tilley Jackson on September 21, 1995. Sister Maggie was born January 19, 1912 the daughter of Edward Thomas Tilley, Sr. and Maggie Oakley Tilley. She was married in Au-

gust 1934 to Garland Jackson, who survives her. There were no children born of this union.

Sister Maggie joined the Durham Primitive Baptist Church by experience on March 20, 1949. She faithfully attended the meetings and was a true and outspoken believer in the "*Doctrine of Grace*". She often lovingly talked about the "trees" and how they are spoken of in the scriptures. (Isaiah Chapter 55 verse 12) This verse says, "*For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing; and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.*"

Recently, Sister Maggie's health problem became a great hindrance to her, but she attended and enjoyed the meetings as long as she was able.

She is survived by one brother Edward Thomas Tilley, Jr. of Timberlake, North Carolina and four sisters of Durham: Mable Carroll, Lottie Mae McPherson, Gladys Hobbs, Alma Overman, and several nieces and nephews. We will all miss her.

Written and humbly submitted by an unworthy sister.

Frances Brinkley

ELDER WILLIAM PATTON O'NEAL



May we be bowed down in humble submission to God in His will to remove from our midst Elder William Patton O'Neal 79, of Turkey Creek, Marianna, West Virginia, where he had resided forty six years.

He was born October 16, 1916 to Daniel Harrison and Martha Mitchem O'Neal. He married Mae Lane and to this union of 60 years came eight children: five boys and three girls; two boys preceded in death, the others mentioned survive. Elder O'Neal came to Old Guyandot Church in 1944 on a profession of faith and was baptized by Elder Otto Tilley in answer to a good conscience toward God. But he became alarmed again and could not rest night or day until the church gave him liberty to speak in love of God our Saviour. He was well received for he brought forth fruits meet to all likewise exercised thereby. Oh praise God for this one whom He has called away from sin and degradation to be forever with the Lord on the 14th of November, 1995.

He preached for 45 years, a great predestinarian of absolute stock, bold as a lion, for he knew he had God's Holy Bible to fall back on. He attended several associations of primitive faith and order. He preached at Hopewell Church and a very aged Elder Josh C. Hammond told him when he sat down: "Elder O'Neal, that was the ablest sermon I have heard preached on the absolute predestination in forty years or when Elder Jonas C. Sykes came through here from Texas preaching."

His funeral service was conducted by Elder Wallace Harvey and Elder Jerry Farmer on November 17, 1995, at Tankersley Funeral Home, Mullins, West Virginia.

Oh God be with us we pray.

Elder Wallace Harvey

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

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

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SONG

WHAT IS LIFE WITHOUT LOVE ?

*Is there anything I can enjoy
That will not create love in my heart?
Should there be anyone in employ
Who cannot love with the art,*

*I have seen people work very hard,
When each task would produce a big
frown.*

*For their work they would have no
regard,
Their efforts will not meet with renown.*

*For they lack the great love for their
work*

*That should prompt anyone in the
choice,*

*Who intends to work and not shirk,
And in every act choose to rejoice.*

*It is, also, important that we
Learn to love all our friends whom we
meet;*

*And to try to admire and agree
To make life very pleasant and sweet.*

*E'en in choosing companions for life
Burning love should be active so strong,
In the hearts of both husband and wife
That they'll smile e'en when
everything's wrong.*

*What is Life without Love? I'll request.
And your answer will evidently be,
"It's a failure without comfort or rest,
Destitute of all joys that should be. "*

February 16, 1928

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EDITORIAL



ELDER J.R. WILLIAMS

We would desire that as this attempt is made our thoughts and guidance of pen be of things we experience on this earth as they

relate to The Almighty God that controls all things on earth and above.

The past two days we have seen a small demonstration of both as snow covers the earth. This bringing to mind the following scripture. *Is. 55 - Ver. 10 & 11. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but*

watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

First lets look at this natural weather and see if we don't also see it comparable to the spiritual reign of God over all things to his people.

The rain that cometh down and the snow, notice both came down from heaven, both water the earth, both are cursed at times by some people but God sends both as He does his word to accomplish His intended purpose.

I can see the snow so much different from the rain, could we not say it's like the grace of God to a poor hungry soul. The snow blots out all the blackness of earth for a spell, falls gently not to pack as a hard rain would, makes low places high or smooth. Yet it meets evenly and slowly so that the earth may reap it's full benefits. On hard ground heavy rain runs off mostly. Can we see this grace of God as like snow to the earth, so is His grace to them that truly cry to Him from the anguish of their souls. Their robes washed white as snow in the blood of the Lamb. Do we see or know of anything whiter on this earth than snow. Or is there any blackness worse than that of a sinner's heart, when that heavenly light shines inwardly and he see where he stands before God. This grace as we try to compare it to earthly snow *"My grace is sufficient for*

thee", softness is required before it is penetrated, but then how mellow and His word as a melting snow sinks so low to that hard heart, it melts as the Sun does the snow, so much more the Son as it shines inwardly.

This rain or snow that comes down, never goes up by human effort or otherwise but maketh the earth bring forth and bud. Does not this sin sick soul bud to bring forth new life, a bud in nature new, never seen before, may be some nearly alike, a bud or newness in spirit never seen before like its springing up as a well to eternal life. Oh for the purity of both, the snow and rain, because it comes from heaven, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth.

I believe we can rejoice together when we can know that as natural things are pictured as spiritual, we see all shall accomplish that which He pleases.

So often we ponder, why such a hard rain, why such a deep snow. Also snow is said to contain more nitrogen than rain, many more reasons perhaps we don't know, but it isn't our's to question.

His word that goeth forth out of his mouth shall not return unto him void.

Then we are convinced, we hope made to believe, the rain, the snow His word, along with all things seen, not seen or imagined and working together for good to those that are called of God, that will some day see Him in His glory.

Might we be blessed to see and praise His matchless name in all of nature and grace knowing that He

doeth all things well from the snow to the calling of His saints, to the knowledge of the truth. It shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it. It shall grow & bud and flower unto a beautiful plant for the Lord.

In Hope,

Elder J.R. Williams

ARTICLES

PSALM 89:15.

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.



Should I act now according to my feelings, I would lay my pen aside, dispose of the paper, and do something besides attempt to write this. I feel as if I am attempting something I am not capable of doing. However it seems I have no choice in the matter, I widely do believe in a God that has all power, both in heaven and on earth, and in all the hearts of men, the preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.

I want to write about Ps. 89:15, blessed is the people that know the joyful sound. There seems to be just one sound in mind here, a joyful sound, but in this world we live in today there are many sounds, lets think about a couple of them, some of them are joyful, some sad, and some just plain irritating.

Where I live I am always hearing sirens, it seems they make a lot of noise, I wonder at times if it is all necessary. I don't like to hear them because to me it means that some one is hurt, probably in pain, this wouldn't be a joyful sound. Someone who had a friend in the ambulance, or maybe the man in the ambulance, would consider it a joyful sound, because it would mean he would soon have help.

Think of another sound, the crying of a baby sometimes it may be the baby is sick or in pain which wouldn't be a joyful sound, other times it may show the baby is well, which surely is a joyful sound.

There is yet another sound spoken of in scripture 1 Cor. 14:8 a uncertain sound, for if the trumpet gives a uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So we see there are many different sounds with many different meanings, as with this uncertain sound, no meaning at all.

However what we are interested in is the joyful sound. As in all the others I have mentioned, there is also a lot of joyful sounds. Think of all the musical instruments, if they are in the hands of the right person, they can surely produce a joyful sound.

Back when I was younger I worked quite a few 10 hr. days at sawmill work. When the boss would stop that engine and say, lunch time, or quitting time, that was a joyful sound.

None of these sounds, however joyful, are not the joyful sound spoken of here in Ps. 89:15 let us think of a couple of joyful sounds that are more joyful than any we have named here.

There is a people who were chosen in Christ before Adam & Eve ever walked on this earth, these people have all been placed in their appointed places, at the appointed time according to the purpose of God. These people have the way of all mankind enjoying the lust of the flesh, and pleasure of their sinful ways, until the time set by God according to his own purpose, to reveal himself to them. Give them faith to believe in the God who created both heaven and earth. Now these people have all been blessed to know the joyful sounds maybe some with different ways, but all with the same result.

Some attend church at a time the blessed Saviour has sent a preacher there with a message, the preacher will be blessed to preach, these people will be given ears to hear.

Now we are getting to the joyful sound spoken of in Ps. 89:15, speaking of joyful sounds, it is so sweet, a person has to experience it to believe it, only these people can know the joy of that sound. Like the poet said, his voice was so sweet the birds hushed their singing. There are times when these people are blessed to hear this joyful sound during the singing of a hymn, or sometimes while having a conversation with a dear brother or sister, who has been blessed with the same God given faith and love to speak of their blessed saviour.

There may be times when these people are in a place where there is no help or comfort, where they feel lost and helpless, as Jonah did in the belly of the whale, and they are blessed to

hear a small still voice, no sound on earth can compare with it.

These people rejoice and enjoy the true gospel as preached by one of Gods ministers, but if one of satan's ministers, although he has been transformed into a minister of righteousness 2 Cor. 11:15, and speaks fluently with enticing words of man's wisdom, there is no joyful sound for these people and they will not allow this person. For Jesus said, *"my sheep hear my voice and they will follow me, but the voice of a stranger they will not follow."*

These people were placed here in this time world at their appointed time, the time appointed by God, and at the time set by God, He has called or will call, yet in time, all of his chosen few. His work is effectual and sure, all of these people will know the joyful sound, they will walk in the light of thy countenance, O Lord, no longer will they be grasping in darkness, wondering about the right doctrine, because they will be shown and led by the Lord. There will be times when they will falter, but not fall, cast down by not destroyed. These people will be led, guided, taken care of, blessed in many ways, suffer trials and tribulations until the day of redemption when they will hear the one joyful sound that all of God's children are earnestly and expectantly hoping to hear. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

What a wonderful Saviour we have,
I ask for your prayers.

A brother, I hope
Frank Hunt

APPOINTMENTS

It is well known, by mankind that some appointments he makes are kept; while some; for one reason or another is unkept. But such is never the case with the Lord God. For His appointments are never early or late or unkept; but always and alway, on exact time as appointed by Him; even before times beginning. There is a time to be born and a time to die; for all mankind. And neither man nor devils can ever alter that appointed time even one iota. That being my feeling and belief; I therefore feel free to say this - In exact accordance with, the appointment, the purpose and will, of Almighty "God;" He brought me into this world; on the twenty fifth day of October, nineteen hundred and twelve; after Christ was born into this world. And, as a wonderful blessing to me; He delivered me unto the loving arms of my God fearing parents - George Riley, and Mattie Viola (Edwards) Shepard; who taught me many things, about that vast difference between Right and Wrong. Which, after 83 years have passed; their words to me seem just as fresh and adored, by me, as if they spake them yesterday. They professed and manifest a belief in that doctrine that set forth the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus the Lord,

and His truths; that declare, Salvation is only of the Lord Jesus Christ, the grace of God applied, on behalf of His children whom He chose out from the world, for Himself; from before the foundation of the world. And in the absolute predestination by Him, of ALL things to ever be or take place, in all time He allotted for this time world to stand and throughout all eternity. In other words; all is sure and certain, with this one and only true and living God. That with Him, all that is to be; has already been, in both His mind and purpose. "God", in His choosing of them, in His only begotten Son; was absolute assurance; that every one would meet Him in heaven and immortal glory; after His Son, Christ Jesus; had come down, and paid all their debt for them, for all their sins; of which He has already done. As I look back upon my past life here I am made to wonder in astonishment: at the multitude of His blessings He has bestowed upon me from my birth and on up to this present time of my unprofitable life here in this world of sin and sorrow. I here and now confess to all; with God being my witness; I, of my fleshly self, have never earned or merited even one of His multitude of blessings He has bestowed upon this poor sinner; and so, they all had to have come, as a FREE gift, from the merciful God. What do I have, that I did not receive? no thing, or nothing. God created and made all things; and without Him; no things were ever created or made. "God", not only created man; but also, created that substance, from which, man were made; and that

substance He used, in His forming of man; it was not of silver, or gold, or diamonds, or rubies; or any other, of what man considers of great value; but instead; man was formed, from what man, does consider to be; the most worthless, and useless, and aggravating, substance on this earth; the dust of the earth; that flies with the wind, whethersoever it bloweth or listeth; getting into his eyes, his nose, his ears, his mouth; on and in his clothes, and on himself; in his tent or house; in his food, and onto all within his dwelling place; and many other places; of which, he considers it to be, a real and present nuisance. And yet, that very same man, who is, of himself; no more of real value, than a lump, of the dust of the earth, of which he is; while he strut around, bragging and boasting, of his own importance; and of so great and marvelous accomplishments he has performed; even, to the helping and assisting his "Creator God," in His efforts, to save the souls of mankind, for heaven and immortal glory.

Now the above does (I feel and believe) give a small description of mankind; in his and her ownelves, unworthiness; to be praised or honored, in any way, shape or form. Except, when it pleased "God" to hinder, him or her, from doing, what their very own fleshly nature, would do, if let; they (we), stand ready and willing to lie, steal, commit adultery, murder, rape, cheat or rob, or commit general mayhem; and yes, even the unpardonable sinning against the Holy Ghost. Now that gives a small but true pic-

ture; of the lack of greatness and goodness and trustworthiness; that lieth within the very nature, of fleshly mankind. And so, with one whom God is pleased to reveal those truths unto; of just what man is in his own fleshly natural self; that one no longer wonders why he should not have his confidence in the flesh of mankind; nor does he wonder why "God" said- I find none good no not one; as He looked down upon mankind.

If I be truly aware, of what my feelings are; they are thusly; - my desire is that I might be kept by Him; in such way and manner; that, all my trust and hope be, in my "Lord and God," and His way and working. Feeling to know full well; without His Spiritual guidance; I cannot do anything, as I aught. Now, with those above things in mind; I say to you Dear Brethren; it is my feverent hope; this love I feel for you all; could be, only, by reason of what I feel I have seen of the working within you of the Holy Spirit, of the "Lord and God," who is full of mercy and grace.

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

EPHESIANS 2:8-9.

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

Not of works, least any man should boast.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD SCHOOL OR PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

*By
Elder Norvel P. Mann*

PURPOSE

This writing is offered for the purpose of introducing interested persons to the basic principles and practices held by the Primitive Baptist Church. It is, of necessity, brief but hopefully contains enough information to provoke the inquiring mind to look further into these things and be like the noble Bereans who "searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

OUR THEOLOGY

Primitive Baptist theology is that set forth in the system known as the Doctrines of Grace. These doctrines are briefly stated: (1) Total Depravity, (2) Unconditional Election, (3) Particular Redemption, (4) Effectual Calling, and (5) Divine Preservation of the Saints.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY is a result of Adam's disobedience in eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. As a result of this original sin, man fell in his every faculty, thereby becoming dead in trespasses and sin and incapable of recovering himself from this fallen state by his own free will or ability (Rom. 5:12-21, Eph. 2:1-5, Col. 2:13).

ELECTION is unconditional on the part of the sinner and is eternal in its consequences. Before the world began, God elected, or chose, his people in Christ and predestinated them to be heirs of eternal glory (Rom. 8:28-34, 1 Pet. 1:2-4, Eph. 1:3-6).

PARTICULAR REDEMPTION occurred when Jesus Christ died for His elect family. All for whom He died were completely redeemed, by virtue of which they will without fail live with him in heaven (John 6:37-40, Rom. 8:29-30, Heb.10:14).

EFFECTUAL CALLING is experienced by all the elect sometime between conception and death. The Holy Spirit imparts eternal life to the dead sinner by the sovereign will of God alone. This call from a state of death in sin to a state of life in Christ Jesus is irresistible on the part of the sinner (John 3:8, John 5:25, Rom. 8:30, Eph. 2:1).

DIVINE PRESERVATION insures that none of God's chosen children will ever finally fall away. The saints, who are the foreknown, the predestinated, the called, and the justified, will also be glorified in eternal heaven after the toils and cares of this life are over (John 17:24, Rom. 8:28-30, 38-39, John 10:27-29).

OUR HISTORY

Primitive Baptist doctrine is in harmony with the basic doctrines taught by the ancient **WALDENSES**, **LOLL-**

ARDS, **ALBIGENSES**, **NOVATIONS**, **DONATISTS**, and others who worshiped God independent of the Roman Catholic system all through the bloody centuries of Pagan and Roman persecution prior to the Protestant Reformation. During these times, these people were often described as **ANABAPTISTS**, meaning rebaptizers, because they refused to recognize Roman Catholic baptism.

The major doctrines which produced and emerged from the Reformation were those of the Doctrines of Grace. Our Baptist fathers, however, were never connected with the Roman Catholic system, and therefore were not protestants. That system of theology which came to be known as reformed theology or Calvinism was essentially nothing more than what our Baptist foreparents had been teaching since the days of the apostles and Jesus Christ himself.

Although Martin Luther, John Calvin, and other reformers ably defended the basic Doctrines of Grace, their practice soon undermined their theology and limited their usefulness. These men attempted to reform a faulty organization and from this effort came the denominational system as we see it today.

In the 1830's a major division developed in the Baptist family. Those Baptists holding to the General Atonement theory and supporting missions as a means of saving lost sinners came to be known as New School or Missionary Baptists. Those Baptist holding to the doctrine of Particular Atonement (or Particular Redemption)

and salvation by free and sovereign grace came to be known as Old School, or Primitive Baptists.

OUR PRACTICE

Primitive Baptists believe in the simple New Testament pattern of divine worship. Services consist of hymn singing, prayer, and preaching. Musical instruments are not used in the service simply because no New Testament command or precedent is found for them. Furthermore, the use of instruments is undesirable in that it tends to bring in carnal entertainment as a substitute for the real melody of the heart (Eph. 5:19).

Primitive Baptists do not have Sunday Schools or any of the auxiliary attachments so common in the denominational world today. Again we notice that there is no command or precedent for the practice. Sunday Schools are modern in origin, not existing in the gospel church for almost 1800 years. Primitive Baptists believe that the gospel minister is the only public teacher of the word authorized of God in the New Testament era. Private instruction is the responsibility of heads of households (Eph. 6:4). Further objections to the Sunday School system of today can be raised on the grounds that it denies the plain teaching of the Apostle Paul in I Timothy 2:11-12, *"Let your women learn in silence with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence"* (See also I Cor. 14:34-35).

Primitive Baptists believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only two ordinances prescribed for the New Testament church. The washing of the saint's feet is an example given by our Lord that should be practiced by New Testament churches (Matt. 28:18-20, I Pet. 3:21, Matt. 26:26-28, John 13:3-17, I Tim. 5:10).

OUR VIEW OF EVANGELISM

Primitive Baptists believe in Bible evangelism. As in the early church, *"They went everywhere preaching the word"* (Acts 8:4), so Primitive Baptists today go as the Spirit directs them. Wherever *"effectual doors"* (I Cor. 16:9) are opened, Primitive Baptists will be found. It is recognized, however, that on one occasion the apostles were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia (Acts 16:6), and in Bithynia (Acts 16:7). Evangelistic effort, therefore, is at the direction of the Holy Ghost. Primitive Baptists believe that the Doctrines of Grace are the only true bases for Bible evangelism.

OUR VIEW OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

Primitive Baptists believe that God's house (the local church) is a resting place for world-worn travelers, born again believers in Jesus Christ who strive to lead a godly life and have given themselves to Christ and to one another. These, having been baptized on a profession of their faith in Christ Jesus, have bound themselves by this solemn ordinance to live in compli-

ance with the doctrine which is according to godliness: to attend constantly upon the public worship services, to minister to the saints, and to be holy and just in their everyday dealings with their fellow men. Only by so doing can believers properly glorify their Father in heaven which is the true purpose for the church.

FINALLY

Primitive Baptists believe in the resurrection of the body, and a general judgment at the end of this present world, and that the punishment of the wicked and the joys of the righteous will both be everlasting (Isa. 26:19, Matt. 25:39-46, I Cor. 15, I Thess. 4:13-18, Rev. 20:12-15).

Elder Norvel P. Mann

PSALM 100.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

VOICES OF THE PAST

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

ANSWER TO A RADIO LISTENER



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT

(Who, being interested in church history, requested a copy of a sermon delivered over radio station KDMS in Eldorado, Arkansas)

Mr. F.H. Gilbert
Cale High School
Cale, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Gilbert:

I was very glad to get your letter of the 16th in regard to the address delivered from the studio of KDMS. I spoke extemporaneously in such address and do not have a recording of this particular address. Therefore, it is impossible to give you verbatim what was said.

I think I made a few remarks that time regarding a recent trip to the first Baptist Churches organized in America that still contend for the same doctrine and order of their constitution. These churches have never had a division nor deviated from their first Articles of Faith.

I had the pleasure of preaching from the pulpits of Welsh Tract Church, Newark, Delaware and Hopewell

Church, Hopewell, New Jersey. Welsh Tract was constituted in Wales in 1701. The pastor and seventeen members immediately set about to come to America in a body. They continued their services while coming over and set up a place of worship on the tract given by William Penn to the Welsh. I saw the markers of the early ministers in this ancient cemetery which surrounds the present meeting house. The marker over the grave of Elisha Thomas who died in 1730 is engraved in Old English, part in Welsh, and states that he was pastor of Welsh Tract Church and that he died in 1730. The present meeting house is an old building constructed with imported brick. The building has a patched place on each side marking entrance and exit of a cannon ball during a battle. A new history is now being prepared of this old church. (If interested write me.) As stated in beginning of this paragraph, I also spoke at Hopewell Baptist Church, Hopewell, New Jersey. This church was organized April 23, 1714. John Hart, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, was buried in this cemetery within ten yards of the present meeting house. You will see his monument there. Hopewell Church has preserved all of its minutes.

I visited Southampton Church located in Southampton, Pennsylvania. This church has records of meetings in homes in 1697, first meeting house built in 1731; present building constructed in 1772-3.

The most impressive thing to me is that there has been no changes what-

ever in their articles of belief and mode of worship. There are no auxiliaries. There have been no changes or additions in practice.

Should space and time permit I would like to tell you of my association with brethren composing many of the old churches in that section of the country. Suffice it to say that my recent trip in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey was the most inspirational of any trip among Baptists I have ever taken.

I would be glad to hear from you again.

Sincerely yours,
Elder E.J. Lambert

THE HOPE AND CALLING

Written by A.P. Mewborn

I shall not attempt to record the experiences I have had, the things I did or did not do in the thirty-six years I have been trying to preach. I am still trying and I know I am too old and weak to try to enumerate the events that have brought me to this day. My desire in this effort has been to tell of some experiences and particularly the calling of an uneducated preacher who honestly feels and hopes that he is called of God, to feed the flock of God that He has put under the sound of my voice. This I have tried to do, and although I cannot describe the events of my ministry; I agree with the hymnodist, they are full of "joys and sorrows". I shall continue this with some of the experi-

ences that hopefully give me a reason for my "hope".

Soon after I was ordained, I helped to conduct my pastor, Elder J.B. Roberts' funeral. Afterwards, I was called as pastor of White Oak, Damascus, Meadow and Hancocks Churches. Before Elder Roberts death; I was invited to go to Mewborn's Church for a yearly meeting. This was the Church my Mother's people were in and she grew up in. I was hesitant because I knew that here, my gift, if I had one, would be compared with Elder J.E. Mewborn's, by my kinsmen there, and I was afraid. However, my Mother wanted me to go and I knew brother and sister Lloyd Bartlett and they meant a lot to me. Their daughter, a beautiful person, both naturally and spiritually also had asked me to go if I had a mind to. Elder Roberts had asked me before I ever tried to preach to stay with him on second and fourth Sundays, and because I loved him and saw or felt no reason not to; I had promised I would. I spoke with him and he seemed in agreement for me to go. He loved their pastor and the membership there dearly. I was glad; for after sister Barbara asked me; I felt compelled to go. The attendance was large; the house full, and as I entered the building I felt a burden I knew was more than I could bear. They called on me to preach and I read the scripture. *"I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."*

Although many years have passed I have never forgotten the text, the people and many of the things I said, but I will not try to incorporate them here. I never forgot the day of the meeting; The Lord was good, and I met sister Betty Gray West, Barbara's sister, and the love we were given has lasted until this present hour. Although men and devils have tried to destroy the love Loraine and I were given for Barbara and Betty Gray, and their precious families, they could not, because men cannot destroy God's gifts. My great desire is that God will keep us in such a way that we may be a comfort to each other in the time remaining.

Another experience I wish to record here; came as my Mother, sister Thelma Rose and sister Annie Mae Potter were scheduled to go to the Staunton River Association. The night before; I felt again I had a dream or vision, and I still don't know. As we were traveling early in the morning; I told my dream to them. I had dreamed I was at a Church I had never been to; it was Elder Boykin's appointment and I had gone to hear him.

He enjoyed preaching, when he was blessed, as much as anyone I have ever known. As I entered the door; he was in the pulpit and seeing me, he said, "I see Elder Mewborn coming in the door, and I want to ask him to come and preach for you." In my dream I went into the stand; turned and faced the congregation and said, "Isaiah has said, *"For the child shall die an hundred years old."* I had told my Mother and the sisters that this

dream must have come from eating too much meat, for not only would Elder Boykin never give up an appointment, but that quotation was not in the Bible. My Mother assured me it was scripture; she could not say where it was recorded, but it was scripture. I still could not feel it was in the Bible is both truth and common sense.

It was our custom to go early; get a motel room as near as we could: so Mother and I could get some rest before going to the meeting, and if Mama began to feel bad we had a place to take her. We got a motel room early; one for the three ladies and one for me. When I had showered and sat on the bed; I saw and reached for a Bible (Gideons), and it was open; my eyes fell on the above scripture I had said was not there.

We went to the meeting, and met brother and sister Pernell Williams; they told Mama that if we would go and stay with them, I could have a bed on the first floor and not close to the others, so if I had a bad night I would not disturb anyone. I could tell all of them wanted to go, and I told them that if we felt like it we would spend Saturday night with them. Saturday after the meeting we went to the Williams home. As I entered the living room; I saw on the piano a picture of Elder T.A. Stanfield. He was a very favorite minister at our house. His brother married a brother Lewis' daughter from the Meadow Church. He was an active deacon and singing teacher. He had a beautiful lead voice, and Elder Stanfield had a tenor voice, as beautiful as I have ever heard. I had

sung with him at the associations and the Churches he had visited in our area. I was astonished and asked Sister Williams what she was doing with my preacher's photograph. She told me he was her Daddy, and we shared some precious moments of memories. She insisted I rest in the bedroom; while brother Williams went about farm chores, as it was a busy time for them. I lay down knowing I would not sleep, but I was tired and felt I would feel better if I did. I slept; I don't know how long, but when I awakened I heard the ladies in the kitchen. Sister Williams was saying, "Brother Ap has had a good rest; perhaps he will feel like going to Springfield tonight to hear Elder Boykin." We had an early supper and while we were eating I asked brother Williams if it were custom at an appointment such as Elder Boykin had tonight to preach all the ministers that went or just the one that had the appointment. He told me that they went and sang, but just the one that had the appointment spoke. I told them then if they wished to we would go, and they were all elated to hear this. When we reached the meeting house; we were a little late and we hurried to enter the building. I knew I had seen this Church before though I had never been there, but I still felt I had been there before. As brother Williams opened the door; we saw Elder Boykin in the stand. He had opened the meeting and now was opening the Bible; as he looked up and saw me he said, "Brethren, I see Elder Mewborn coming in the door; I don't feel impressed to speak and I

want to ask him to come and preach for you." Now I remembered my dream and I was so afraid. However, I did not protest in any way but went into the stand, and turning to face the people I said, "Isaiah has written, For the child shall die an hundred years old." As I looked to my left, I saw a beautiful sister holding a tiny baby in her lap, and I asked her, "*How old are you sister?*" She replied, "*I will be a hundred in a few days.*" I then asked, "*How old is the baby?*" And she said, "*She is on the way home from being born.*" Then I tried to preach; I don't remember anything else I said. This association was one of the high places that God ordered, as a reason for my HOPE for me.

About fifteen years later; I was again at the Staunton River Association. This time at Danville, Virginia; when on Friday afternoon a very prominent and well loved Elder, preached. His topic was television, and he depicted all the horrors there of. It was terrible for an Old School Baptist to own one. He had one, but when he learned they were the "devils window", he wanted to take an axe and destroy it, but he sold it and gave the money to his wife. I thought now he has sent an instrument of hell to someone else to buy. I was glad it was late and I would not be called on right now. I felt it would be like a little lad disciplining his parents, but you guessed it, I'm sure. I was called on to follow this giant. The people had responded so favorably to his efforts that I was "sore afraid". When I began to speak; I told them as usual I had learned something, but I

had a television I could cut off as well as on. I told them that if a ball game or the news was on, I would gladly cut it off at anyone's request, but if "Gun Smoke" was on I did not want anyone to bother it. I also told them that God had made this instrument of hell and He would control it. Somehow, and I don't know how; it will finally be to the praise of His Glory. As I came down from the stand; the meeting dismissed. A mother, father and young girl came up to meet me the girl was weeping aloud, embraced me, and said, "*I love you.*" Later she visited in our home for a week and we became very close. I shall not try to describe all the joys and sorrows we shared, but in a few months she united with the Church at Springfield. She called and asked that we go to her baptism, and sister Ruby Coward, brother Ennis, sister Jean and Edna, my sweet wife and I, and there may have been more, went to Gretna. On Sunday morning when I was called on to speak; I told the brethren I had been there once before and my text had been, "*For the child shall die an hundred years old,*" and that was the only scripture I could think of right then. For fear of sounding like, or being like a bowl of warmed over peas, I was fearful, but yet I had to try. Again, I cannot recall all I said, but I described the dear old sister with the infant in her lap. I later found out she had lived to be one hundred years old. As we recessed for lunch and I left the pulpit; I saw my people rejoicing, shedding tears, and looking so happy.

The little girl met me crying, "*I was that baby.*" Her people verified this. There was much evidence of the Holy Spirit in our midst. Many years have passed, circumstances and trouble have prohibited me from continuing to go that way to Church. For a goodly length of time we kept in touch, but she grew up and living the life allocated to her, we don't hear from her anymore. I pray God has given her a good life, and that from time to time she may think of us.

In 1955 on one fourth Saturday night we were at the Meadow Church. Prior to this Loraine had a vivid and frightening experience, and although she had never been reconciled that I must preach; one night she awakened me; she was weeping and asked that I pray for her. I will not try to write her experience here; that is hers personally and I think it's her option to tell it or not. I tried to pray and we wept together, and I tried to be thankful she had asked me to pray with her. My text on the above described night was, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath delivered from the hand of the enemy." After the sermon; we closed with "Rock of Ages", and I had as I usually did, announced an open door of the church. I had always been real formal when someone offered to the Church, and waited for them to come to the front and state their desires, but this night as Loraine stepped out in the aisle to come to the front; the heavens opened for me, and I forgot all about being formal, and met her as she came to offer to the Church. The Church received her with much

joy and I asked her who she would have baptize her and she asked me to do it. I looked up and my brother Joe left the Church crying out loud. We were very happy, and about ten o'clock that night she asked me to call "Pop" (Elder Trevathan), and ask him to come to her baptism. I began to feel full of doubts, and was afraid she did not want me to do it. She felt so close to me now, until if she had wanted him to baptize her; I would still be happy. When I asked her; she said she wanted him to have the ceremony from the shore, but wanted me to baptize her. I called "Pop" and he told me they had a baptizing at Lower Town Creek also, but when I told him it was Loraine, he said, "Son I will be there, if my car won't run I'll start walking, and God will have someone to carry me to my daughter's baptizing." I believe her to indeed be his daughter in God's Church, and I felt happy that he would be with us. He came on Sunday, and was blessed to preach in a wonderful way. After trying to preach, I announced an open door of the Church, and after much suffering my brother Joe came up. He was hurting so severely that I wanted to meet him, but "Pop" said, "Wait Son." As he came saying he wanted to join the Church, his wife Hazel also came, and I truly felt our Lord had opened the windows of heaven, and caused me to look in. The baptism was beautiful; it was a happy time for me, and that joy was shared by a goodly number of people there. Someone took photos of the baptism, and now after thirty-three years; I still enjoy looking at them.

I have said that I could not hope to enumerate all the experiences I have had, some beautiful, some seemingly horrible. My life has been full of joys and sorrows, but when I remember Soloman has said, "*God requireth that which is past.*" (Ecclesiastes 3-15), I have to concede that "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." I don't pretend to understand, but when I am blessed; I surely believe it. I have served five Churches; for a time I was serving all of them at once. White Oak, from the Black Creek Association was the first I agreed to try to serve; then Meadow, Damascus, Hancock and Tysons, all from the Contentnea Association. I am currently trying to serve Meadow, Damascus, Tysons and with Elder Kenneth Windham supply for a newly formed Church, (Grace) at Lowland, North Carolina.

The trouble that has crippled the Churches has been tremendous. I will not attempt to discuss those troubles, but I am convinced after all these years, these troubles are caused by some form of jealousy, and that God has a purpose in them.

The brethren and friends of the Church have been wonderful to my family and I. As I look back I am not satisfied with my life, but I have given of myself and of what I was given, and I have done what I could. My sweet wife has given me much hope as I look at our life together, and as I have said from the pulpit, "I don't know that I am a minister of the Lord's Church, but I know he gave me a minister's wife."

Our sweet son and precious daughter have blessed our life in such a beautiful way, until I just know they too are a gift of God. Our son, Albert Ray, and his good wife, Pat have two nice and sweet sons, Albert Ray, Jr. and Ricky Lyn. They are both married to precious girls and Al has a daughter, Crystal Lynn that makes me a great grandfather, and it feels great. Our daughter, Julia and her husband Perry are currently living with us and have for about six years. They and their darling daughter, Amy Loraine are such a comfort to us that to try to describe all the care they give us is an impossible task. Paul said, "This is the sum of it," and if I were to try to sum it up; the sweet joys, our children, our grandchildren, our great grandchildren have afforded us; it would really be "indescribable and full of glory". The brethren have been kind and good to us, and we hope we are thankful for this. I have not accumulated any of the treasures of this world as many have, but God gave us a home, and until now we have had good food to eat, and been able to pay our expenses. We have no retirement except social security, and we are both sick and not able to work or earn wages, but God has covered our needs by His grace and the gifts we receive, and the loving care our children give us. I am sixty-nine years old, afflicted with closed arteries (causing my feet and legs to hurt nearly all the time), an aneurysm and a colostomy, but with all the hurt that comes; the blessings far exceed them, and I can really say, "*The Lord is good.*"

As I look back in my life, there has never been a time when I did not love the brethren. I cannot say (like some) I love them all the same; because I have felt closer to some than others.

I cannot begin to number the ones that have been such a comfort to me, but my Lord has said, "*Sufficient for the day is the grace given.*"

To have written this has been a great comfort to me. It is not for publication, but for those that my sweet wife and precious children wish to share it with. This will conclude the epic I have endeavored to write; so I bid you, my loved ones, farewell. The poet has described my feelings and my hope right now as he writes:

*Farewell vain world I'm going home,
My Jesus smiles and bids me come.
Sweet angels beckon me away,
To sing God's praise in endless day.*

I remember being in the funeral home with a dear sister, as she said goodbye to her son, daughter-in-law, grandson and granddaughter; as she left the room, never to see them on earth again; she said, "Children, brother Ap preaches that through God's mercy I can see you in the morning." David said, and I echo him to you, my loved ones. "*When I behold thee in righteousness, and wake in thy likeness, I'll be satisfied.*" Now may the God of grace, love and mercy often reveal himself to you in the present world, and in that "*great and notable day;*" assemble you with His saints in

glory. God bless you and make you to know that I am forever grateful for His love and the love He has given us to share.

AMEN

A.P. Mewborn

MEDITATIONS ON JOSEPH

From the Book of Genesis

*by T. Floyd Adams
Willow Springs, N. C.*

PART ONE

"But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die;" and they did so.

The above quotation will be found in the 42nd chapter and 20th verse of Genesis. They are the words of Joseph to ten of his brothers when they came down to Egypt to buy corn.

For many months I have had some desire to write some of my meditations on the above scripture, but feeling my weakness and barrenness of mind most of the time I have put it off until now. As I fully realize that writing is like preaching, if it is profitable to the household of faith, we must be endowed with power from on high.

If I should undertake to write the life and travels of Joseph from early childhood to the time that he was made Governor of Egypt, as it is recorded in the scriptures, it would require many pages, even if I were blessed to do so.

But I would like to say just here, that as an obedient son of his father and being persecuted by his brothers, tempted by Potiphar's wife, cast into the dungeon, and then mounted to the throne of Egypt, speaking roughly to his brothers, putting them into prison, storing away corn in the years of plenty to be freely meted out to his brothers without charge in the days of the famine, and then revealing himself to his brothers as their precious brother: in many respects beautifully portrays in types and shadows the work of the Father, who taught us through the law, the Son who suffered for our sins under the law, and the Holy Spirit or Comforter who revealed Jesus to us as the way, the truth and the life.

It will be noticed that when Joseph's brothers came down to Egypt they made obeisance to him, which was in part a fulfilment of the dreams which he had when he was yet a small boy while living with his father. Joseph called them spies as a reminder of their transgressions. He uses these words to stir up their evil conscience and make them mindful of the sin they had committed. Now Joseph knew his brothers and he was fully aware of the fact that their evil deeds were the cause of his sufferings and sorrows, yet he loved them. Like Jesus who *"loved his people with an everlasting love, even when we were dead in trespasses and in sin."* He said, *"Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come."* Joseph spake roughly unto them, and put them into ward or (prison) three days. In my meditations I can see them convers-

ing in sorrow over their past wicked life, when they put their brother into a pit, then sold him for twenty pieces of silver, after which they killed one of the kids of the goats and dipped his coat of many colors into it and sent it back to their father in order to try to cover up their wicked acts. We are told, *"Be sure your sins will find you out."* Num. 32:23. And they said one to another, *"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear therefore is this distress come upon us."* Can you not, dear reader, see from your own experience how their sins rolled up before them like mountains? Trace your own experience as a convicted sinner under God's just and holy law, when you came to the end and was shut up under the law, without God and without hope in the world. The unworthy writer while under this heavy guilt and condemnation often looked at the beasts of the field and said I had rather be in their place than in mine, for I could not see how God could justify such a sinner as I felt myself to be. Yet my breathings were like the poor publican, who stood afar off (in his feelings) and said, *"God be merciful to me a sinner."* Often when I lay down at night I would wet the pillow in part with tears from my eyes while under conviction of God's just and holy law.

Now back to my narrative. Joseph spake to his brothers by an interpreter and he continues to call them spies. This expression causes their guilt and

sorrow to mount up before them and to further serve to sink them into despair. Yet, they vainly tried to vindicate themselves, saying, *"Thy servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not."* Again Joseph said unto them, *"That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies."* Gen. 42.14.

Now, when his brothers said, *"Thy servants are twelve brethren, and the youngest is with his father and one is not"*, of course, he knew he was the "one is not." He now puts the burden of proof on them to prove that they are not spies, by saying, *"Hereby ye shall be proved; by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison that your words may be proved."* At this point, Joseph modifies his previous statement by saying, *"If ye be true men let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses."* But remember, that he makes it mandatory upon the part of his brothers that they can not get any more corn unless they bring their youngest brother.

Several years ago, after reading the above quotation of Joseph, I wondered in my mind, just why, he made it imperative that the youngest brother (or Benjamin) must come before they could get any more corn. The thought lingered with me occasionally for a

period of about two years. I am convinced *"That the secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children forever."* Deut. 29:29. Is it not true that we must be overshadowed by the Holy Ghost today to understand the revealed things of God?

Would it be too much for me to say that the Lord was gracious in revealing to me in a dream who Benjamin represents in the type and shadows? One night while I was asleep, a wheat field appeared in front of me and a voice spoke and said, *"Benjamin is the corn."*

I awoke and meditated over the dream, but I could not understand it. I fell asleep again and a second time, this wheat field appeared in front of me and the same voice said again, *"Benjamin is the corn."* I awoke and I said to myself that I cannot understand how that Benjamin could be the corn when his brothers were going down to Egypt to get corn. A third time I fell asleep and the same field appeared before me. It seemed to be about twelve or eighteen inches high, and the same voice said, *"Benjamin is the corn."* It made such an impression on me that I called my wife, and I said, "Mother, I have dreamed three times of seeing a wheat field in front of me, and each time a voice' would say, "Benjamin is the corn," And I cannot make any sense out of it as I thought they were going down to Egypt to get corn, but the voice said that Benjamin is the corn." Immediately my wife said, "That is plain." She said, "Benjamin

is the evidence that his brothers are not spies." I still seemed to be at a loss to understand. She said, "Benjamin is the fruit." All of this was foreign to me, then she said, "Benjamin is the youngest brother." *In a flash*, the whole dream was clear before me. Surely Benjamin is "Christ formed in you the hope of glory." HE MUST COME. Then I could understand what John taught when he said, "*And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.*" That is, when you bring grace you get grace, when you bring the evidence you get the evidence, when you bring the fruit you get fruit, when you bring corn you get corn. Is not this the same doctrine that John preached in the wilderness of Judea when the Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism, and brought such flimsy evidence that they were the children of God because Abraham was their father John said, "*O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*" Matt. 3:7-8. Is not love, joy, peace, happiness, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, patience and kindness which Paul says are fruits of the Spirit, always found in the youngest brother?--Christ formed in you the hope of glory?

Many people wonder today why it is that we do not seek for large numbers in our churches and because we do not, many have said that we are selfish, but this is not the truth. I will only answer for myself. I like large numbers provided they bring the FRUITS

or "Benjamin the youngest brother." The inspired apostle Paul taught by divine revelation that they were not all Israel that are of Israel, neither are they children, because they are the seed of Abraham, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. He was born out of due season. His mother, Sarah, was ninety years old and Abraham, one hundred years old when he was born, which to my mind is a true type of every heaven-born soul, for the spiritual birth is contrary to all human understanding and human reason and all of His people were saved in the mind and purpose of God before the world began, for Jesus said, "*Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.*" John. 17:6. Paul said, "*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.

While I am writing about this youngest brother I would like to relate a beautiful scene which took place one night during a commencement exercise at our school. My wife and I went into the auditorium and took a seat near the back of the room and there were two girls sitting about three seats in front of us. They looked back at us and bowed their heads. One of them was so full that she began shedding tears. I turned to my wife and said, "*There is a child of God.*" At that time I did not know either of them. About eighteen months after this I had the gracious privilege of baptising this same little girl. Now, when she came

before the church, was it necessary for her to relate any of the dealings of the Lord with her, in order for us to have confidence in her? My answer is no, for I saw the fruit or evidence the night we were in the school auditorium.

While Joseph's brothers were yet in prison, it will be observed in Gen. 42:22 that they continue to talk about the sin that they committed against their brother, and moreover, they are branded as spies. All the evidence that they could produce, even the money that they brought to pay for the corn could not appease the justice of their just condemnation. But charity never fails. The love which Joseph has for his brothers is now made manifest in part. Although, while he bound Simeon in their presence and kept him in prison until Benjamin came, he released the others and commanded that their sacks be filled with corn that they might carry it to Canaan for the famine of their houses and to restore every man's money into his sack. Let it be fully understood that Joseph did not release them from prison and put them under bond because of any evidence that they gave or even the money which they brought, but it was because of the great love he had for them, their father and families. Is this not agreeable with the language of Peter who said, *"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."* 1 Pet. 1:18-19.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. — HEBREWS xi. 1.

WHEREVER there is faith, there is desire; and as faith embraces heavenly realities, desire embraces that of which faith testifies. Now as the soul is wrought upon by a divine power, and faith is drawn forth into blessed exercise upon the promises of which it is persuaded and which it embraces, desire is kindled for their enjoyment. Religion is not a burdensome, painful, melancholy, wearisome, and toilsome task or employment as many think. It has indeed its trials, temptations, afflictions, cutting griefs, and depressing sorrows; but it has its sweetness, its peace, its delights, and its enjoyments. And it is the sweetness that we feel, the enjoyment that we have, and the delighting ourselves in the things of God, which hold our head up and encourage us still to persevere and travel on through the wilderness. It is not all bondage, nor distress of mind, nor sorrow of heart, nor perplexity of soul which the heirs of promise feel. There are sips and tastes, drops and crumbs, and momentary enjoyments, if not long nor lasting, yet sweet when they come, sweet while they last, and sweet in the recollection when they are gone. The Lord gives that which encourages, strengthens, comforts, and delights, and enables us to see that there is that beauty, blessedness, and glory in him which we have tasted, felt, and handled, and which we would not part with for a thousand worlds.

August 1.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”—ROMANS viii. 2.



WE by nature and practice are bondslaves to sin and Satan. We are the sport of the prince of the power of the air, who takes us captive at his will. We are held down also by many hurtful lusts; or, if free from gross sin, are bondslaves to pride, covetousness, or selfrighteousness. Perhaps some idol is set up in the chambers of imagery which defiles all the inner man; or some snare of Satan entangles our feet, and we are slaves, without power to liberate ourselves from this cruel slavery. We groan under it, as the children of Israel under their burdens, but, like them, cannot deliver ourselves. But sooner or later the truth comes to our aid; the truth as it is in Jesus flies to the rescue of God's oppressed family; the blessed Spirit opens it up and seals it upon the heart with a divine power. As, then, under his gracious influences they believe the truth, and feel its power and savour in their heart, a liberating influence is communicated; their fetters and shackles are loosened; the bondage of sin and Satan, and the power and strength of evil are sensibly broken, and a measure of holy freedom is enjoyed. There is no other way of getting from under the bondage of the law but by the application of the gospel, and by believing what the

gospel reveals. As the truth, then, comes to the heart as the very word of the living God, power comes with it to believe; faith is raised up to credit the testimony; and as faith begins to credit the truth of God and receive it in hope and love, there is a sensible loosening of the bonds; and then the chains and fetters drop off of themselves. It is with the soul as it was with Peter in prison: when the angel came, and a light shined in the prison, and the angel's words fell upon his ears, “the chains fell from off his hands.” There remained nothing then to bar his exit; for “the iron gate that leadeth unto the city opened to them of its own accord.” So whatever chains or fetters may hold the soul, let the angel of mercy come; let the message of salvation be revealed, the chains of unbelief drop off, the iron gate of hardness gives way, and the truth makes the soul blessedly free (John viii. 32).

J.C. Philpot

PROVERBS 3:13-20.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver. and the gain thereof than be gold.

She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

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.

MEETINGS

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION



The West Country Line Union Meeting will be, the Lord willing, at Big Meadows Church the 5th Sunday in March. The church is located in Chatham County.

Take 87 South from Graham to Pittsboro. Go approximately 17 miles after crossing I-85. Just after crossing Cane Creek turn first road to right at top of hill. Go approximately 4 miles to cross road and turn left. Go 1 mile to church.

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

Kenneth R. Key, Pastor
Casey Johnston, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JANUARY 1996

Mrs. Jenneye A. Osborne, MD	2.00
Mrs. Charlotte B. Richardson, VA .	2.00
Mrs. Ruth Sparkman, TX	2.00
Tillman R. Pullig, TX	2.00
Woodrow Bellinger, NY	2.00
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M.L. Richardson, FL	7.00
Walter Hill, NC	5.00
Mrs. Hazel Ford, TX	12.00
A Friend, CA	25.00
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Mrs. Kenneth Mathis, TN	7.00
Mrs. Myrtle T. Daniel, FL	7.00
Mrs. Ilene Clifton, VA	2.00
Aubrey Oakes, VA	2.00
Mrs. Mary Ruth Lee, NC	
In memory Jessie & Emma Somers	10.00

OBITUARIES

SISTER ISLA FLOYD



Sister Isla Floyd, beloved member of Stump Sound Primitive Baptist Church, was called home by God in his love and tender mercy, from this world of sin, sorrow and suffering May 19, 1995.

Sister Floyd was born July 2, 1899 in Horry County, South Carolina, the daughter of Hezekiah and Scottie Stevens Hinson. She was preceded in

death by her husband Wilbur L. Floyd. Surviving are two sons, Franklin Floyd of Wilmington, North Carolina and Lamar Floyd of Charleston South Carolina and two daughters Sybil Hewlett of Emerald Isle, North Carolina and Doris Cantrell of Fort Walton Beach, Florida; two sisters and a host of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Sister Floyd was baptized the third Sunday in 1922 by Elder George Gore in the Mill Branch Association. She remained a true and faithful member of the Primitive Baptist Church the rest of her life. She was blessed with deep understanding of doctrine, and also great wisdom in church matters. She was faithful to attend meeting as long as she was able. Although she suffered much in her last years, she never complained, but repeatedly thanked God for his mercy and blessings. She is greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Graveside funeral services were conducted by her pastor Elder Oliver Allen in Greenlawn Memorial Park, Wilmington, North Carolina.

Written by request of Stump Sound Primitive Baptist Church by one who loved her.

E. Pratt, clerk
Elder Oliver Allen, pastor

SISTER LEONA G. RAYNOR

Sister Leona G. Raynor, beloved member of Stump Sound Primitive Baptist Church, was called from this world of sin, sorrows, and suffering September 1, 1995. She was born November 3, 1906 in Onslow County, North Carolina; the daughter of James Nixon and Zonnie Gurganus. She was preceded in death by her husband, Brother Roe Raynor. Surviving are her daughter Lois Dean Home and her husband J. M. Home, three grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Sister Raynor was received into Cypress Creek Primitive Baptist Church August 10, 1975, and was Baptized by Elder Harmon Brown and Deacon Albert Manning. She was a firm believer in salvation by grace through Jesus Christ. She was faithful to attend church meetings as long as she was physically able. She is greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Funeral services were conducted by her pastor Elder Oliver Allen and Elder J.T. Prescott. Internment was in the Gurganus family cemetery at Cypress Creek, N.C.

Written by request of Stump Sound Primitive Baptist Church.

E. Pratt, Clerk
Elder Oliver Allen, Pastor

Signs of the Times

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SONG

***THE good old way that leads to God,
Which saints in every age have trod,
Was Christ alone, they saw his day,
And him pursued, the good old way.***

***When Adam sunk his unborn race
In ruin, guilt, and deep disgrace,
The promise, with celestial ray,
To Jesus points, the good old way.***

***Th' apostles all proclaimed him thus,
Jesus the Lord, or God with us,
Who did by death our ransom pay,
The truth, the life, the good old way.***

***'Tis true, there's one exceeding broad,
Cast up by men, a dangerous road,
Where thousands to destruction stray,
Who never found this good old way.***

***Cheer up, believer, courage take;
Why should thy heart with sorrow
break?***

***Eternal joys shall soon repay,
The sorrows of the good old way.***

***Should foes and fears on every hand,
Thick as the leaves in autumn stand,
Still forward press, the day is yours;
The good old way the crown secures.***

Kent.

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EDITORIAL



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

is the nation whose God is the LORD: and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. (Ps 33:12).

We would ask, Who is the man, and what is the nation and the people who are so blessed of God? Ask this of the unregenerate people of the world and you will re-

ceive many different answers, but let us inquire in the holy scriptures, and may the Holy Spirit be our guide so that we rightly divide the word of truth. We know that many natural blessings come to all men, *"for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust,"* (Matt 5:45), but spiritual blessings are not received by natural man, 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). Before any man receives a spiritual blessing there must be a new birth, *"which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."* (Col 1:27). Jesus said unto Nicodemus, *"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 you, Ye must be born again."* This new birth is surely a blessing from on high for *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."* (James 1:17). To whom is this new birth given? Are they not *"the saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus?"* and who are blessed of God *"with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having pre-*

destinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Eph 1:1-5). If we be the children, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom 8:16).

Regardless of what worldly men may teach, there is not a man-made nation in the world that is *"the blessed nation"* spoken of in Ps. 33:12. The nation spoken of is "the nation", not "a nation"; and this nation is a spiritual nation whose name is Mount Zion. This nation was born of God in one day, and he shall dwell in her for ever. (See Isa 66:7-8 and Micah 4:7). She is *"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the Great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge." (Ps 48:2-3.)* The people who dwell in Mount Zion are the chosen heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ according to the promise of God. (Rom 8:17). What a wonderful blessing this is!

In the new testament Mt. Zion is called Sion, and the prophets of old wrote, *"Tell ye the daughters of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." (Matt 21:5).* In Rom 9:33 we read, *"as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and a rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."* Surely we must believe that Jesus is the "him" of whom we shall not be ashamed if we believe,

neither is he a stumbling stone or rock of offence to us. But to those who do not believe on him he is a stumbling stone and rock of offence. Why do we believe? *"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." (Phil 1:29).* Also, *"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John 6:29).* There are very many people in this world who are working hard, spending millions of dollars, and begging for more while they attempt to do the work that only God can do. Out of him who is blessed to believe shall flow rivers of living waters, which is the Spirit who lives in him. (John 7:38-39).

Abraham believed God, and *"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. And 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 4:20-24).* We are all as an unclean thing, and all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. (Isa 64:6): and Jesus said, *"Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."* All unrighteousness (self-righteous-

ness) is sin, but, *"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," (Rom 4:8)*. This blessing comes only to those who are given to believe on Jesus Christ as did faithful Abraham.

"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what sayeth the scriptures? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." In Matt 7:22-23 we read what Jesus said. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." These are the ones who trust in their own works, and not in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Paul tells us, *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."* Are we not as Paul who also said, *"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."* Paul also tells us. *"So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of*

God dwell in you." If we are in the Spirit, and he in us, then we have the mind of Christ, (1 Cor 2:16), and we can serve the law of God. This we can do if *"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)*. We must walk in good works for they are ordained of God, but yet we do not know when we do them. In the 25th chapter of Matthew the righteous asked Jesus when they had done the good works he had spoken of, because they did not know that they had done so. The unrighteous wanted to know when they had not done so. To the righteous he answered, *"In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."* Unto the others he said, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."* The children of God are not cursed, but greatly blessed to keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. (1 John 3:22). And Paul exhorts us to *"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* (Phil 2:13).

There are two principles in the man who has been born again. Paul speaks of them as the new man and the old man. which represent the flesh and the Spirit. The old man is as corrupt, deceitful and full of lust as he was before the new birth: but the new man is created in righteousness and true

holiness. (Eph 4:24). These are contrary one to the other so that we cannot do the things that we would. When we are not being led of the Spirit we are very prone to turn to the lusts of the flesh; for which we immediately receive the chastisement of God. This chastisement is indeed a blessing, for it is not to punish us, but to correct. *"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the LORD loveth he correcteth."* (Prov. 3:11). *"Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law."* It is the chastening of God that causes us to fall at his throne of mercy in prayer. In Isa. 26:16 we read, *"LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them."* There is an exhortation unto us as children; *"My son, despise not 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."* (Heb 12:5-6). And in verse 8, *"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons."* God's chastisement is a portion of the manner of his love for us. *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."* (1 John 3:1). In the Psalms we read, *"If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the*

rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail."

There are far too many ways in which we are blessed for me to mention all of them in this treatise, but I will mention three more which in my opinion overshadow all the others, for without these three our salvation would not be accomplished.

First. God's choice (or election) of us in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world, and blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph 1:3-4).

Second. The birth of Jesus in the flesh. In his Godhead he could not die, therefore, *"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."* (Gal 4:4).

Third. The death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour. God's holy law demands the death of the transgressor, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin (Heb 9:22). Only the pure blood of Christ could achieve this, therefore he shed his precious blood upon the cross of Calvary and by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Heb 10:14). He was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. (Rom 4:25).

When Christ died, his children were in him, they were buried with him, and they arose with him. (Read Rom 6:1-

10.) If we were in him then we surely had a part in him. Jesus said to Martha, *"I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."* (John 11:25). And in Col 1:18: *"He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."* In Revelations we read, *"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power."*

Beloved brethren, Jesus is coming again in that last day, "and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb 9:28). Then shall we hear these blessed words from his lips, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." PRAISE HIS HOLY NAME!

Elder C.C. Wilbanks

PROVERBS 6: 1-3.

My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,

Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.

Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Brother Williams:

Enclosed is a check for the amount of \$20.00, \$10.00 for renewing subscription for the Signs of the Times. \$10.00 for helping to keep the Signs coming or whatever the cause to help. I enjoy reading the Signs very much. I am hoping God will bless you and others to keep writing such good news especially for such sinners as I am. I have been hoping I could sometime in the future write my experience. But it seems something keeps me from doing so. Anyway I hope the good Lord will bless you Christian Hearted people to keep the good news from a far country - to such a thing as I feel to be. Will ask for your prayers. May God Bless.

From a poor sinner,
Whitney Mohly

433 Heritage Place
Morehead, Kentucky 40351
March 14, 1996

Dear Brethren,

Each year I desire to do better in renewing my subscription, and each year I seem to do worse. I would ask your pardon, and hasten to say thank you for your patience with me.

I feel like that line fits my case which says, "Worse and worse myself I see,". As time passes I seem to feel my need

of salvation by grace more. If the least part depended on me, I would be lost without hope. The least crumb of mercy is more than I deserve, and increases my debt of praise and thanksgiving to the Author and Originator of every good and perfect gift.

Each month the Signs reaches me full of good spiritual articles setting forth salvation all of God and of Grace, which exalts God and not man.

May it please this God of all Grace to continue to bless the Editors of the Signs, and every one who has a part in sending out the Signs each month.

Please pray for me.

In Hope,
Bill Slack

ARTICLES

Writings of my mother, Julia H. Potter

June 9, 1994

I Julia H. Potter, am feeling lonely, or maybe I should say unfit. I've meant to try and write something in the way of my feelings and this goes back to my childhood days. I always seemed to be a lonely or unworthy person, not being able to fit in with ones my age. Now I'm 83 years old and I'm still a strange person to myself.

I fall short of not counting my blessings enough. I know the blessings come from above, and how wonderful when you can feel this, a lifting up. I wanted to Join a church and be bap-

tized when I was 14 years of age. They were having a revival at this Missionary Baptist Church. I Joined and was baptized in the summer of 1925 and went to church regular until 1928. I met my husband Willard P. Potter in 1928. We were married January 12, 1929. We were living in town at the time in Henry County, Martinsville, Virginia. My husband's people lived in Franklin County. They were farmers so we went to live with his family for our first year. Our first child was born on November 9, 1929. In the first of the year in 1930, we moved out on our own nearby. They (my husband's people) being primitive Baptist, I started going with my husband to his church and never went with the missionaries any longer.

Not long after we moved into our first home, it was the winter of 1930, I saw Christ come one night down in the form of a cloud and spoke the words that time would be no more. I pondered over this a lot thinking that this was a new beginning for me. Then, not long afterwards, I awoke one night and saw a beautiful light to the East side of our bedroom. I woke my husband and asked him to look at this light and he said he did not see it. I went on like that until the summertime. My husband was working in the field with neighbors Just over the hill from us. I had taken my baby out in the yard and close to me there came a whirlwind close by. It seemed to get close to me and I was afraid it would Just pick us up. I had never seen a whirlwind like this one. I started away from it to go over to where my hus-

band was working. I thought to myself, what could I tell them, so I turned around and went back in the house.

October 27, 1994

It's been several months since I've had a feeling of writing anything pertaining to the works of the Great I am, or the Lord. But this morning, while I was eating my breakfast, where my kitchen and living room joins. I was sitting with my face to the living room. Everything Just lit up. I had never seen such a beautiful light in the room. I even got up from the table to see if all the lights had come on. To my amazement, it was the sunshine from the window, that everything in the room was shinning as I had never seen before. It Just lifted me up.

Sent in for publication by Lois Gunter

A. Romans 8:7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

B. 1 Corinthians 2:14. 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.

C. Ephesians 2:14-17. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between

us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were far off, and to them that were nigh.

D. James 4:4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.



hen Adam fell he took with him every person who would be naturally born, because he was the Federal head of all to be born, and thereby when he fell all of mankind fell with him. In this fall there was a death or spiritual separation by man from God, which then was passed upon all of mankind to be possessed with a natural mind. This natural mind is what needs to be examined in context with the above scriptures. In what is professed to be the Christian world there are only two foundations of belief and both claim that Christ is the head: one believes that man has the ability to acquire salvation through Christ and good works earns him a place in heaven eternally; the other believes they were chosen by God's election because it was simply God's will and not merited due to any thing man does or does not do. Normally,

the first is usually referred to as a works doctrine, while the second is a doctrine of election. Also, in the first or works doctrine there are many variations within those who profess belief concerning what happens after someone works themselves into favor with God. Some believe that after they obtain their salvation they can never lose it; while some believe that after they obtain their salvation they can put it aside at any time they choose and once it is put aside they can never take it up again; and some believe that after they obtain their salvation they can put it aside any time they choose and thereafter they can take it up again, anytime they so choose. As an opposition to the works doctrine there is election which was put into place by God before the foundation of the earth, and has no dependence upon mankind. Arguments and disagreements have raged for many, many years between those advocating a works doctrine and those advocating a doctrine of election. Let us examine the works doctrine in light of the above scriptures to see if there is any whole or part truth in which a claim of correctness can be made for which a surety can be held or cling to for comfort. The central or common thread running through the above scriptures is that the natural man, carnal mind, friendship of the world, etc., all being the same, is an enmity with God and as such can not spiritually discern on matter, this not being subject to the law of God. Works doctrine proclaims good works causes God to accept the person and these

good works gets the person to heaven, and therein lies the paradox, because the scriptures plainly state that the natural mind can not produce anything pleasing to God. If man is possessed of a natural or Adamic mind which was brought about out of Adam's fall, and this natural mind can not do anything pleasing to God, what then is the process by which election is the answer or truth? I have not read nor heard as to why God chose the process of election. All I know is He chose election and that is explanation enough. Within God's elect family each individual is spiritually born somewhere between natural conception and natural death. At some point during this natural lifetime of an individual child of God who has been spiritually born there is a quickening of the spirit wherein the individual is made aware that something has taken place to cause them to inquire and desire after or about those things of God, that is to follow in the seekings of spiritual matters. (Some believe that the spiritual birth, which is bestowed by God on his chosen ones, takes place at the same time the person is made aware there has been a change which causes them to search and desire to learn of things spiritually. This point may be or possibly could be true, for which I think there is not a reason to contend or argue, because either way it does not have a bearing on the salvation of a child of God. And in either case there is no dependence upon the creature or natural mind.) Upon being made aware of this change the person hun-

gers and thirsts after righteousness to learn of Christ (to grow in grace).

Election doctrine is driven home in a forceful and finite manner in Romans 10:20 "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." It is impossible for a natural mind to initiate a cry unto God and ask for a spiritual birth or anything else spiritually, is plainly set out in the beginning scriptures referenced, and this passage in Romans eloquently states that those (children of God) were found of God even though they were not seeking Him and God was made manifest to them without them asking. How plain, how simple; but yet how unclear and confounding to those to whom God chooses to not reveal the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

Expressions used by those of the works persuasion try to show that the individual can cry out to God to be saved; can accept Christ as their savior; can ask God to give them a new birth (spiritually); and that Christ offered himself on the cross for and to all of mankind. These expressions are man-made and are not grounded in scripture, especially in St. John 3:3 where Christ plainly tells Nicodemus that except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God. And on further in this same chapter Christ explains that the new (spiritual) birth is a gift of God at God's own choosing without any action on the individual's part.

After an individual has been spiritually born and made aware of a change, then he is a teachable character in

Christ, grows in grace for the remainder of their years. This desire implanted by the Holy Ghost is effectual and gives the individual a desire toward obedience (to do those things which are right in Christ.) With Christ's finished work the eternal destiny of his family is made sure and steadfast, without any action (works) on the part of the individual. Proverbs 16: 1-4 points out that both the preparation and answer is of the Lord, and the Lord made all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil. Romans 11:1-7 clearly shows that it is either of work or grace; and Paul plainly points out that it is of grace and not works, plus Paul states that election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Hebrews 6:1-6 shows that a person was enlightened and if they fall away, they cannot be renewed again unto repentance, for this process would be testament to crucifying Christ again; but this shows a person can not fall away to be eternally lost if they are a child of God, however, this does not mean they cannot be disobedient while on this earth, for sure they can be disobedient but God's rod of correction will fall at God's own good time.

The above is not meant to be an all exhaustive list of things to show God has an elect family. The whole of the Bible, from the first word in Genesis to the last word in Revelation, teaches election, predestination and foreordination with no restriction on God's power or will. All that is presented here is to show clearly that the fallen creature in Adam cannot discern or

ask concerning spiritual matters. Spiritual matters come only after God bestows a spiritual birth and awareness, which is done only at God's choosing. After God gives the spiritual birth and awareness then the person can attain toward obedience. There is nothing in the Bible to show a person has the power to choose eternal salvation, it is a gift of God, not as a reward for doing good, but simply that it pleased Him to do so. Also, there is nothing in the Bible to prove that a child of God will be judged at the end of time. (If anyone can use the Bible as a whole, not take anything out of context, and not render a private interpretation, and show me a person can save themselves (or have a choice or influence on the matter), or can show me where a child of God will be judged at the end of time, please let me know.

Submitted in bonds of love and friendship for Christ's sake.

Hoyt Sparks

VOICES OF THE PAST

GREETINGS FROM ELDER BARNES

Rt. 1, Box 119,
Stantonsburg, N.C. 27883

Greetings to the Household of Faith,
Old School Predestinarian Baptists:



This year is fast coming to a close, and none of us knows what the future holds. All that we know is past, or present. In my fifty-three years as a member of the Primitive or Predestinarian Baptists, I have

enjoyed the happiest, and the saddest days of my life. I am sure that you who have tasted the goodness and mercy of our God, can witness with the testimony of the prophets and the apostles, and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that we are pilgrims and strangers in a strange land. This world is not our home; we have no abiding city here, but we seek a city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God.

I am made to realize, my dear brethren, that my race is almost at an end. Of course, I do not know when the end will be with me, but according to the average life of men, I cannot expect to remain on earth more than a few more years. God has been good to me; and He still is. Oh! if I could but praise his name forever. But I have fallen so short of living to the Christian standard. I have to go weeping and mourning. When I am blessed to think upon the name of the Lord and his wonderful love and mercy which he has bestowed upon me a hell deserving sinner, it makes me hang my head in shame: to think that the Lord of glory had to suffer on the cross in my room and stead; that is, if I am a vessel of mercy which God afore prepared unto glory.

He took my sins and yours, if we are the children of God. Though I have a precious hope, sometimes I doubt and fear, and often ask myself the question, "Do I love the Lord, or no? am I his or am I not?"; that is a point I long to know, with the poet, "Oft it causes anxious thought." I am so imperfect that almost all I do, or think,

or say is wrong. "Oh! is there any one like me?"

Dear brethren, I confess I am a poor, unlearned man, but I believe there is a God in heaven, who has by the word of his power created this world, or universe; and inhabited it with people, animals, fowls, insects, and every living thing for his own glory. There was not a man to help in any way whatsoever, for man was the last thing that God made. I believe that God in the annals of eternity, before the creation, foresaw everything in his infinite wisdom that he would bring to pass in the process of time, from the beginning of the creation to the final consummation of all things. I believe that God chose his people (his church) in Christ before the creation; that He saw the fall of man (Adam); and that he made provision for the redemption of all saints in Christ Jesus long before the first sin was committed. And, inasmuch as the church spiritually was in Christ before the world was, Adam, being a type of Christ, and Eve his bride being in him, was a type of the Church in Christ before the world was.

Some have asked me if God did not have a purpose in sin entering into the world, and my answer is and has been, Yes. Then they ask if God did not make sin. My answer to that is, No. Sin is something that was not made, but was and is the act of the creature. Some say that God made them to sin. But I find that one of the writers in the New Testament said that God cannot be tempted with evil; neither tempteth he any man. But somebody wants to know what is God's purpose in sin.

Elder Griffin mentioned in an Editorial some-time ago that the wicked are the sword of the Lord. Now the first cause of wickedness is sin. Dear brethren, as I see it, God's purpose in sin entering into the world was that He would make his power known unto the vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory. (Read Romans ninth chapter.) Had sin not entered the world there would have been no sinners to be saved from sin. So this was God's way of manifesting his power in his love and mercy upon the vessels of mercy. God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God."

Man in nature has never been satisfied to do God's will, for in the dead state of nature he has never known the Lord God of heaven, nor his Son Jesus Christ. Only those know him to whom Christ is revealed; and revelation comes to man by spiritual birth. Jesus in the third chapter of John told Nicodemus that except a man be born again he could not see the kingdom of heaven. And on the occasion when Jesus asked his disciples whom men said that He was, some said one thing and some another. So it is today. But Jesus asked, "*Whom do ye say that I am,*" and Peter answered, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" And Jesus said to him, "*Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father*

which is in heaven." So we see that the spiritual birth is through and by the revealed power of God in man.

Elder W. B. Barnes

"And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground."— JUDGES vi. 39, 40.



ANY of the Lord's people labour under doubts and fears, questionings and suspicions as to the reality of the work of grace upon their hearts; whether their convictions were not merely convictions of natural conscience, and whether their joys have been anything else but the joys of the hypocrite. "O," they say, "what would I not give to have a divine testimony that the blessed Spirit was leading me in the right path I " It is through these very doubts that the evidence is obtained. Doubts lead to cries and groans after a divine testimony; and in answer to these cries the heavenly witness is given. A man without doubts is without testimonies. Doubts are to testimonies what the mortise is to the tenon, the lock to the key, the enigma to the solution. Testimonies are Ebenezers, "stones of help" (I Sam. vii. 12, marg.); but the stone must have a hole dug for it to stand in, and

that hole is *doubt*. Doubts of salvation are to manifestations of salvation what hunger is to food, nakedness to clothing, a thunderstorm to a shelter, a gallows to a reprieve, and death to a resurrection. The one of these things precedes, prepares, and opens a way for the other. The first is nothing without the last, nor the last without the first. Thus, next to testimonies, the best thing is spiritual doubts. To know we are right is the best thing; to fear we are wrong is the second best. To enjoy the witness of the Spirit is the most blessed thing this side of the grave; to pant after that enjoyment is the next greatest blessing. I am speaking, my mind, only of spiritual doubts; that is, doubts in a spiritual man, for natural doubts are as far from salvation as natural hopes. The path through the valley of Baca is "from strength to strength," that is, according to the eastern mode of travelling, from one halting-place to another, where wells are dug, and "the rain filleth the pools" (Ps. lxxiv. 6, 7). We do not learn either God or ourselves, sin or salvation, in a day. The question is not so much whether you have much faith, but whether you have any. It is not quantity, but quality; not whether you have a very great religion, but whether you have any at all. A grain of true faith will save the soul; and I have known many, many seasons when I should have been glad to feel certain that I had the thousandth part of a grain. A grain of mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds; and even faith as small as that can move mountains. Happy is he that has one divine testimony to his

eternal interest in the electing love of the Father, in the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of the Son, and in the divine teachings of the Holy Spirit.

Elder J.C. Philpot

PETER 1: 18-20.

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.

MEDITATIONS ON JOSEPH

From the Book of Genesis

by T. Floyd Adams

Willow Springs, N. C.

PART TWO

Some time ago, I was speaking upon this subject, about Joseph's brothers trying each time they returned, to pay for their corn and every time it was put back into their sacks. When the services were closed, a sister came up to me and said, "Brother Adams, don't you believe that we too, try at times to spend a little of this money?" I paused for a moment, then said, "I believe you are right." I can see now, that in my nature I am still possessed with self-works, and self-righteousness. I believe that Peter was possessed with self-confidence the night our Master was crucified. He said, "Lord, I am ready to go

both into prison and into death." It is only when we are clothed and in our right mind that we can fully understand the truth of the scriptures which say, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, etc." By grace through faith, and every blessing that we receive is a free gift, without any merit on our part. Joseph taught this lesson over and over again to his brothers about which I hope to discuss more fully later in this article.

They are now on their way back home to carry corn for their families. While they have been released from the prison, yet Simeon is still there, and they dread the thought of having to introduce the subject to their father of having to bring Benjamin back to get any more corn. This was indeed distressing to them. Their conscience stings them severely for taking vengeance on their brother, the man whom they did not know down to Egypt who "spake roughly to them", also, they realized that they would soon have to face him again, not knowing what the consequences would be. All of the above was enough to sink them into gloom and despair. There is no doubt that they wished they had never been born. I speak this from my own experience, but, dear reader, this is the only route of travel to get any more corn, for we must "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Acts 14:22. So it was with Joseph's brothers, they had a long way to go under God's just and holy law before they could meet Joseph face to face in peace.

Now, they approached their father with the sad news that Benjamin must go down the next time if they got any more corn. Jacob was in despair. He said, "Joseph is not and Simeon is not and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me." At first he refused to let him go. But ah! when the corn gives out and the famine gets to be sore in the land (or soul) Jacob's heart begins to soften, for our God knows how and does make His people willing through suffering in the day of His power. How well do we remember the sufferings that we went through before we were made willing to present the corn (or the youngest brother). If I am not mistaken, the Lord called me one day when I was about thirty-four years old, at about two o'clock p.m., and said, "Show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." I said, "Lord, I will die before I will go." Oh, the suffering I went through for several weeks will never be described by mortal tongue. May I ask this question - Are there any volunteer ministers in God's kingdom who can preach the gospel? Are they not all conscripted? Yet, we fully realize that we are a failure without the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Now, let us view the scene a little further and see how Jacob endeavors to appease the wrath of the man in Egypt. He said, "Take the best fruit in the land in your vessel and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, myrrh, nuts, and almonds. And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your

sacks, carry it again in your hand, peradventure it was an oversight." You perceive, he is still trying to pay for the corn as well as to appease Joseph's wrath. Now all of this amounts to nothing, but are we not like Jacob? We have to learn this lesson by experience again and again. Jacob's heart is getting much softer at this period, for in Gen. 43:13, he says, "Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man" and his prayer is that "God Almighty give you mercy before the man." Judah said before this that "I will be surety for him." "If I bring him not again, let me bear the blame forever."

When they came into Joseph's presence and he saw Benjamin with them, he said to the rulers of his house, "Bring these men home, and slay and make ready' for these men shall dine with me at noon." Notwithstanding the fact that Joseph's brothers presented Benjamin by his demand and he manifested his love for them by giving them food and lodging, also had their sacks filled with corn and restored every man's money in their sacks; he still speaks to them by an interpreter and has not yet made himself known to them. The climax of their sufferings is yet to come as will be seen by the finding of Joseph's silver cup by his steward. He put the silver cup into Benjamin's sack according to Joseph's instructions. Is not this cup a type of the law? It was by the finding of this cup in Benjamin's sack that Joseph's brothers found out his righteous indignation against them for their evil deeds which they had

committed against himself. They were able to present Benjamin which was required by Joseph as true evidence that they were not spies; yet, now they are at their wit's end, for Joseph has accused them of taking the cup, which of course, each one knew that he did not, but they were not able to prove that the other did not, for the evidence is beyond questioning, as it was found in Benjamin's sack. Please remember, that this cup is used by Joseph to drink and DIVINE. Read Gen. 44:5. "Is not this *it* in which my Lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing." Could his brothers when they returned and were in the presence of Joseph, a man clothed in royal apparel, sitting upon his throne, and one who had power to execute judgment, even think, much less express that they were not guilty? How dare they say that they did not take the cup? The evidence is too plain.

Dear reader, please observe again that this cup is put into Benjamin's sack for the purpose of divining, and it well served the purpose for which he had it put there. It brought out the wickedness which was in their hearts before God. For Judah said, "What shall we say unto my Lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." They had a sense of their guilt long before Joseph called them spies. But now God has found it out and made them acquainted with the fact that through the finding of the CUP that He knows all about their evil conduct. There is no alibi which they can plead, the secret of their wicked

hearts is fully opened up, for God has found it out. They are at their wit's end; there is nothing to say but GUILTY, GUILTY, GUILTY! Divine justice must be satisfied. Oh, how they felt their just condemnation. "How shall we clear ourselves?" If you, dear child of God, should chance to read these meditations, you may say, "I have not had quite as bitter an experience as you have described." May I ask: Have you ever heard a still small voice speak in the court of your conscience? - "Guilty, behold, I am vile." If you have not heard the voice you evidently felt the power of it.

Is not this CUP a clear type of the law? Paul said by the LAW is the knowledge of sin. (Rom. 3:20.) Again he said, "Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay I had not known sin, but by the law." Rom. 7:7. I have often said that the law is a straight edge. When it is applied to a sinner it shows him how crooked he is. When I was a small boy, I watched those old hewers of timber. When they cut the tree down, they would stretch a string from one end of the log to the other on the side which they desired to slab or hew off, then saturate the string with lamp black, then pull it up in the middle and let it spring back on the log. This would make a black line from one end to the other. Now, this line did not straighten the log, but it showed the hewers just how crooked the log was. So it is when we are brought under the law, as the log is lying under the line. It reveals the secrets of our heart and causes us to exclaim as Job did, "Behold, I am vile. What shall I answer thee?" Job. 40:4.

Inasmuch as the finding of this cup by Joseph's steward in Benjamin's sack, brought the most excruciating pain and sorrow to his brothers, just so, when God's just and holy law was written upon this hard and stony heart of ours, and his continual wrath and judgment poured out upon us, and that without mercy. It brought us down as poor penitent sinners before Him. Through this experience we learned one lesson that we will never forget, that is, to never plead that we are not guilty before Him again. Now, the only thing that we can plead, that is acceptable to God is the imputed righteousness of Jesus. Our sins were imputed to Him and His righteousness was imputed to us. "He was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." So Jesus said except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The finding of the CUP in Benjamin's sack (bear in mind that he is their youngest brother) is the cause of their returning to Joseph, so "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" and let it be observed that as they stood before Joseph (the man whom they did not know) sitting upon the throne of His Royal Majesty, that they never again uttered one word to try to prove their innocence, they never muttered again that they were not spies, they did not say again that they were true men; they never said again that we are all the sons of one man and "one is not."

They did not say that none of them stole the CUP, all of which expressions they previously used before in order to prove and plead their innocence. Now the finding of the CUP IN Benjamin's sack, has stopped their mouths, so when this LAW revealed the secret of our hearts, it stopped our mouths. For Paul says, "Now we know that what things soever the LAW saith, it saith to them who are under the LAW. That every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." Rom. 3:19.

Now if we try to justify ourselves by continually pleading our righteousness, are we not found to be liars? For Paul said, "By the deeds of the law shall no fresh be justified." It only remains to be seen that through the goodness of this great and mighty ruler of Egypt, in restoring Benjamin to them is the only hope of ever having any peace now or ever, for he is "their youngest brother." - "Christ formed in you the hope of glory."

Now, inasmuch as God has let them know that He knows all about their iniquity, they said, "We are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found." Now, Joseph brings them into the full extremity of their sufferings, for he said, "God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the CUP is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father." Now hear the pitiful pleas of Judah, who is spokesman for all. Dear reader, I ask your patience just here, while we see THE SHADOW TURN ON THE DIAL. They are yet experiencing sore trials

under the Governor (or law) who sits upon his throne, for Paul said, "The law having a shadow of good things to come." So the good thing is yet to come. Does not Judah now become a type of the Son of God? For his past sufferings made him willing to be surety for Benjamin's safety and return to his father and he manifested it fully by more sufferings when he said. "Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. Then I shall bear the blame to my father forever." By the opening of the 45th chapter of Genesis we can see from what follows that divine justice has been satisfied, and **THE GOOD THING HAS COME.**

Do we not see the Son of God manifested in this shadow? "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." Heb. 5: 8-9. It may be said that Judah was not perfect. To this inquirer I will repeat the language of Paul: the shadow is "not the very image." For proof of this read Gen. 49: 8-12.

Now, Paul said, "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament." Please take notice that Jesus is not our SECURITY but our SURETY, for if I become security for Someone, this means that I will pay if he fails. Let it be remembered, that the righteous indignation of God against His children was charged to the Son in the mind and purpose of God before the world began. "For lo, in the volumn of

the book it is written of me, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." So He, Jesus, took all the blame and bore our sins in His own sinless body, (no sin except the imputed sins of His people). He suffered shame and was nailed to the cross, bled and died that we, poor, evil, vile and wretched sinners "might have life", and not only have life but that we "might have it more abundantly." And through His sufferings you were set free, and I have an humble hope that I was remembered in His sufferings too.

Now their suffering has reached a climax and begins to subside while Joseph makes himself known unto them. He is so overcome with tenderness and love for them that he can not refrain from weeping aloud, He said, "Cause every man to go out from me." Dear child, may I ask, was there anyone present but you and Jesus when He made Himself known to you? He said, "Come near to me." What sweet and gracious words from our elder brother to such sinful and guilty rebels. "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt," Gen. 45:4. Their great burden of sin and condemnation is gradually being removed by these words. "*Be not grieved, for God did send me before you to preserve life.*" Could there be any life for Joseph's brothers except through his sufferings and then mounting to the throne of Egypt, to store away corn in the years of plenty to meet their need in the years of famine? As the type, so is the reality. Was it not through this crucified and risen Savior that we poor mortals are blessed to eat His

flesh and drink His blood. Jesus said, *"My flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed."* May I ask this solemn question: Have we really been a partaker of the sufferings of Jesus? Have we been made a partaker of His joy after the sufferings? If so, we have eaten His flesh and drunk His blood. We know from experience that all the things on the "menu" are not good to the taste, but ah, bear this in mind that all the things in the listing such as sorrow, grief and trouble are not palatable to our taste like love, joy, peace and happiness, but remember that all of this is good for the body. *"For if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."* 2 Tim. 2: 12.

PSALMS 2:6-12.

Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

MEETINGS

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

Pursuant to the request of Republican Primitive Baptist Church, a Presbytery met at Republican Church on January 20, 1996 for the examination of Brother Curtis Cundiff if found qualified in accordance with the written word of God, at the satisfaction and discretion of the judgement, ordain the above mentioned to the full work of the office of Deacon.

The solemnity was begun with prayer by Elder Marvin Brumfield. All Elders of our faith and order present constituted the Presbytery. Those present were. Jr. Conner, Lane Carter, Clarence Stone, Carl Terry, Larry Hollandsworth, Hale Terry, Marvin Brumfield, Julian Williams, Leonard Brammer, W.T. Conner, and Lic. Allen Terry.

Deacons present were as follows: Jamie Cooper, Wade Poff, Jimmy Holley, Nelson Nester, Gene Potter, Tommy Wall, Joseph Cahill, Howard Peters, Oscar Pickral, Jessie Tyree, Carlton Aker, C.T. Abshire, A.L. Shelton, Tony Horton, Edwin Dyer, Posey Poindexter, Wayne Hundley, W.G. Parsons, Clay Brown, H.D. Ingram, Mark Terry, Clyde Johnson, Herbert Dodson, Robert Smith, Wilton Sutphin, Hassell Conner, Donald Scott, Woodrow Abshire, R.W. Akers, Guy Holley, Grey Ingram.

The Presbytery was organized by electing Elder Junior Conner as mod-

erator; Jamie Cooper as Clerk; Elder Hale Terry was chosen to lead in the examination of the candidate. Brother Guy Holley having been duly appointed by Republican Church, delivered Brother Cundiff to the presbytery. Examination was made by Eld. Hale Terry and all present Elders were invited to participate using Scripture reference First Timothy Ch. 3. The presbytery being satisfied with examination and answers given by the candidate, administered the laying on of hands, with the Ordination prayer being delivered by Elder Larry Hollandsworth. The charge was delivered to the candidate by Elder Leonard Brammer using Scriptural reference First Timothy.

The Moderator asked the Presbytery if they were satisfied with the work of the Presbytery which was answered in the Affirmative.

A certificate of ordination was presented to Brother Curtis Cundiff and the right hand of fellowship was given. The ordained Brother was delivered back to the church as an ordained Deacon of the Old School Primitive Church at Republican. The Presbytery was dismissed with prayer by Elder Clarence Stone.

Elder Junior Conner, Moderator
Jamie E. Cooper, Clerk

JOHN 1:13.

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

Pursuant to the request of Republican Primitive Baptist Church, a Presbytery met at Republican Church on January 20, 1996 for the examination of Brother Paul Jones if found qualified in accordance with the written word of God, at the satisfaction and discretion of the judgement, ordain the above mentioned to the full work of the office of Deacon.

The solemnity was begun with prayer by Elder Marvin Brumfield. All Elders of faith and order present constituted the Presbytery. Those present were. Jr. Conner, Lane Carter, Clarence Stone, Carl Terry, Larry Hollandsworth, Hale Terry, Marvin Brumfield, Julian Williams, Leonard Brammer, W.T. Conner, and Lic. Allen Terry.

Deacons present were as follows: Jamie Cooper, Wade Poff, Jimmy Holley, Nelson Nester, Gene Potter, Tommy Wall, Joseph Cahill, Howard Peters, Oscar Pickral, Jessie Tyree, Carlton Aker, C.T. Abshire, A.L. Shelton, Tony Horton, Edwin Dyer, Posey Poindexter, Wayne Hundley, W.G. Parsons, Clay Brown, H.D. Ingram, Mark Terry, Clyde Johnson, Herbert Dodson, Robert Smith, Wilton Sutphin, Hassell Conner, Donald Scott, Woodrow Abshire, R.W. Akers, Guy Holley, Grey Ingram.

The Presbytery was organized by electing Elder Junior Conner as moderator; Jamie Cooper as Clerk; Elder Hale Terry was chosen to lead in the examination of the candidate. Brother Grey Ingram having been duly appointed by Republican Church, deliv-

ered Paul Jones to the presbytery. Examination was made by Eld. Lane Carter and all present Elders were invited to participate using Scripture reference First Timothy Ch. 3. The presbytery being satisfied with examination and answers given by the candidate, administered the laying on of hands, with the Ordination prayer being delivered by Elder Larry Hollandsworth. The charge was delivered to the candidate by Elder Julian Williams using Scriptural reference.

The Moderator asked the Presbytery if they were satisfied with the work of the Presbytery which was answered in the Affirmative.

A certificate of ordination was presented to Brother Paul Jones and the right hand of fellowship was given. The ordained Brother was delivered back to the church as an ordained Deacon of the Old School Primitive Church at Republican. The Presbytery was dismissed with prayer by Elder Clarence Stone.

Elder Junior Conner, Moderator
Jamie E. Cooper, Clerk

EPHESIANS 1:8-10.

Wherein he hath abounded toward us in al wisdom and prudence;

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

That in the dispensation of th fulnes of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

OBITUARIES

WALTER VERNON ABRAMS

January 30, 1927 - December 11, 1995

Brother Walter Abrams, a life-long acquaintance with the Primitive Baptists was diagnosed with terminal cancer only three months before his death. He had never indicated to the brethren his interest in the church, but during his illness he talked with those who visited him in a manner that was somewhat astounding. It seemed to be a perfect example of "*He opens and none can shut.*" His conversation was on Godly things and concerning his belief from childhood, which he had not talked to those who knew him best. The things he had strived for through life for the betterment of his family, was taken from him. They apparently were no longer of any concern to him.

He expressed a desire to unite with the church at Pleasant Hill, stating he had for so long wanted to go to the church but that was something he had not been able to do.

A meeting of the brethren and friends of Pleasant Hill Church was called at the church on November 3, 1995 for the purpose of hearing Brother Abrams' testimony. He satisfied the church with his expression of unworthiness and long standing desire to be with the church, but having been unable to satisfy that desire.

He was unanimously received into our fellowship and the baptismal date

was set for Sunday, November 5th. On the morning for which the baptism was scheduled, he called to get word to the brethren that his physical condition was such that he felt unable to be baptized, so that was called off.

The writer visited him soon thereafter and his conversion was praising God who did all things right and he realized it was in God's plan that the baptizing would not be at that scheduled time. Why? He didn't try to answer that, but he still expressed a desire to be baptized.

On December 11th God called Brother Abrams home to peace, I do believe. He was begging to die and had surrendered all things earthly. None of those things, he expressed, made any difference anymore.

He was never baptized in the liquid grave, but I do not believe that is essential to enter God's kingdom. The visible shroud of God's love and His manifestation to him was baptismal enough. The following verses found in *Let Worldly Minds the World Pursue*, seem to fit the description of what I saw in him.

*"As by the light of opening day
The stars are all concealed,
So earthly objects fade away
When Jesus is revealed.*

*'Creatures no more divide my
choice,*

I bid them all depart;

*His name, and love and gra-
cious voice,*

Have fixed my roving heart."

Brother Abrams left a kind and devoted family who mourn his passing, and the church at Pleasant Hill join them in their mourning. We would, however, beg God's grace upon them and hope they can feel, as we do, he has gone to rest and does not now desire to be in nature's world of woes. He is survived by his wife, Lizzie Lancaster Abrams of the home in Pinetops, NC; one son and daughter in law, Joseph Vernon and Pamela H. Abrams of Macclesfield, one daughter, Terry A. Phillips of Pinetops; One grandchild, Kelly Leanne Abrams of Macclesfield. Five sisters, Mavourneen Owens of Pinetops, Hazel Worrells of Tarboro, Thelmas Garris of Wilson, Elma Wass of Rocky Mount, and Hilda Carter of King; Two brothers, Roy Thomas and Cooper Pitt Abrams, both of Pinetops; One half sister Mary Elizabeth Stallings of Smithfield; Five half brothers, Carl Abrams of Crisp, George Abrams of Pinetops, Henry Abrams of Rocky Mount, James Abrams of King, and William Abrams of Sims.

Funeral service was conducted by Elders Henry C. Jones and Lester Eason (both of whom were brothers in law) on December 13th at Carlisle Funeral Home in Tarboro. His body was laid to rest in the Williams Family Cemetery in Edgecombe County to await the call home.

This tribute of love written by order of Pleasant Hill Church in conference December 23, 1995, by one who was blessed to hear Brother Walter relate his thoughts, hopes, and fears in a new perspective.

J. Carroll Williams

J. Carroll Williams

Elder Henry C. Jones, Moderator
J. Carroll Williams, Clerk

ERNEST LINWOOD BLAIR

Brother Ernest was born in Pittsylvania County, Va. in the Vance Community on August 8, 1901 to the late Brother Robert Young Blair and Louisa Oakes Blair. At the time of his death on June 10, 1988 he had one living sister, Mrs. Irma Blair Walker and one brother Joe Blair, both now deceased.

He was first married to Gladys Lee Hundley Blair who died Jan. 10, 1972. On Nov. 3, 1983 he married Sister Ruth Walker Inge Blair who survives. Brother Ernest asked for a home with Canaan Primitive Baptist Church on August 29, 1984 and was baptized on Sept. 2, 1984 at Malmaison Primitive Baptist Church by his pastor Elder J.R. Williams.

For many years before uniting with the church he was a strong supporter and always interested in the welfare of the church and attending regularly. His funeral was conducted at Swicegood Funeral Home by his pastor, Elder J.R. Williams and Elder O.K. Tench. He was buried in Highland Burial Park in Danville, Va. He is sadly missed but may we all be reconciled to God's will.

Elder J.R. Williams, Moderator
Geneva B. Scarce, Clerk

JOSEPH "JOE" BLAIR

Brother Joe was born on Feb. 17, 1909 in Pittsylvania County, Va. in the Vance Community. He was the youngest of thirteen children born to the late Brother Robert Young Blair and Louisa Oakes Blair. At the time of his death on July 19, 1990 he had one living sister, Mrs. Irma Blair Walker, now deceased. He was predeceased by a four year old daughter, Jo Ann Blair.

Brother Joe asked for a home with Canaan Primitive Baptist Church on June 13, 1988 at Malmaison Primitive Baptist Church by his pastor, Elder Julian R. Williams. He attended the Primitive Baptist meetings his entire life and was a firm believer in the Doctrine of Salvation by the Grace of God.

He is survived by his wife, Sister Gertrude Carter Blair and one daughter, Carolyn Blair Harrison and one son-in-law Robert Harrison and three grandchildren, Chad Blair Harrison, Martha Lyn Harrison, and Martin Leigh Harrison, and a number of nieces and nephews.

His funeral was conducted at Swicegood Funeral Home by his pastor, Elder J.R. Williams and Elder O.K. Tench. He is sadly missed but may we be reconciled to God's will.

Elder J.R. Williams, Moderator
Geneva B. Scarce, Clerk

IRENE BLACK JEWETT

Irene Black Jewett, 84, of Bristol Village, Waverly, Ohio, died January 27th at Waverly.

She was born near Ralston, Iowa on October 21, 1911. She was a retired elementary school teacher.

Irene was the second child of Walter W. and Myrtle (Jones) Black. She joined the Deer Creek Primitive Baptist Church at Battle Creek, Nebraska on September, 1927 and attended services whenever she could. The last churches she was able to attend were Harmony P.B. Church at Washington Courthouse, Ohio and Turkey run P.B. at Ashville, Ohio.

Irene was preceded in death by her Parents and two brothers.

She leaves to mourn, her husband, Bill, two daughters, a son and two grandchildren. Also two sisters, Lois Cloud and Sara Cody of Sun City, Az.

Memorial services were held February 10 at Bristol Village Community Center. Elder Durward Edwards of Edison, Ohio and Pastor Roger Horton, Bristol Village conducted the services.

Lois E. Cloud

SISTER ANGIE JONES

It is with a feeling of sadness and unworthiness as I attempt to write an obituary of this precious person. At his appointed time, God, in his mercy has cause to carry home the spirit of our beloved Sister

in Christ, Angie Jones, and thus bring to a close her earthly toils and sufferings, at the age of 89.

Mother was born March 29, 1906 and passed away October 5, 1995. She was preceded in death by her husband Elder George Jones, my father, and both were members of Union Primitive Baptist Church for many years. She leaves behind four sons, Gerald, Preston, Wendell and Elder John Theron Jones: two daughters, Carolyn Spence, and Pauline Toney: several grandchildren and great grandchildren and a huge host of friends who will greatly miss her.

I can't put into words what my heart would like to say, but if not deceived, I feel that I was richly blessed to have a mother like her which can only come from our dear Lord. My walk in life with her was a blessing, but we feel that our loss is her eternal gain Though the earth mourns, the Heavens rejoice.

Funeral services were held October 7, 1995 at Cox Funeral Home in Delhi, La. Services were conducted by our dear Elder Gerald Shipman and Brother Alford Garvin who were blessed to speak with sweet humility and words of comfort. She was laid to rest beside her dear husband at the Crowville Cemetery near her home As her body sleeps, may the Lord give grace to all that mourn, that they be reconciled to their loss and truly say, Thy will be done, Lord.

Written by her son,
Elder Theron Jones

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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Editors

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EDITORIAL



ELDER R.H. CAMPBELL

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

This verse is beyond doubt the most often quoted scripture in all of the bible. It has been used as a text for many sermons to show that God loves the world, and everyone in it, so much that he gave his Son that anyone who would believe in him could be saved without exception;

just make a decision, accept Jesus as their savior and they are assured of a home in heaven. This is an example of the extreme measures to which man will go to take scriptures out of context and attempt to use them to support their belief.

This one verse of scripture is only one sentence in a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemous, a ruler of the Jesus, who came to him in darkness inquiring of his doctrine and the works he had done; knowing they were beyond the power of the flesh. He said, *"Rabbi we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."* He knew that the natural man could not give life, restore sight heal the lame and cure the sick just by commanding it to be so, and believed that he must possess the powers of God. He did not understand how these things could be, just as he did not understand how a man could be born again, but that did not keep him from believing in the evidence he had witnessed. If the natural man had to understand everything that he believed to see the kingdom of heaven there would be none to enter therein. Jesus told him ye must be born of the water and the spirit but added, *"Marvel not that I say unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."* No one has control over the wind or the air cur-

rents of the earth and can only discern their presence by seeing the effect of them and feeling them as they blow on the man in nature. Jesus uses these illustrations of the experience of the children of God and both are beyond the power of man in nature; just as on the occasion when some asked Jesus, what they must do to work the works of God and his reply was this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. In like manner these things are the work of God, not man.

Nicodemus questioned these sayings and Jesus said, *"We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told ye earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?"* This was true of all the teachings of Jesus to his disciples; he talked to them in natural terms of things that contained deep spiritual truths and they did not learn the lessons til the day of Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, and they were born again. He told Nicodemus that no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. This was something that Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, was familiar with, he knew of the experience of Moses in the wilderness and the story of the brazen serpent; how it was made, per God's instruction and

of the results when one who had been bitten by the fiery serpents and looked upon the brazen serpent which was lifted up on a pole. When those who were bitten beheld the brazen serpent they lived and did not die from the bite of the fiery serpent. Nicodemus knew that the effect was not to everyone in the world or even in Israel, but only those who were bitten: so when Jesus quoted the text scripture and compared it to the raising up of the brazen serpent it referred only to those that had been born again of the water and the spirit.

For the text to be interpreted as the world proclaims it, would mean that the doctrine of Christ was changed during the conversation and that they no longer must be born again, but just believe, and that anyone could do this. This could not be true because James 2, 19 states, *"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble."* Surely they don't believe that this scripture includes the devils. The whosoever in verse 16 is the same as the born again in verse 3 and it is as the wind blowing: outside of the ability of man to control. 1st John 5, 1 ties it down completely when he says, *"whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."*

John 1 vs. 12 says, *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."* and many sermons have been preached using this as a text supporting the Armenian doctrine and ignoring verse 13 which says, *"Which were*

born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God." This contradicts entirely what is preached based on vs. 12 alone, by the world, just as the sermon based on John 3, 16 is contradicted by the context in which the text is written. A text that is preached and not based upon the context in which they are written considering who is speaking, to whom they are speaking and the topic under discussion is a wresting of the truth to appeal to the natural mind of man; because the truth excludes the wisdom of man.

To my understand and experience, the text is not that God gave his only begotten Son because he loved the world and all of the inhabitants so much, but rather he loved the world for the sake of his elect that dwelled therein. As the man who formed a treasure of great value in a field and went and sold all that he had and bought the field, not for the sake of the field but for the sake of the treasure that it contained. Many times the scriptures refer to the Lord's portion as his treasure or his jewel and his love is for them and not for this world which is their temporary dwelling place. *Psa. 135 vs. 4 "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself and Israel for his peculiar treasure." And again Deut. 7 vs. 6 "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."* Any faith or hope that I have in things eternal is that the who-soever referred to in the text is the

same that God had chosen as a special people unto himself and that they are the ones that are born again. My prayer is that I have been born again which is evidence that I shall not perish but have everlasting life.

In bonds of love,
Elder Richard H. Campbell

NOTICE

901 Ave. O. N.E.
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June 8, 1995
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Dear Brother Williams:

Would you be so kind to send a note "Free" I have the Signs books to 1902, some good books, 2 book cases.

Due to old age and nobody to give them to. I would love to give them to someone who loves the doctrine set forth by the Signs which I love.

John J. Simpson

PSALM 2: 11-12.

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

 ARTICLES

TO ALL WHO FEEL A DESIRE, ALL
THEIR TRUST BE, ALONE IN GOD:

Sometimes; it is within, the realization of my weakness and self-helplessness; I become aware of His almighty power; and given to feel and say, of a truth; through His furnishing; I can do all things; Even to the praise of His great and Holy name. But, let it be known fully; without Him, I can do no thing or nothing. For in and of my own self, I am only a tiny speck, of the dust of the earth. Which earth is, His footstool. Therefore, the extremity of my own self worth; is lower down than the sole of His feet, and not worthy to even be stepped upon, by Him. Man's self worth, cannot be measured; for, how can a measurement be made; of nothing and less than nothing. Now that is the sum total, of man's complete lack, of any self greatness or goodness. Now that being said; it is my wish; that no one come to me; telling of some great or good thing, any person has done; as if that person, of himself, or herself; had done it. For though I do not say one word in response; I shall not believe it. For I feel fully convinced; that, within mankind of themselves; there is absolutely no ability, or even a desire; to do any good, as be good, in the sight of "God". For all such good is of, and by, and from; He alone, who does all things well and good. And so, any and all such good ever per-

formed THROUGH (not by) a person; came into being, only, through and by, the Holy Spirit of "God", having worked within them; both to will and to do, of that good. So therefore; for us to render praise and or honor, unto that person alone; is a denial, of God the Holy Spirit, having any part, in bringing it all unto fruition. Which is the same as saying; that person is, the father, or mother, or controller; of the Holy Spirit. Of which is, a complete opposite, of the Holy truth. Now, what has been said thusfar; is in no way; meant to deprive any one, of their just dues; but, is only to point out, what I feel to be the truth; whereas, the "Three-in-one God," is the only one, who is qualified, to impute Righteousness or honor, unto anyone; whomsoever He so pleases; which righteousness, is, in and of, Christ Jesus the Lord. So it is with man; his very existence, his very life, the function of his brain to think thoughts, and his every function, of all what has to do with his very being; requires strength; and all strength that exists; must and does, have some power source, from which, that strength does come; and in that, almighty "God", being the Holder and Controller, of all power that be; and that all powers that be, are ordained by God; thereby establishing, that very fact of Holy truth; Man, is NOT, his own; but is wholly and entirely, dependent upon His Creator; for all he ever is or does, both naturally, and Spiritually. And therein, being proof positive; that man in and of his own self; could never no never, be

self worthy, of any praise or honor; for any thing, he may, or may not do.

I have heard men praised highly; for what they (supposedly) had accomplished, on their own; some were Kings, some were Presidents, some were Farmers, some were referred to as Preachers; and etc. and etc. Whereas, it would have been as well, or even better; had they rendered praise to a fence-post, for holding up a fence. For at least, that fence-post, was not a sinner.

Now some might derive, from what has been written thusfar; that I have no confidence, in the flesh of man; Well, if that should be their opinion; then, I sure do hope; their opinion is correct. Whether or not, I have ever praised my Lord and "God"; only He knoweth for a certainty; I just feel to hope, I have. I feel, I have surely, desired to do so. I do feel and believe this though; any and all that be, pure and true praise unto, His Holy and Righteous name; can never no never, be mixed with any praise, of fleshly mankind. For such, it seems to me, would be like, the mixing of heaven, with hell. For, were man's fleshly thoughts and actions, any determining factor; in where, his eternal stay would be, after this time world is no more; then, we all would surely be cast into that ever burning hell. But thanks be unto God and His Son; His merciful grace was and is, sufficient; to save a Remnant. Them whom God choose in His Son, out from the world; and did so, from before the foundation of the world. Yes, them who are His Jacob's; them He has loved, with

an everlasting love. And all others, the Esau's, He has hated, everlastingly. And all that being, His Holy right. Ephesians 2:8, For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:, Not of works, lest any man should boast. I feel and believe, there never has, and never shall, exist, any circumstance; under which; any humankind, could ever have a RIGHT, to boast of SELF; for any thing he has ever done, or not done. FOR though, he give all his goods or holdings, to the needy; there still exist, that very fact of Holy truth; but for "God," he never would have had, any of those goods or holdings, to begin with; either, for the keeping, or giving. Therefore, all boasting, is excluded. Even the praising, honoring, and glorifying of "God", is not boasting; for it is just the expressing; of a pure fact, of Holy truth. I have heard it said; No little baby could possibly be born into this world, already bound for hell, or be hated by God; but such reasoning by one, is their measuring of God; according to their own rule of measurement of themselves, in their own carnal ways, of thinking and reasoning. God who cannot lie said; Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated; when neither of them had as yet been born, to know good or evil. Isaiah 55:8, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For any one of us, to know of God and His way; we must wait for, His Revelations unto us. While with "God," in His infinite wisdom; He has forever known all things. It is impossible, for any thing,

to ever come, as a surprise to Him. For back in eternity, before He ever brought this time world into existence; in both His mind and purpose; He saw it all, knew it all, fixed and established it all, and Predestinated it all; from its beginning, and all the way through, and unto its ending, or consummation; and all heaven, and hell, has received their eternal inhabitants. And within the whole entire process of it all; there never has been, and never shall be; even the slightest, or minutest, variation; from that which, "God" foresaw would, and shall, unhenderedly come and be. Now that is the One and only, "God and Lord" in whom, I desire, my trust and hope is. One who created it all; set and established all bounds and habitations; and super rules, all comings and goings, all beginnings, continuations, and endings. "He" who said; As I have thought so shall it be, as I have purposed so shall it stand.

In hope, of a better world; after this time world has passed away, and gone forever.

Troy G. Shepard

VOICES OF THE PAST

SERMON BY

ELDER D.V. SPANGLER

AT THE PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION
AT ROANOKE, VA. - 1964



lder Turner told me this morning that there was an afflicted brother here who has hoped someone would talk on the scripture which is found in the 30th verse of the fifth

chapter of Ephesians: "*We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*" I am sure this is a wonderful text.

One of the things that stands out in the Scriptures, is that wherever God has brought his church to view, he has presented her as something complete. When he refers to the church of God, he speaks of that church being the bride, the Lamb's wife. And we find also that he tells us how, at some time in the future, he will present that church unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, wrinkle, blemish, or any such thing. When the Lord has brought Zion to view as the church, he presents her as a city set upon a hill, that cannot be hid. When he has spoken of the safety of this city, he has told us that salvation shall be her walls. Not the salvation that men talk about, but the kind that God Almighty appoints, for he said that salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

When God brings Zion for his people to view, he brings her to view as absolutely complete in him; he brings her to view as bring watered by the river of the water of life; and that stream, he tells us, makes glad the city of God. Now if your heart has ever been made glad as you heard the gospel of Christ preached, as you mingled with your brethren, it is evidence that some of the streams have reached you.

"*Makes glad the city of God.*" I like to think about the effectiveness of this stream - that there has never been one too poor but that the stream will reach him. Last night, as we sat on the

brother's porch, I talked about people going home to the church, for I feel in my ministry to encourage God's people: if they love His name, to stand up as God blesses them, and be counted with his people. And I saw a tear in a friend's eye; and I said, "My friend, there's room for you in the house." He said, "I'm unworthy." A very acceptable answer, wasn't it?

We want to talk about the text, but we must first get to it. We want to show, the Lord willing, that we are a part of the body of our Saviour. And we are going to show, the Lord willing, that Jesus Christ did not come into the world to make a decision as to a single person going to heaven. Somebody has brought forth such false doctrine that they advance the idea that men are helping other men to go to heaven - to make a decision for Christ. Christ taught that he himself never made the decision while in this world, as to a single person who would be in glory. We find, in her earthly understanding of Christ, that a woman approached Him, and said that she had a request, that she had two sons and she would like for one to sit on his right hand and the other on his left, when he entered into his kingdom, And Jesus said, "*Woman, you don't know what you ask; it is not mine to give.*" He didn't come into the world to decide who would go to heaven, but to make it sure to every one that was chosen in him before the world began. He said, "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." If any man has advanced the idea that Christ went about

upon the earth trying to save sinners, making decisions as to who would enter the kingdom, this scripture forever sets it at nought.

But he brings this matter to you and me, for it is said that we are members of his body, of his flesh, of his bones. There is a depth here that I doubt whether any minister has ever reached; there is a depth here wherein our Saviour, (I hope I can say, our), has taken our flesh and our bones. We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. As we look back at the wonderous work of grace, we find that when God created a man of the earth earthy, (and in a sense a type of our Lord Jesus Christ), the woman was in the man, and a part of the man, before she was ever taken from him; and that the law that God gave to Adam, was given him while Eve was yet a part of his body. That is why Adam said, "*She is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.*" That is why Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, said that a man has never hated his own flesh, but he nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." In the preceding verses, how wonderfully he said, "*Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.*"

There a few things in my life that have been most humbling to me; one is, that God would love a sinner like I am; another is how brethren could love me. Another humbling thing to the minister is when God's people tell him, "You were blessed to preach the

gospel to me." This never exalts one of God's ministers. Oh, no! but the devil does sometimes. He will sometimes tell one that he preached a wonderful sermon; but a tear in a person's eye is more humbling than all the Devil had ever said to him.

He took the woman out of his side. The Bible doesn't say his side, but He took a rib, and that is where the side is; and He gave her to him to be a helpmeet. The side of Jesus Christ was torn when he hanged on Calvary's hill, when darkness covered the earth. The soldier pierced the side of Jesus. Why did he pierce his side? Two reasons: prophecy had said it would be; and the soldier didn't know what he was doing - he knew nothing about the purposes of God. Men today are living out the purposes of God blindly, but I assert that the purposes of God shall stand. If I didn't believe that, I would be afraid to start home this afternoon. Someway, I believe with all my heart that in our journey here, the angels of God have been our protection.

But. I want to talk about the text. "You are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Eve received the law through Adam, and the Ark was the only thing that could weather the storm of the wrath of God, when his wrath for sin was poured out upon the world. The door of the Ark, the Bible says, was in the side. It didn't have two doors; it had one door, - in the side.

When Abraham sent his servant to seek a bride for his son, he caused him to swear that he would not go

among strangers, but that he would go among his own kindred. What does it show? that Jesus Christ came into the world to save a people that already belonged to him - that were united with him. And the servant wanted a sign; and he said, "When I reach a certain well, have somebody there to draw water for the camels." And we find a willing Rebekah there. She even ran to meet him; and said, "Drink my Lord." And when the question arose, when the servant had told his business, "Will you go with this man?," her parents said leave her a little while, and then she can go. But they left the answer with Rebekah; and she said, "I will go." I like a doctrine that brings about in the heart a willingness to do the will of God; that not only brings about a willingness, but makes every particle of His service a delight.

"You are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones." We find in the wonderful works of grace that God Almighty has brought home to his people throughout the ages, two things clearly brought to view; One is, that he has saved them because he had an everlasting love for them; and the other is, that they are unworthy of everything that God has done for them.

I remember that when David went out to fight the battle for his brethren, he was just a lad; and his brethren rebuked him, saying that the naughtiness of his heart had brought him down to see the battle. Here is a giant! if we can't overthrow him, we know you can't: Goliath, the giant of the Philistines. David was of the bone and the flesh of his brethren, wasn't he?

And David said, *"Is there not a cause?"* Yet they did not believe in him until he manifested to them his power to fight the battle. And that is when every sinner believes in Jesus Christ. David's brethren would scorn him, but he said that he would fight the battle; he would meet the giant; but he would not take the armor of Saul, for he had not proved it. David went forth saying unto Goliath, *"I come to thee in the name of the Lord."*

They were David's brethren, and nothing they could say would ever change his love for them; no rebuke from them would change him. Neither will anything, my friends, ever change the love of God for you; for Paul said, *"I am persuaded that neither death nor life, things present or things to come, principalities or powers, etc., nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

"Flesh of his flesh; bone of his bone." Let's find out more. Joseph was a beautiful type of Jesus Christ. We find him hated by his brethren - hated because he had a dream. Did the devil give him the dream? Oh, no! But it caused his brethren to hate him. God gave him a dream in which he saw his brethren bowing down to him. One of the things that Elder Helms spoke so clearly in his Introductory was that all things worked together for good to them that love God. The hatred and malice of Joseph's brethren would have done away with their brother; but it couldn't be. They put him in a pit; and but for the grace of

God they would have left him there to die. But he had a brother to speak for him. The Midianite merchantmen come by, and he was sold for twenty pieces of silver. God took care of the situation. Sometimes in my mind I have seen that boy being led off, with his brethren watching, no doubt glad to get rid of him, thinking it was the last time they would see him. But then we find that there came a time when it was God's time to bring them to him - through famine and hunger, which God alone could bring and control. Someway I believe that every drop of water that falls on the earth, God sends it; every famine that comes, God sends it.

And, finally, I like to think of Joseph when he couldn't refrain any longer. He knew his brethren all the time: he knew them because they were flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. They were a part of him. *"Come near me; I am your brother."*

Has the Lord ever drawn you near him? Have you ever felt the encircling arms of Christ? I remember what dear Elder Gilliam said, when he was at the point of death for days: *"I felt those arms under me."*

I'm your brother - you thought evil - God meant it for good.

Now to reach our case He came all the way to where we were. Our Saviour must take our flesh, since, as the Scriptures say, the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same, that he might destroy the works of the Devil. How must the Lord Jesus Christ come into the world? He must be found

under the law. Paul tells us in Galatians so clearly, that when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law. He took our flesh and blood as the Son of man, taking it in union with him as the Son of God - our very flesh and blood. ***"God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law to redeem those that were under the law."***

I like to think also that it is said that he took not the nature of angels; for an angel could never reach our case. But he took on him the seed of Abraham - our flesh and our blood; and we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones; and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in their likeness, he humbled himself. Men did not humble our Saviour - he humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross. Why? because from all eternity his people had a standing in him: they were chosen in him, and their life was in him before Adam fell. They fell in Adam, but they were safe all the time. To reach his bride, Jesus could not come as an angel, but must come as the Son of man. We are glad that he spoke so many times of himself as the Son of man - more than he spoke of himself as the Son of God.

I like to think of the expression of the Apostle that there is one Mediator between God and man. Talk about the Pope, talk about the Priests of the land being mediators between God and man, there has never been a greater lie preached under heaven than that. To believe that, you would have to burn your Bibles; to believe that

doctrine, you would have to preach that Jesus Christ didn't come to save a people who were already his; and to take in union with himself the flesh and blood and bones of his people.

There is one Mediator! None of these preachers here are mediators between God and man; there's never been but one. Who is he? the man Christ Jesus. The one of whose body we are members. Think of it, my friends! People of God members of the body of Christ! the mystical body of Christ, of his flesh and of his bones. We never know the full force of salvation until we have known something of how low our Saviour came: If we only know of his humiliation, and not of his glory, it won't do us any good. I cannot speak of his glory, and know the wonderful love he had for us, unless I see his humiliation.

I went for years wondering what it means when it is said in the 8th chapter of Acts, ***"In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation, for his life is taken from the earth."*** Then I saw it one day. I saw that God left his Son hanging in the body that would satisfy as a sacrifice. He left him hanging there, and turned his face away; and Jesus cried out and said, ***"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*** If we are his people, every one of us was hanging there - represented in him. To be a complete sacrifice, he must be left to die.

Have you felt my friends, that He died for you? What a wonderful thing! ***"Gave himself," Paul said, "for***

me." I like to think of Him who took our flesh and blood in union with himself, when he was held up before the people of old: I like to think that every time the high priest went with the names of the tribes of Israel on his heart - with their names on his shoulder, he showed that the people of God were represented in him. I think of the high priest going once a year into the most holy place, making atonement for himself and the people, that he couldn't put away sin; but I think of one who went into the most holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. The high priest couldn't feel the groans of his people: he hadn't experienced them. But, my brethren, today we have and high priest who can be touched. We have one who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was tempted in all points. I like to think that when Stephen was dying, he said, "*I see Jesus standing on the right hand of God.*" Standing, waiting to pour out his wrath upon the people.

What a blessing to have a great high priest in heaven, who is brought near as our brother, our very brother. We read that he who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. These are my brethren; Who? He that doeth the will of my Father, the same is my mother, my brother, my sister. He is not ashamed to call his people brethren, because they are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. The only way there can ever be a people prepared for heaven whom God will not be

ashamed of, is for he himself to prepare them.

The doctrine I am preaching to you today, will be preached on and on, until the Lord of glory comes from heaven; and the people I am talking to and about today have the grace of God wrought so perfectly in them, that God in heaven will never be ashamed of one of them.

We are told that Abraham, when he was called out, went not knowing where he went; that he sought a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God. He was looking for a place where God is not ashamed to be called our God.

"We are members of his body, of his flesh, and his bones." He didn't come part of the way under the law; he didn't come just to make an offering for sin, and leave the acceptance to men, but He came to redeem us from the curse of the law. The Scriptures say that he went to heaven, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Do you know why he is coming again; and who he is coming for? He is coming for his bride; he is coming for those who are members of his body, of his flesh, of his bones.

"As by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead, he said, Now is Christ risen and become the first fruits of them that slept." When Christ rose from the dead, he said, "*Now is Christ risen and become the first fruits of them that slept.*" When Christ rose from the dead, it was a promise that there was a crop coming: The people of God - their bodies are going

to be raised. Not like you are as I look at you now, but fashioned like His glorious body; and will be prepared to praise him.

When the priest under the law took the sheaf from the people and waved it before the Lord, it was saying, There is a crop like this. So is the resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ from the dead. He was the first fruits of his people; and they will be like the first fruits. The glorious day is coming - the day all the saints have looked for, the day of all days, when we will be taken home. I have been coming here almost forty years; most of the old ones who were here when I began coming, are sleeping somewhere. In a few years we will all be sleeping, laid away somewhere in the silent people; and they will be like the first fruits. The glorious day is coming - the day all the saints have looked for, the day of all days, when we will be taken home. I have been coming here almost forty years; most of the old ones who were here when I began coming, are sleeping somewhere. In a few years we will all be sleeping, laid away somewhere in the silent tomb; but, bless the Lord, He will not deny his own. When he comes the dead will be raised. It is the resurrection of the dead, not merely from the dead.

You that love his name - it will be you that day. It will be the redeemed sinner; it will be one whose vile body is changed, and fashioned like the glorious body of Jesus Christ. Lift up your heads, my brethren; praise the Lord! No wonder when David started in the 22nd Psalm he said, "*My God, why*

hast thou forsaken me." and said in the 23rd, "*The Lord is my shepherd.*" Then in the 24th, he said, "*Lift up the everlasting doors that the King of Glory might come in. Who is the King of Glory The Lord of hosts is the King of Glory.*"

(The above is taken from a recording, and is somewhat condensed. - J.D.W.)

Elder D.V. Spangler

MEDITATIONS ON JOSEPH
From the Book of Genesis
by T. Floyd Adams
Willow Springs, N.C.

Joseph no longer speaks to his brethren by an interpreter, but he comes to them face to face. Now this wonderful secret which has been kept from them so long is now revealed, "I am your brother." *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past (law days) unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days (Gospel Day) spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things."* Heb. 1 :1-2.

Joseph has the keys to the corn houses in Egypt, and he freely hands it out to all of his brothers, as will be seen by the wagons loaded with provisions going back to Canaan, to spread the good news that "*Joseph is yet alive, and he is Governor over all the land of Egypt.*" He sends for their father, their families and all of their kindred, in the land of Canaan and settles them down in the goodly land

of Goshen. Now they eat bread from this great store of CORN, for which they have bestowed no labor.

Lest I forget, I will now mention the charge which Joseph made to his brothers before they left to bring their families--"**Also regard not your stuff; for all the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.**" *Gen.45 :20.* Why did he render this charge? He well knew that they had a lot of possessions that they would not want to leave behind, all of which have now become worthless, for the store houses in Egypt are open to meet all their requirements in time of NEED. Furthermore, there is no room in the great store houses of Egypt to shelter such for these houses are filled with CORN.

Now, would Joseph's brothers question his right and ability to deliver to them this serious and solemn charge--"Regard not your stuff?" The man who sits upon his throne in his royal majesty, and is governor of all Egypt. He also has the gift to divine. Is he not fully qualified to tell them what to bring and what to leave behind, First he tells them to bring Benjamin (the corn, or Holy Spirit); second, bring your families and father and kindred. That is all. Then he tells them, "**regard not your stuff.**" For this store house in Egypt is a place to get as a "**free gift**", and not a place to exchange our "**stuff**" for corn. Regardless of how we may present our "**stuff**", we will never be able to exchange it for CORN, because all our "**righteousnesses are as filthy rags.**"

That which I have written above is only a faint type, or as Paul said "**a shadow of good things to come.**" Now, this Great God who sits upon His throne clothed with ALL POWER and authority, who says that "**Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool and the cattle of a thousand hills are mine, if I were hungry I would not ask you**", and further says that "**the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof, is of the Lord.**" Who would question His right and ability to teach and give instruction to us poor mortals, for "**all of thy people shall be taught of the Lord**" and "**great shall be the peace of thy children.**" So this Great Giver, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift (Jesus), for "**every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of lights in whom there is no variableness neither shadow of a turn.**" "**And he spake as never man spake.**" How fitting are the words of the poet:

**"Keep silent all created things,
And wait your Maker's nod,
My soul stands trembling while
she sings, The honors of her God."**

As Joseph administered to his brothers out of the store houses of Egypt, so Jesus administers to us out of His great store house of mercy. For John said, "and of His fullness have we all received and grace for grace" or spiritual blessings of Benjamin. The bringing of Benjamin was all that Joseph

required of his brothers for them to get corn, and the only time that we can get corn or Jesus, is when we are made willing through sufferings to present Christ who is formed in us the hope of glory. Oh, how often we try to present our "stuff", such things as good works, self-righteousness, which is compared to filthy rags. We make vows and promises, self-confidence creeps in and many other things too numerous to mention, that we are continually trying to exchange for a blessing (corn). Ah! hear servants of God, was this not a serious and solemn charge that Paul rendered to Timothy, "PREACH THE WORD"! How careful we should be to make a clear distinction between our filthy works and the precious works of Jesus, "*who works in us both to will and to do of His own good pleasure.*"

Ah! my dear friends, this market or great store house of our God is not a place to exchange our silver and gold, for the precious blood of Jesus. Joseph used the barter system in trading with the Egyptians, but to his brothers, it was a free gift.

When we come to this great treasure house and present our works (stuff) we only find the door closed against us. This is another lesson that I too, have to learn again and again. Often do I feel at a loss when our Master hides His loving face, I get to my wit's end. This is the time that Satan makes his worst attack. He will say to me as Eliphaz, Job's miserable comforter, said to him, "*Acquaint thyself with him.*" This is what I have tried to do for many years. "And

be at peace." This is what I greatly desire. "*Thereby good shall come unto thee.*" Do you believe it? Sometimes I do. "Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth and lay up his words in thine heart." I have made an honest effort to do this. "*If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy Tabernacles.*" How hard I have labored to get away from this iniquity. No wonder Job said, "*Miserable comforters, ye are.*" "*Acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace. Lay up his words in thine heart. If thou return to the Almighty thou shalt be built up.*" Job 22:21-23.

WHAT LIES! This may be an exaggerated expression, but I wonder if I could not build a world like this just as easily as I could do what this "Tenamite" told Job to do. Those Tenamites and Midianites are a great pest in our lives. They tell us that a "*hope is not sufficient, you ought to know you are a Christian,*" "*you are the cause of so few people joining the church*"; "*you ought to cry a little louder from the pulpit and spare not.*" I make the feeble attempt by trying to obey his bidding, but all in vain, only to hear my feeble voice echo back again. Ah! dear child, do not become discouraged, this is just another experience that we have to pass through to learn from "whence our help comes." Now our precious Redeemer speaks, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Now deliverance

has come. The joy of God's salvation is restored for a short season, but alas, we again sink down, but we never get out of His reach or hearing. He sweetly whispers these words to us, *"Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, for I am he that was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore;"* *"and as I live ye shall live also."* Live where? Right here in the flesh. But how? By the faith of the Son of God, for Paul said, *"I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."*

Now, let us go back just a little and pick up a few threads and see if they are types of our experience. We talk a lot about sin, but first, let us get a clear picture in our mind and a well defined answer. Just what is sin? Paul gives the correct definition. *"Sin is the transgression of the law, and by the law is the knowledge of sin."* There is a vast difference in our experience between a pardon for our transgression of the law and a knowledge of the sin that remains with us after the offence has been committed.

When our Federal Head, Adam, transgressed God's law, it swept the whole human race into death and destruction and our only remedy is through Jesus Christ. For Paul said *"Who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification."* Rom. 4:25. We too, were tried, convicted and crucified by this same law. But when Jesus died (or laid His

life down) and lay in the heart of the earth three days, then arose a conqueror over death, hell and the grave, He brought us back through Him freely justified and put a new law in our heart and mind, a law that gives life and peace, and not a law like the first law that brought conviction, and condemnation. then put us into prison and finally we were sentenced and put to death. Now when we were brought back through Jesus Christ and were put under this new law which Paul says *"is the law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus,"* it took all the guilt and condemnation away from us, for Paul said that *"there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."* Rom. 8:1-2. He further says, *"He that is dead is freed from sin."* Remember, dear reader, that we are not freed from the KNOWLEDGE of the fact that we were justly condemned for our sins. Joseph granted a free pardon to his brothers for all their sins and transgressions which they had committed against him, but they always were mindful of their sinful and wicked acts, and because of this KNOWLEDGE of their just condemnation under the law, they were continually reminded that they were still sinners for Paul said, *"By the law is the KNOWLEDGE OF SIN. Now when this knowledge of sin continued to revive in them, they began to have doubts and fears. So do we. When*

they saw that their father was dead, *"They said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us for all the evil which we did unto him."* Gen. 50:15. But Joseph, like Jesus, is always a very present help in time of need (not needs). Now his pledge and promise is renewed again, as will be seen in Gen. 50:21. *"Now therefore, fear ye not: I will nurse you and your little ones."* And he comforted them and spake kindly unto them. *"Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good"*. Such manifested love as this can never be described by mortal tongue.

Now through the suffering and death of Jesus, who satisfied the demands of the law, were we not freed from the sins which we had committed? The unworthy writer felt as though he would never have another evil thought, which lasted only a little while, for he had been in bondage for twenty-one years. Is it not true that we are out under bond most of the time? But like Joseph's brothers when he saw fit he put them behind the bars in the prison walls. I have often compared my experience with that of a bird that had been caged for a long time, and when the door was open it flits around from limb to limb, and often soars high in the air, but when it gets thirsty, tired and hungry, it is forced back to earth to get a fresh supply.

Now, I will say just a few more words about this *"knowledge of sin."* Paul, the great apostle, through divine revelation left nothing for us to guess, for he brings the subject clearly to the

light and said, *"Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound."* Among the many things which this law taught us when it entered into our hearts are three important things. First, that we have always been sinners even before we had any knowledge of the law. Second, we are sinners after we transgressed the law. Third, we are still sinners after we are resurrected from the dead, that is, after we have been delivered from our sins, and the reason for this knowledge that we are still sinners is because the offense still abounds. The knowledge of our sins, and the fact that we have to carry a dead body around the remainder of our lives, often causes us to cry out as Paul did and say, *"Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death."* The very scent of our bodies together with the "knowledge of sin" is extremely nauseating to us at times. It is through those sore trials in the night that we get a little glimpse of the great and marvelous works of God. David said, *"Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge."* Psa. 19:2.

Through this sore affliction we learn a great many lessons, one of which is this, that the great mountains of sin that we could see in our brother has not become a molehill, and the little mole hill that we could only see in ourselves now becomes a mountain of sin. We may fight many battles with our brother and the world, because of SIN, but when the fight is finished we then learn that the greatest SIN al-

ways rages most within. Now when we are brought to the knowledge of the fact that the greatest sin rages most within, we can then see that the victory is only won through Jesus Christ. Paul said, "*But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" 1 Cor. 15:27.

*And when the fight is finished,
And the battle is won,
Then we can see that Jesus
Was the conquering One.*

Through this experience, this scripture sweetly comes to our view: "*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*" Rom. 5:20. Now, it is through the abounding grace of God that we can look over one another for good. It is through the abounding grace of God that we can see the imperfections in ourselves. It is through the abounding grace of God, that we have love for one another. It is by the abounding grace of God that we can preach, pray, hear and sing. It is by the grace of God we can render equal and undivided praise to the everlasting Father, Son and everlasting Spirit. It is through the abounding grace of God that we can get a peep through the lattice work and glimpse the heavenly scene beyond and forget momentarily that we ever committed a sin.

Now what I have written above is some of the sweet meditations that I have had for several years, but mostly for the last three weeks, and I realized that it is like the writer, very imperfect

and only to be accepted so far as it is supported by the word of God. But I will say as Paul said, "*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out.*" Rom. 11:33. "*Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of Him? and the thunder of His power who can understand.*" Job 26:14.

May I close with the words of the poet:

*"Deep in unfathomable mines,
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will."*

T. FLOYD ADAMS

Willow Springs, N.C. March 27, 1945.

May, 1948

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." 1 Peter 2: 2-3.

I have a desire to write on this Scripture to the household of faith. I want to remember that this household is composed of little children, some of whom are not able to understand the things we see promulgated in the pulpit and on the printed page. But while this is so, I want to be explicit and declare to you that does not give me a right to change what I

write just because of the inability of any to not see. The gospel is the gospel all the time: it is Jesus Christ and him crucified, and he is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. Not only is the gospel the same but the characters that is for remain the same. As far as ability goes we never have any of our own, but all we have is just the measure of faith that is given us. We must keep in mind that this measure is not turned over to us; that dispensing grace is not the work of the children of God.

I hear a lot about not preaching so much doctrine, but rather to preach the sincere milk of the word to the babes, for they cannot understand the hard doctrine. That is right that they cannot, but I trust I am thankful to Almighty God that he will teach his doctrine to them. These babes would not have any better judgment about milk than they would meat, would they? In fact if we are out to solve the problem by our observation of natural children, then my analysis would be that more babies would gnaw on a piece of meat than would try to drink out of a cup. Now to follow up the idea of this milk, let us remember that this milk has got to be handled by the mother instead of the baby. Just imagine a tiny babe holding it's own cup. If you want conditions in this sincere milk of the word, here are all of them anybody can desire. Just turn the babe loose to get its milk. Now while you have given the little one over to the

task of getting its milk, will you please remember that the Gentile church does not have any breasts. What a hard doctrine! What a dry, starving, husky doctrine! And what an awful thing it is to preach a theme to little, storm-tossed, sin-smitten children of God, that mocks them into believing they can find their mother and that she is well qualified for feeding her brood! The church has not milk, bread or any other nutrition for the children. She is barren anyway and it was all done that no flesh should glory in His presence.

Three times I have seen my wife go down into the valley, giving birth to a baby boy. One of them has long since passed on and the other two are now grown and by the time this appears in print will be men of their own. My mind is enraptured with the picture coming before me of the zeal and motherly devotion that has been given to them. Did she tell the first one that he could find his own food the best way he could? We read in the book about some one having their part in the book taken away if they add anything to the words of a certain prophecy (Rev. 22), and I do not know of a greater adding or taking away than to mock a baby by telling him to help himself. That is the nucleus of conditionalism, and we cannot avoid the dilemma it places us in to talk about the sincere milk of the word, as though we could milk it out and give it to another. If one of the family is able to preach, it is not that God has given

him more than some one else. But just as sure as a man has ever preached, it is just as sure that some one has been fed from that soul-lifting milk of the word. Now I want to say that there is such a thing as sincere milk of the word, but you just cannot say that it is something we can handle. The church is often spoken of as a woman in the Scriptures, but she is not equipped for nourishing children. The whole family is fed alike; every age of the church has the same appetite, the same desires, the same need. The apostle could not, and did not, claim anything except that which comes from the Spirit; the patriarch David was led and made to lie down; the "lot of the inheritance" was touched in the place that made him a cripple the balance of his life. Time and space would fail us to cite the cases of the different saints in all times that were helpless except when led by the Spirit and grace of God.

Preaching practical godliness is another favorite pastime of people that seem to fear too much strong meat. I do not know just what kind of godliness that is, anyway the Bible does not mention that kind as though you preached that kind when you wanted to preach to the babies, but that you had another brand for the old sheep. Anyway now if you were going to experiment about which were the nearest able, old soldiers of the cross of babes, to receive this "practical godliness business," do you not honestly believe that it would be better to preach it to the older ones than it would be to felling the little fellows about it? If a

thing is helpless, are you going to tell it to milk out the fatness and grow? Now I do not mean than either the older children of God, or any other saint can do a thing apart from the Grace of God. No, I am not in sympathy with this idea that we are progressive in complying with the admonitions laid down in the Scriptures. If we can do better as we go along it would mean that we could get sanctified after awhile and there would not be any need for grace.

Let us read the text again. Before we do let us look back at some of the things Peter has said. We, the children of God, are born again of an incorruptible seed, by the word of God which lives and abides forever. This word is the same word that was made flesh and dwelt among men. This is a scriptural birth and there is not any way under heaven to make the two births related: one being flesh, earthy, the other spiritual, heavenly; the first getting its supplies from perishing sources, the other from living, eternal. Every sinner born of this spirit, knows very little about it; he cannot tell with any degree of certainty, where it came from; he professes to know but little, if anything, about what is going to be the end of it all. I thought at one time that our inability to tell about this birth was at the time of its taking place, but the very language forbids any such interpretation. It says "so is everyone that is born of the spirit," and that covers the ground from the time on earth until we quit the walks of men. Now child, this word endures, it remains the same

yesterday, to-day, and forever. This birth is as lasting as the source from which it comes. But this flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass. The best thing about us as men is about as lasting and dependable as the grass and the bloom of it.

Now this text does not tell us to get to desiring the milk of the word. It is not a thing that we can preach (as though we could preach without the nourishment of the milk) to the little children of God, thinking that this is something the unlearned can do and understand, and that they can take hold of it better than they can the hard points of the gospel, but this is the only gospel that has ever been preached for "this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." This desire is in every heaven born soul; it is something given you in the birth, and has sin been taken out of our mortal bodies, instead of merely being condemned in the flesh, we would have never known the sorrow of warfare. There is in a wonderful sense two plants or at least two natures here, and this sincere milk of this living word causes, or makes, or produces, a growth in these new-born babes. I do not care how this is said as long as it is not a conditional growth. I do not want to strive about words nor to make any child of God an offender for a word, but I do want to, and, God being my helper I will, contend most

tenaciously that salvation is of the Lord. I will not say, and certainly do not believe, that this growth is in sin. I had as soon have any other rotten or blasphemous doctrine as to have the kind that would say that this milk of the word causes the children of God to grow in sin. But they grow in grace and in a knowledge of the truth. Just as long as they grow, they grow away from self. They are grown in nature: they are grown in sin, but how little in grace they feel to be. But that desire continues for the milk, and just as long as it continues, just that long will they be nurtured by it. Just as long as they are nurtured by it, they shall be growing. When they stop growing away from self, then they get strong in self. This old plant of nature will produce all kinds of wild fruit and bitter gourds, and sometimes it has a form of sweetness, (2 Tim. 3:5) but you had better watch it for it will even deny the power it comes from, claiming that bitter and sweet comes from the same place. Growing in ability to do the things of God, and growing in sin by this milk being given us, are neither caused by the milk but we are making manifest that we came into the world grown in nature, full of sin, completely under its power and influence. May it please Almighty God to give each child his portion in due season, that there be normal, healthy growth in the kingdom.

Elder W.D. Griffin

MEETINGS

**HOPEWELL PRIMITIVE
BAPTIST CHURCH**

The good Lord willing, our annual 5th weekend meeting will be held at Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church on June 28th through June 30th in Winnsboro, Texas. The Lord delights in the worship of His people. Psalm 149:1 states, *"Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints."* Verse 4 states, *"For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people. He will beautify the meek with salvation."* We cordially invite all who desire to humbly worship our sovereign Lord.

Jimmy Hamrick, Pastor
John Hamrick, Clerk

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The Staunton River Union meeting will be, the Lord willing, at Union Primitive Baptist Church, the 5th Sunday and Saturday before in June. The church is located on 605 off Rt. 40 and 799.

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

Raymond Goad, Pastor
Silas Payne, Clerk

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

The 1996 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-fifth 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,
Association 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

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR DECEMBER 1993

Mrs. Frank Sizemore, WV	10.00
Mrs. Erma C. Sowers, VA	2.00
J. Cline Chandler, NC	2.00
Mrs. Helen Teach, VA	30.00
Mrs. Ralph Lucas, VA	
In memory of Ralph Lucas	25.00
Mrs. Foye Cole, NC	2.00
Mrs. Carrie Jo Williams, TN	5.00
Mrs. Agnes Sutphins, VA	2.00
Alvis G. Beacham, NC	2.00
Joel S. Miles, FL	2.00
Mrs. Sarah Barker, VA	2.00
Eld. Walter B. Wilson, CA	7.00
George W. Hyslip, TN	10.00
Mrs. Virginia Apple, NC	2.00
Eld. Jesse A. Foreman, NC	2.00
Ila Leary, NC	5.00
W.L. Knight, NC	7.00
Mrs. Lois Cloud, AZ	10.00
Mrs. Ed Glidewell, NC	2.00
Mrs. Joyce Farley, TX	15.00

OBITUARIES

MARIE CANNADAY

It is with sadness that I attempt to write in memory of one I dearly loved. Sister Agnes Marie Dobbins Cannaday. She was born August 6, 1923 and died at her home October 28, 1995. She was preceded in death by her husband Brother Harry Cannaday in 1988.

Sister Marie was born to the late Peter and Audrey Dobbins Akers and raised by an aunt and uncle, Eula and Omen Whitlock. She was married to

Brother Harry Cannaday on December 26, 1942 and to this union was born three children: Brenda Gayle Cannaday, Harry Brammer Cannaday, Jr., and Roger Dale Cannaday, and five grandchildren.

Sister Marie and Brother Harry Cannaday joined Mt. Union Primitive Baptist Church on June 18, 1944 and were baptized by Elder Odell Thompson with their memberships at Paynes Creek Primitive Baptist Church in Floyd County. Both were firm believers in Salvation by Grace.

Sister Marie suffered through a lot of pain but as her body grew weaker, her faith grew stronger. Her funeral was held at Oakeys Funeral Chapel in Vinton on October 31, 1995. The service was led by her pastor, Elder Hale Terry, Elder Willard Cox, Elder Junior Conner, and Elder Lane Carter before a large audience of relatives and friends.

We believe our loss is her eternal gain.

Ora T. Nichols

DESSIE MAE CONNER

Sister Dessie Mae Conner was born January 2, 1911 and died March 4, 1996 making her stay here on earth 85 years. She was the daughter of the late Brother Guy and Nellie Conner. She is survived by one sister and brother-in-law, Sister Aldene and Brother Thomas Nichols; one brother and sister-in-law, Alvin and Attaway Conner and a step-mother, Sister Ora R. Conner.

She has been a member of Salem Church since October 24, 1965, attending church as much as her afflictions would allow. I shall never forget the day that Sister Dessie was baptized. The wind was blowing with snow flurries and I was freezing but not our dear sister. She came from the water rejoicing greatly and there wasn't a chill bump on her. I truly felt the Lord's presence there that day. Just a few weeks before her death, an angel visited her in a dream. Before he left the angel told her that he would be back for her.

Funeral services were held at Salem Church by Elders Leonard Brammer, W. J. Conner and Larry Hollandsworth. She was laid to rest in the Restvale Cemetery. We feel our loss is her eternal gain.

Written by request of Salem Church by one who loved her.

Mary Poff

GUY HENRY HUNDLEY

In memory of Brother Guy Henry Hundley, who departed this life January 4, 1996, having lived for 87 years.

He was born September 13, 1908, in the Swansonville Community of Pittsylvania County, VA (Dry Fork, VA). He was the son of James Henry Hundley and Minta Oakes Hundley.

He was never married and was the last of his generation.

He lived at the Hundley Home Place and farmed there all his adult life, with the help of his sister, Lillye Claire Hundley. They also took care of their parents as long as they lived.

He joined Strawberry Primitive Baptist Church on December 31, 1955 and was a faithful member and a firm believer in Salvation by Grace.

Brother Guy became disabled and could not live by himself. He was very fortunate to have a dear and compassionate couple (Len and Christine Herndon) to take him into their home and care for him. His condition improved so much, he was able to attend his church regular for several years prior to his death.

The last of November, 1995, his health began to fail and he was admitted to the hospital. He realized his condition was worsening, so he talked with his pastor, when he was visiting him, and told him he would be leaving this world soon. He told his pastor he loved him and loved his church and friends. He passed away shortly after that.

His funeral was conducted at Swicegood Funeral Home, Danville, VA on Saturday, January 6, 1996 and was buried in highland Burial Park, Danville, beside his family to await the coming of his Blessed Savior. His funeral was conducted by his Pastor, Elder Thomas Solomon.

He is greatly missed by his friends and church. We feel our loss

Written by:
Sister Gertie C. Holley, Clerk

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

SONG

*SWEET was the time when first I felt
The Saviour's pardoning blood
Applied to cleanse my soul from guilt,
And bring me home to God.*

*Soon as the morn the light revealed,
His praises tuned my tongue;
And, when the evening shades
prevailed,
His love was all my song.*

*In vain the tempter spread his wiles,
The world no more could charm:
I lived upon my Saviour's smiles,
And leaned upon his arm.*

*In prayer my soul drew near the Lord,
And saw his glory shine;
And when I read his holy word,
I called each promise mine.*

*Then to his saints I often spoke
Of what his love had done;
But now my heart is almost broke,
For all my joys are gone.*

*Now when the evening shade prevails,
My soul in darkness mourns;
And when the morn the light reveals,
No light to me returns.*

*My prayers are now a chattering
noise,
For Jesus hides his face!
I read, the promise meets my eyes,
But will not reach my case.*

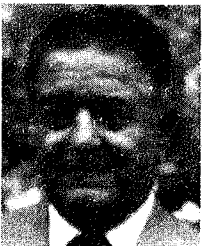
*Now Satan threatens to prevail,
And make my soul his prey;
Yet, Lord, thy mercies cannot fail,
O, come without delay!*

Newton.

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EDITORIAL



ELDER C.C. WILBANKS

*"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
soul. For my yoke is easy, and my
burden is light."*

The one who spake these words is the same one who said, *"Let there be light, and there was light"*: the one who said unto his apostles, *"Follow me, and I will make you*

fishers of men," and they immediately left all and followed him. Every child of God who has been born again and taught of the Holy Spirit of truth knows this is a commandment, not an invitation as taught by unregenerate men of the world. The world does not know the truth, *"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."* John 14:17. I do not purpose to cast stones at any one's religion or beliefs, but only desire to point out errors, and rightly divide the word of truth, using the holy scriptures as the truth, and praying that God will direct my every thought.

There was a time in my early life when I believed this was an invitation to lost sinners, and I tried to persuade others to accept this invitation. I laboured long with them, but I was not heavy laden, for I felt sure that my salvation was secure. There came a time, however, that I was made to see that I was a sinner, perhaps a chief sinner among sinners, and totally lost. That was the time when I truly began to labour and became heavy laden. I sought with all the powers of my mind to find a way, something I might do, to make myself acceptable to God so that he would forgive my sins. I believed that forgiveness of sins was all that was necessary. The more I tried, however, the worse I became. I felt sure that hell was my eternal destiny and that God would be just in his judgment of me. I think I prayed often for relief of the burden that I carried.

Relief did not come suddenly as it has to many others, but there was a gradual awakening, as I hope. Within myself I believe I heard Jesus say, "*Come unto me.*" My labours ceased, and I began to cry and beg, for I was made to see that my labours were useless. I had come to the end, and had no place to go but to Christ. Is this the way it was with you? Eventually I was given to see that Jesus had already accomplished what I had laboured so hard to do for myself. I cannot say when I was given a little hope in Christ, as I hope, but on the day that I asked the church for a home with them and was baptized, there was a rejoicing in my soul that I had never experienced before, a rejoicing that was impossible for me to describe. I understood very little, if any, of the doctrine they believed and preached, but I had loved them for a long time. Unworthy as I felt to be among them, I was given a desire to live the rest of my life with them; a desire I could not resist. I was soon tempted to believe that I was deceived and had deceived the brethren. When at meetings I often sat by myself, not wishing to pollute them with my vileness. I still feel unworthy of their fellowship, but as long as they will let me I hope to live with them. I told them of my unworthy feelings and was surprised to learn that they also felt unworthy. Their fellowship became my chief joy. The scripture that says, "*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren,*" took hold upon me, and I greatly rejoiced for some time. Then came doubts and I wondered if I

truly loved them, or was deceived. Yet, if the feeling I have in my heart is not true love for them I am totally deceived.

"*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.*" I do not believe any man can of his own power or desire take this yoke upon himself. This is the yoke of Christ, and it is he who must put it on whom he will. When in the flesh a man will resist this yoke, but, "*Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.*" Rom 8:9. The yoke of Christ is not put on the natural man, for, "*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.*" 1 Cor. 2:14. Before a man is born again of the Spirit he is yoked together with unbelievers, and he is quite satisfied this way. But when the Spirit is come into his heart and teaches him, he is turned into a new path. The old yoke is broken and a new yoke is put upon him. He knew something about the Lord before. but now he is taught OF him, for the Spirit of Christ must do the teaching.

"*For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*" I know from experience that a man will resist having this yoke put upon him because of his feeling of unworthiness and fear. He will use every excuse he can find, but finds that none of them avails him any thing; for God hath said, "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*" And, "*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" Who can successfully resist the will of God? After being made willing, one finds that the

yoke is indeed easy and the burden light. Why does he find it to be so? Because he is yoked together with Christ, (and not unequally yoked with unbelievers,) and it is he that bears the heavy load, and gives us the strength to bear what we must. Jesus said, *"Without me ye can do nothing."* Paul said, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* And Job said, *"But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? What his soul desireth, even that he doeth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him."*

The chosen children of God are the mystical body of Christ, which is his church. Christ is the head of the body and the children are the members of his body. God has set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased him, and there must be no schism in the body. One member cannot say to another member, I have no need of thee. Even those who seem to be more feeble are necessary. And on those members, whom we think to be less honourable, we bestow more honour. (See 1 Cor. ch.12.) Every member must perform the work that is laid upon him from above, for God has tempered the body together, that there should be no schism in it; but that we should have the same care one for another. Paul wrote, *"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."* The things that were laid upon Paul are examples of the things laid upon us. Regardless of

what is laid upon us, we must do. As Paul said, *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."*

Beloved brethren, you have found, or will find, as I believe I have, that there is a reward in willingly doing that which is laid upon you. I did not say you would receive a reward for doing it: for the reward or blessing is in doing it. Yea, and it is in righteousness that ye do it, for the work of the Lord is in righteousness. Men of the world may persecute you for righteousness' sake, but, *"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of God."* What a holy blessing this is!

Brethren, the works that we do must be of faith, but, *"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."* Also, if our works be not of faith, they are dead works. It is said by the world that we must exercise our faith by works, but we find that it is faith that exercises us. What is faith, and how do we obtain it? *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* And, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."* It is in the finished work of Jesus that we have faith and hope. Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say*

unto you, 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 to my Father." He said that we shall do the works that he does, not different or greater works than he, but the same works. It is he that does all the works, and the works are made manifest through us, if we believe. How do we believe? *"Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."* Christ was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. In all of our afflictions he was afflicted, he carried us all the days of old, and in his love and in his pity he redeemed us. It pleased the LORD to bruise him, to put him to grief and make his soul an offering for sin. (Isa 53rd ch.). Christ was crucified upon the cross of Calvary. He suffered, bled and laid down his life for his people, and "by one offering he hath perfected for ever them who are sanctified." Jude wrote to those who are sanctified, saying, *"To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints."* We should study the scriptures and contend for the truth found there as revealed by the Holy Ghost, and not accept what worldly men may teach, regardless of how pleasing and tempt-

ing it may sound. This exhortation is needed as much now, or maybe more so, than it was then. If we have been born again of the Holy Spirit there is now two principles within our one body. Paul refers to them as the "old man" and the "new man". The "old man" has the evil, sinful nature inherited from our federal head Adam, and the "new man" is holy and righteous, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Because of these opposing principles there is a continual war within us, *"for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things that we would."* When we would do good, we find that evil is with us, therefore we cannot find how to do that which is good. Yet we are admonished not to walk after the things of the flesh, for the works of the flesh are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, etc... Against all such things there is a law, but there is no law against the fruits of the Spirit which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. *"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."* We are tempted by the lusts of our flesh daily, but. *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."*

Brethren, let us not yield to the lusts of our flesh, but seek the escape pro-

vided of God through the Spirit. *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye thru the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* When we are tempted, let us pray, *"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but 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."* What a blessing it is to be able to go to God in prayer in our times of need!

Brethren, rest for our souls is found in Christ Jesus our Lord. When he says, *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you,"* I believe we should and will ask, seek, and find. John said, *"Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then we have confidence in God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him and he in him. And we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."*

Brethren, rest for our souls is in our God given faith that his Holy Spirit

now dwells within us, and that he will come again and receive us unto himself, and that we shall hear these precious words from his lips, *"Come, ye blessed of my Father. inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

Brethren, I have not written the things that I had purposed to write before I began, but I have written the things that have come to mind, and I hope and trust they have been given from above. May he bless the truth herein, and pardon my errors. Praise God's holy name, and pray for this poor sinner when blessed to be at his throne of grace.

Eld. C.C. Wilbanks

CORRESPONDENCE

Route 1, Box 101
Willis, VA 24380
June 3, 1996

Dear Elder Williams:

It is again time to renew my subscription to "The Signs of the Times". Please renew for two years and use the remainder where needed.

I look forward to getting my "Signs" each month. I enjoy the correspondence of the brethren and wish more people would write.

Although I am afflicted with MS and am steadily getting more disabled I feel, yet, to be richly blessed. God blesses me from time to time to think on Him and Heavenly things. He gives

me a heart to be thankful that things are as well with me as they are.

I need your prayers and the prayers of the brethren everywhere.

A sister in hope,
Margaret H. Quesenberry

ARTICLES

GENESIS - CHAPTER 1, VERSE 31.

"And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

Now, there are at least two, different interpretations, of what God meant, in the above quoted Scripture; and especially, in those words, - (and, behold, it was very good.) Now, if God's will, let us prayerfully consider, those two different interpretations, while particular noticing, those words used, by both groups of people; who differ so greatly, in their interpretations, or beliefs; - First, let us hear, some of those words or sayings, used, by those whom we refer too, as the worldly religionist; who profess to believe that; God is in dire need, of mans help, in His efforts, to save the souls of all mankind, whom He loved them every one. Therefore, if we are to assume, that the grouping of their words, has meaning; it would seem that, there is but one conclusion to arrive at; and that being thusly; they

interpret His words, - (very good), in the above quoted verse; as, applying to man himself, as being very good; and even so, following after, Adam and Eve had transgressed God's Holy Law. Of which, would amount to no less than their denial of God's word, when He said, - Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated; when neither of them had as yet been born, to know good or evil. Also, a denial of God's word, when He said, - He had chosen His people, through His Son, out of the world; and that, from before the foundation of the world. Also, a denial of the function or working, of God the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit. And a denial of the Almighty power and preeminence, of the very Holy and Righteous God Himself; and of His every word of Holy truth. And further - more is; a denial of what the Holy word sayeth, concerning, why Christ the Lord did come into this world FOR; and DID accomplish, while He were here; and, in Holy truth is, a denial of that very Holy true Principal; wherein lieth every pure meaning, of every Holy word, ever spoken or inspired, by the three-in-one God; God the Father, God the Son or word, and God the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit.

Now, let us take notice of that other, but smaller, group, and of what they profess, practice, walk and speak; as God may be pleased so to enable them. Now this smaller group, are known, amongst themselves; as, Old School, or Primitive Baptist, or Predestinarian Baptist; of which mean one and the same thing, in principal of doctrine; wherein does embrace (first

of all) that, God is, ever was, and ever will be, the One and only Almighty, Self existent, all in all, infinite God; of all knowledge, wisdom, truth, Holiness and Righteousness; who is full of, never depleting grace and mercy; of which, He has and does, shed upon His children; whom He chose for Himself; from before the foundation of the world. That in Him, is truth and life and light eternally. That He is the Creator, and Dispenser, of all things outside Himself; just as His pleasure is; to either sustain, keep for Himself; or destroy; and that, He does hold it all in His hand, to do with, as His pleasure so to do. That He holds and controls all power, both in heaven and earth, and that none can stay His hand or say what doeth Thou. That His infinite wisdom and knowledge, is limitless, and eternally in His presence; and so, therein is absolute assurance; that, whatsoever He now knoweth; He has ever known; and therefore, there is no new thing, for Him to ever become aware of; and so, making it impossible, that He ever be surprised. That His allotted time for this world to stand, be in ten thousand, a hundred thousand, or a million or more years; yet, it is but a day, within an everlasting eternity, with God. For He is the eternal God, without beginning or ending; He never sleeps, and His eyes see all things, at all times, and eternally has; and so, there can come no new thing, with Him. He has forever, clearly seen, and fully known, every scintilla, of all, what does ever be or take place, in all time and eternity. He is everywhere present, and no where absent; He

covers all the limitless universe; and yet, He enters the very heart and soul, of His little children. He is in need of nothing, for He has all things in His hands, to do with as He pleases; and so, mankind, has nothing of his own, to offer him; of which, He would not accept; if offered; for all that man handles is filthy; and furthermore; God will accept no thing or nothing, what He Himself did not prepare, in its entirety. God is the Giver, of every good and perfect gift, unto His Chosen people. May we be kept mindful; it is "God," and not man; to look to, for our every good and perfect gift. Even though, we receive a good gift through a man; yet still, may we be reminded that, that man was given the mind and desire, to do that very thing. It may be well, to thank that man; but, keeping in mind, God is the one, who brought it all into being; and so, is worthy of all honor and praise. I am reminded of, - Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. (704 in Lloyd's Hymn book.) Of which wordings, have many times, coincided with my own feelings; and with a desire, that I might be enabled to, in Holy truth, do as those words say. But I readily confess to this truth, - without God, I can do nothing; not ever naturally; much less Spiritually. For of my own fleshly self, I am just a poor self-helpless sinner; and in that state of being, I know nothing as I ought. but feel that surely, the Lord has done for me; that, which is impossible with man; For I feel, I was shown enough,

of what the carnal fleshly man consists of; that I just simply must not, place my confidence in the flesh of man; and especially that of my own self. Therefore, to my feelings; that good and very good, recorded in Genesis 1:31, was and is, - that very good "God" accomplished, in His work of creating and making all things, in exact accord with His will, purpose and pleasure.

It is within the bound of my hope, I could be one among His little children; I say, Dear Brethren in the Lord; do with this writing, as your mind leads you; and all will be well.

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

"MY LITTLE HOPE"

My desire is, if the Lord directs me,
To pen a few lines, that you may see,
How He who suffered bled and died,
Heard when my heart so piteously
cried.

"O Lord Jesus", I could only say,
"Have mercy, or I must die".
Soon I that awful debt must pay,
with none to hear my wailing cry."

This prayer for many a day was mine,
While not one ray of light did shine;
"O Lord I am a sinner great,
But surely, surely I have a mate."

"Did deliverance then come?," you say;
No! No! there was a sad delay;
For I must yet realize that state
When I should feel to have no mate.

And soon, yes soon, this hour came,
"A greater sinner, Lord, I can not name;
"Reveal thyself to me, I pray,
Or in this world I can not stay."

When I arose and looked above,
I saw a large and lovely face;
Then all within my heart was love,
I then did feel His pardoning grace.

My burden at once was taken away,
My song was changed to praise;
"Oh! now I feel I can truly say,
Jesus has died my poor soul to raise."

Before this a desire to go to the church
I'd had,
Even while my burden was so heavy
and sad;
But knowing I wasn't fit nor ready to
go,
I resolutely said to myself, "No! no!

To some extent this impression
passed away.
After I felt Jesus was my head and
stay;
Oh! surely this was enough for a while.
To have a sweet hope that I was a
child.

But once again came the desire of my
heart,
To go to the church and tell them a
part,

Of what I hope the Lord had done for
my soul,
Asking with those dear ones to be
enrolled.

Though feeling so little, so unworthy
so weak,
I found myself in the pulpit trying to
speak;
There among the friends I felt to love
best,
Seeking a place in that warm nest.

The vote was taken, I was received,
Ah! how my heart was then relieved;
Yet one thing none my soul did crave,
That I might be buried in the liquid
grave.

In August 1922, on a very beautiful
day,
Beneath the waves our pastor my form
did lay,
Oh, when I was raised, I was carried
so high,
Was ever a mortal so happy as I!

Now, Brethren sisters and friends,
One I loved this feeble call;
As on it's journey time trends,
If it be God's will, may He bless you all.

I ask an interest in the prayers of all,
That my race I may well run;
In behalf, dear ones, to Him please
call,
Of your little sister, Ethel Jefferson.

Ethel Jefferson.

BAPTISM

I, being burdened for some-
time past, attempt to pen a
few words at last, on the sacred burial
in the liquid grave, 'Tis sweet and
good but does not save.

One graved example I now behold,
Jesus meeting John where great Jor-
dan rolled; There demanding baptism
He who was sinless.

*"For it becometh us to fulfill all
righteousness."*

Then John into the water our Sav-
iour led, Baptized Him, who coming
out straightway, Rec'd the Spirit, as a
dove, upon His head, "I am well
pleased a voice was heard to say.

The water baptism doesn't save us
at all, Salvation's by Jesus to all whom
He will call. We must be baptized by
fire and the Holy Ghost. None of our
works save us lest any man should
boast.

Baptism, by and of the called of
God, is a very lovely and sacred view
to me, It manifests a death to the joys
of this sinful clod,

An answer toward God of a con-
science that's free.

Composed by,
Ethel Jefferson,
Elawsville, Va.

*This was printed in
Zion's Landmark in 1924.*

VOICES OF THE PAST

**MEDITATIONS ON THE
TEMPLE OF SOLOMON**


or sometime I have had a mind to write on the scriptures at the head of this article, but as I have said many times, that if preaching or writing is profitable to the household of faith, it must first be taught in our experience, by the Son of God, and then revealed, or brought to our remembrance by the Holy Ghost. Jno. 14:26.

When someone is talking or writing about a great person he is very apt to inquire in his mind, who is this man? Where did he come from? Who was his father and mother? Where did his ancestors come from? In answer to some of the above questions, may I add that according to Holy writ, Solomon was the son of David who was king of Israel; his mother was Eliam's daughter and the wife of Uraih the Hittite. It may be of interest to the readers to know that David had Uriah put in the forefront of the battle, so that he was smitten. Then David took Uriah's wife to be his wife, and she was Solomon's mother. His grandfather was named Jesse, and his ancestors were of this same notable family Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

I have regarded Solomon, in many respects, as being a type of Christ. First, he possessed more wisdom than any other man, and if my memory serves correctly we are told that none shall come after him that is as wise as

he. Second, he was a kind and gentle ruler over all of Israel, and rendered just and righteous decisions before the people.

"In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, ask what I shall give thee." 1 Kgs. 3:5. Solomon prayed to God to "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people, that I may discern between the good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people." "And the speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing." So the Lord did not only give him wisdom, but riches and honor also.

When I was a boy I read this scripture and I thought that it was a matter of choice for which he could ask. (Of course it was a matter of choice, but not in the sense which I thought). I had an idea he could ask for riches, wisdom, honor or anything of his own choosing. In other words, I thought it was about like this: if I should go to town and buy several presents and say to my little girl take any one that you want, and in all probability, I would not know which one she would take before she made her selection. I also thought that I certainly would have asked for riches, then I could discharge all my obligations and probably give a little to the poor, but make sure that I would reserve a sufficient amount for future use, and there is but little doubt in my mind but that Solomon would have asked for riches had he been possessed with a carnal mind at the time.

But ah! How different do I look at the scene now. Does God ever put the burden of prayer in your heart, before He first makes you feel the need of the thing that he purposes to give you? Can we pray for mercy before we feel the need of mercy? Can we pray for help before we feel the need of help? Solomon felt the need of wisdom more than anything else, for he was now beginning to reign in the place of the father David, and he was conscious of the fact that many perplexing problems would arise among the people, which would require the guiding hand of God; therefore, he said, *"Give thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people that I may discern between the good and bad."*

Dear servants of God, have you not had the same experience as Solomon did, many times in your feeble efforts in serving as a servant among the people of God? I know that my dear wife and I have felt this to a great extent in our family circle, in the rearing of our children.

Before I was married I thought that I knew all about rearing children, and I had a fixed rule in my mind that I would follow, which was something like this. If I ever married a wife and any children were born in our family, I would use the lash in making any corrections, but ah! how mistaken I was. May I say that if your child knows nothing but the rod of correction laid on his or her back every time he does something wrong, you have a poorly brought up child, for I have learned by experience that it takes a great deal of patience, kindness and teaching,

mixed with firmness, to get the proper respect and confidence of our children in order that they may obey from a standpoint of love rather than fear.

When our boys grew up into the teen age, they would come around and say, *"Father, I want your car to go to a ball game, picture show or some worldly amusement."* My preference was that they be content not to go, but I began to realize that I was once a boy and I enjoyed parties and dances and I wanted them to have reasonable privileges with other boys, lest they think that their mother and I were too strict on them. But the great problem was this; when they repeated this request, which I thought, was too often, shall I say yes, or shall I say no, and for fear that I was not in the frame of mind to make a proper decision I would say, go and ask your mother, and she would say, go back and ask your father. We have often been brought into a great strait in making up our minds, and many times we said, *"Oh, Lord, decide this matter for us, that we may train our children up in the way that they should go that when they get old they will not depart from it."* The same has been true regarding our girls.

One notable circumstance which was brought before King Solomon was the case of two women who lived in the same house and each gave birth to a child about three days apart. One of the women overlaid her child and it died. About the midnight hour she laid the dead baby in the bed of the other woman and took the living child and

claimed it as her own; the other woman awoke in the morning to give her child suck, and upon finding that she had been defrauded of her child she made complaint to the other woman that the living child was hers; but the other contended that the living child was hers. In as much as they could not settle the matter they brought the case before the highest tribunal on earth. So Solomon heard the testimony of each, both testifying that the living child was hers. No other witnesses were present, which of course made it much harder to decide. I am sure that nothing short of divine wisdom could render a righteous verdict in this case. May I repeat again that King Solomon had prayed and said, *"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart that I may judge between the good and the bad."* He said to his servant *"Bring me a sword,"* which they did, and the King said, *"Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other, then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my Lord, give her the living child and in no wise slay it. But the other said, let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. She is the mother thereof."* 1 Kings 3:25-27.

This one decision was published abroad throughout the land, and the people feared him, for they saw that the hand of God was with him. The vast number of horses and chariots,

and the great number of beasts that were slain each day to satisfy the hunger of those of his household, and the men servants and maid servants that were in attendance at his command, are beautiful types of the bountiful storehouse of our Great Emanuel, who sits upon His throne and metes out justice and mercy to all of his poor, hungry, and tempest tossed children. As Solomon was Governor over all of Israel who would say that God does not govern the universe, from the huge monsters down to the smallest insect. For He has said in His word that *"The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains and the wild beast of the fields are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell thee: for the world is mine and the fulness thereof."* Psa. 50: 10-12. But ah! before we can fully realize the truth of this we have to be brought down from our throne of self-works and self-righteousness, then we can appreciate the true value of this inspired word. When the great King Nebuchadnezzar was dismounted from his throne and was made to eat grass like oxen *"and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until his hairs were grown like eagle feathers and his nails like birds' claws."* Dan. 5:33. Then he could say with a true and understanding heart that *"all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and He, God, 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.

I can appreciate and sympathize with our brethren when they get in a low state, and the Lord seems to hide His face. We see so many of the dear fathers and mothers passing out and so few joining the church to fill the vacancies. We often wonder and feel that we have been remiss in our duty. Such has been my own feeling many times. When we are brought to this low ebb, and darkness enshrouds our souls it is then that Satan makes his worst attacks, but when the day dawns and we are again illuminated by the Holy Spirit, the evil one flees like the darkness before the beaming sun. And as these Temanites were a great pest in the life of Job, you may be sure that they will pester you. How good it is to remember the words of the inspired apostle which was directed by the Holy Ghost, *"and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:47.*

The eagle is a faint type of the church and I would not say that during her molting season that she is entirely free from her prey, but when she feathers out she soars high above the clouds. The old prophet Elias, was reduced to a low state when he made intercession to God against Israel saying, *"Lord they have killed thy prophets and digged down thine alters! and I am left alone, and they seek my life."* But what saith God unto him? *"I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed their knee to the image of*

Baal." And the Apostle Paul referred to this and said, *"Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Rom. 11:5.* Jesus said, *"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12: 32.*

I will now attempt, if God is willing to explain what I see in the scripture at the head of this article. *"Wisdom has builded her house."* The house which Solomon built was to my mind a type of the heavenly Church which the Lord has or is building, for He said, *"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16:18.*

This house was not so large, according to the dimensions, but it was an expensive one. It took one hundred fifty-three thousand and three hundred men, seven years to build it. Cedar and stone were the principle materials that were used in the construction of this building. Cedar is a highly typical material, because of its long life and preserving qualities. It kept the moths out, and the stones made it burglar proof, which compares favorably to the language of Jesus. *"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 or rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal." Matt. 6: 19-20.*

These trees were hewn out chiefly by the servants of Hiram from the cedars of Lebanon. Each piece of material was so minutely dressed out, we are told that *"neither hammers nor ax, not any tool of iron was heard in the house, while it was in building."* 1 Kgs. 6:7. As the type so is the reality, when the Lord began His work you were in the forest of nature. *"And were by nature the children of wrath even as others."* Eph. 2:3. He first cut you down, and each stroke was indeed necessary, in order to hew off the roughage, straighten you out and make you fit meat for the Master's use. The reader may inquire, "Have I been properly dressed out?" I have said that this is a fairly good rule by which to tell. If we are back-biting, fault-finding, contending about trifling things, and striving about words of no profit, among and with our brethren, it is good evidence that a few more knots need to be slabbed off, which God alone can do.

Long before you united with the church you may have thought that there were certain members on the inside you could not fellowship, but ah! how different when you were carried there on the wings of God's love. There was then no thought in your mind of "Who can I fellowship," but the great wonder now is, who can fellowship me? How good if we could always be possessed with this spirit.

Several years ago I had an appointment at a church during the week. Upon approaching the ground, several brethren gathered around me and said, "Brother Adams, there is a man

here that we want you to encourage to unite with the church. I said, "What is his reason for staying out." They said that he stated that there was a member that he could not fellowship. My reply was, "You had better let him alone until God completes His work with the hewing ax." About two years later, the unworthy writer was present when his brother came pleading for a home and was happily received into the fold.


It will be noticed that when these timbers were hewn out that they were floated to Joppa by way of the sea. The word "sea" often when used in the scriptures signifies trouble. We see the waves and billows as they roll to the shore. David said, *"All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me."* Psa. 42:7. Dear child of God, have you ever felt any of those waves and billows come over you, while you are floating by the way of the sea? If so, be not discouraged, for our God has spoken by the mouth of His Apostles and said, *"We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God."* Acts 14:22. The materials that were used in the construction of this building was not dead, rotten or decayed materials. They were sound and seasoned materials. So is the Church of God. She is built out of living materials, living by reason of Christ who lives in her. Peter said, *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,"* 1 Pet. 2:5. Which is in harmony with the testimony of the Apostle Paul, *"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ*

himself, being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Eph. 2:20-21.

Elder T.F. Adams

Sent in by Sister A.E. Hailinger

ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION

 ur Standard Lexicon defines absolute to mean, in its literal, or general sense, free, independent of anything extraneous. 2. Complete it itself; positive, as an absolute declaration. 3. Unconditional; as an absolute promise. 4. Existing independent of another cause; as, God is absolute. 5. Unlimited by extraneous power or control; as an absolute government or prince. 6. Not relative; as absolute space. See Webster's definition. As this word is nowhere used in the Scriptures to qualify the word Predestination, we will not contend for it, especially as the word predestination when rightly understood needs no such qualification, as it cannot be otherwise than absolute. We merely use the word absolute to distinguish our views of predestination from those who, while they admit that the term is frequently used in the Scriptures, deny its plain and obvious meaning, as though it were only vaguely used by the inspired writers, without any positive or unequivocal meaning.

On the signification of the word predestination, our brother is correct; it means foreordination by an unchangeable purpose. But the grand

question on which we are principally at issue, is, whether the predestination of God extends to the wicked actions of men or devils. We have rejoiced greatly in the firm belief, that God's government is universal, that there is not a sparrow or a worm, but is found in his decree. That sin, and death, and hell are under his control, so that the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain. If the Scriptures do not authorize us so to believe, we know not at what hour we may fall a prey to the unbridled rage of the enemies of God and of his people. If the divine government of Jehovah only extends to the good conduct of his creatures, his government is much more limited in regard to this world, than we had supposed, for he has informed us that there is none that doeth good; no not one. But that he has set limits to the wicked men, we should infer from his declaration, "I have formed the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and bringeth forth an instrument for his work; I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." - Isa. liv. 16, 17. If God has created the smith, and the waster, to destroy, and so limited their operations that they cannot go beyond his decree, and if this is a part of the heritage of his servants, they cannot yield it without marring their inheritance. We confess that to us this part

of the saints' inheritance is too valuable to be sold for a mess of pottage. Paul has said, that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; and God has told us, by the mouth of Isaiah, that he has declared the end from the beginning, &c., "saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravening bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass, I have purposed it, I will also do it." How unmeaning would all this language be to us in the absence of predestination! The end declared from the beginning, and yet not determined in the mind or purpose of God, how preposterous! We cannot believe that our God would declare a thing beforehand that he was undecided upon, and which might be quite different from what he had declared; and if he has only declared what he had determined on, that is the most absolute predestination that we have any knowledge of. This predetermination of events extends throughout all the intervening space, from the beginning to the end, and consequently embraces all things. When wicked men conspired against the life and liberty of Joseph, and against the predestination of his and their own destiny, as signified by Joseph's dreams, they intended evil, but God intended all for good. If God had not previously intended to harden Pharaoh's heart, he would not have told Moses that he would do so. If he had not predestinated that the children of Israel should sojourn in a strange land, and be af-

flicted by the Egyptians four hundred years, he certainly would not have told Abram so; read Gen. xv. 12-16. Let it be remembered that God told Abram this long before either the children of Israel or the Egyptians, who were to be concerned in it, were born, and the things which the Egyptians were to do to the children of Israel were such, as God told Abram he would judge and punish them for.

The Son of God was delivered into the hands of wicked men, that they should, with wicked hands, do to him what God's hand and counsel had before determined to be done. He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

Paul writes to the Thessalonians concerning the manifestation of that wicked people, whom the Lord would destroy, and says,

God will send them strong delusions that they may believe a lie, that all may be damned, &c. God said by the mouth of Isaiah, that he would choose their delusions. This is solid Bible testimony, and it is what he intended to express by the words absolute predestination. And pray brother, what objection have you to it? Would you wish the right, the power, or the government of God to be circumscribed? Would you wish to restrict his government, and confine his dominion to good people and their good works and leave the powers of darkness to rage at random, without the restraint of God's predestinating decrees? Are you fearful that this view reflects upon the purity and holiness of God? But why these fears? Are not

the inspired Scriptures sufficiently guarded to secure the honor of their supreme Author? If not, all our attempts to supply the supposed deficiency, will be as vain, if not as presumptive, as Uzzah's attempt to protect the ark of God. Because God controls, restrains, overrules and disposes of all beings, and all events, precisely as he eternally designed to do, it does not by all means follow that he is the fountain from whence impurity proceeds. He is perfectly holy, just and good; but he has all power to set bounds and limits to that which is unholy, unjust and wicked. If it be admitted that God now has power to restrain the wickedness of men and devils, according to his sovereign pleasure, and that he is immutable, then it follows, that he always had that power. If it be denied that he has that power, where is the safety of his church? Of if he has now a perfect knowledge of all beings and of all events, then he must always have had that knowledge. It certainly does not become us to say that either his wisdom, holiness, prescience or power, are at fault, that he has allowed his creatures to rebel against his government, when he had power and wisdom enough to have prevented it, if it had been his pleasure so to have done. We do not charge our brother, nor those brethren who are associated with him, with attempting to limit Jehovah, or set bounds for him to be governed by, but we would give and take the admonition, "*Be still and know that he is God.*" If we cannot comprehend him, it still is our privilege to confide in him, for he is too

wise to err, and too good to do that which is wrong.

We have no disposition to press our views on those who do not understand the Scriptures as we do, on every subject. But we wish all our readers to understand that we do as firmly believe, and as greatly rejoice in the doctrine of Predestination, and its extension to everything in heaven, earth and hell, as we do in any other part of divine revelation.

Middletown, N.Y., July 1, 1855

Elder Gilbert Beebe

"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. —PSALM lxii. 5.

BELIEVE that the Lord, before he ever communicates a real blessing to the souls of his poor and needy children, not merely convinces them by the Spirit of the depth of their poverty, of their truly ruined and lost state by nature, of the destitution of everything good in them; but he opens their eyes in a mysterious manner to see certain blessings which are stored up in Christ; for instance, righteousness to cover their nakedness, blood to atone for their transgressions, grace to superabound over all the aboundings of sin, faith to be the evidence of things not seen, hope to anchor within the veil, and love to be a foretaste of eternal bliss. These and similar blessings the Lord presents before their eyes, and gives them a spiritual understanding that these mercies are stored up in Christ; and as he gives them this perception

of what the blessing is, and shews them that these blessings are not in the creature, but in Christ, he draws forth the desires and sighs and ardent affections of their souls after these blessings so that nothing but these special mercies can really satisfy them, ease their minds, assuage their troubles, bind up their wounds, and pour oil and wine into their conscience. And thus he brings them to be suppliants, he lays them at his feet as beggars. Yet, base though they feel themselves to be, black though they know they are, there is that mysterious attraction of the Spirit, as well as that mysterious fitting together of their poverty and Christ's righteousness, their nakedness and Christ's justifying robe, their helplessness and his almighty strength, that they never can be satisfied, unless an experienced and enjoyed union of the two takes place in their conscience.

"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."—EPHESIANS ii. 22.

THESE words will apply both to the whole body of Christ viewed collectively, and to each separate member of that body viewed individually; and what the Church of God is in its completeness in Christ, as it will be in heaven above, and what it is in its visible and militant state on earth now, so is every individual member of that Church in this time state; and it is this solemn truth which makes the words before us to have such a forcible application to every individual believer. As we shall all have to answer for our-

selves, "to die," as one said, "alone," and as religion is a personal matter, how careful should it make each individual believer so to walk before God and man that he may have both an inward and outward evidence that his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19), and that he is a habitation of God by the Spirit. If he realises this, and lives under its solemn weight and influence, how careful he will be not to defile that body which is the temple of the Holy Ghost; how desirous and anxious not to defile his eyes by wandering lusts, nor his ears by listening to worldly and carnal conversation, nor his lips by speaking guile, or indulging in light and frothy talk, nor his hands by putting them to anything that is evil, nor his feet by running on errands of vanity and folly, but to view his body as a member of Christ (1 Cor. vi. 15), and therefore sanctified to his service and to his glory.

J.C. Philpot

MEETINGS

PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Pigg River Association will convene the Lord willing; with Little Hope Church; as the host church. The meeting place will be at Republican Church in Franklin County, to begin on Friday before the first Sunday in August. (Aug. 2nd, 3rd & 4th).

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 the 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 yards - cross railroad tracks, bear right - you will be on route 623 - (Ingramville Rd.); turn left on rout 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 MARCH 1996

- Burnell Williams, VA 2.00
- Ms. Tina Walker, MS 7.00
- Mrs. Doloris Weatherford, VA 2.00
- Hoyt Sparks, Overseas 35.00
- Gene H. Lupton, VA 7.00
- Richard Stegall, VA 2.00
- Claudis Tucker, LA 2.00
- Charlie Alston, NC 2.00
- Mrs. Betty H. Lovitte, NC 2.00
- Mrs. Emma Mitchell, VA 7.00
- Mrs. Edrie Clifton, VA 2.00
- Eld. Fred Neikirk, FL 2.00
- Whitney Mobley, NC 10.00
- Mrs. Patsy Mitchell, TX 2.00
- Mr. & Mrs. J.B. Neely, AR 2.00
- L.D. Goard, VA 4.00
- J.E. Fortner, TX 7.00
- Raymond Clayton, KY 10.00
- Woodrow W. Abshire, VA 7.00
- Eld. Tom Solomon, VA 2.00

FOR APRIL 1996

- Mrs. Carmen Abernathy, NC 7.00
- Mr. & Mrs. B.W. Wade, WV 2.00
- Lynn C. Kendrick, VA 14.00
- Mrs. M.M. Richardson, MS 7.00
- Mrs. Edith Sewell, FL 2.00
- Bill G. Clinton, CA 5.00
- Mrs. Flora C. Vest, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Nannie A. Carter, NC 2.00
- Billy Weatherford, VA 2.00
- John Collie, NC 2.00
- Eld. W.T. Conner, VA 7.00
- Hassell Allen, NC 5.00
- William & Nancy Pullig, LA 7.00
- Dale Haygood, TX 32.00
- Mrs. Joe L. Hamrick, TX 2.00
- Mrs. Odell Anderson, LA 7.00
- Mrs. Marjorie Cook, TN
- In memory of Mrs. Lucille Young 25.00
- John M. McCullar, TX 7.00
- Mrs. H.R. Toney, MS 7.00

OBITUARIES

BROTHER ALPHA ADAMS



gain we bow in humble submission to God's will in removing from our midst another lovely member Bro. Alpha Adams. Malmaison Church, our sister churches and associations will greatly miss his faithful attendance.

He had remarked that he hoped he would be able to go to church as long as he lived. God granted him this blessing. He attended meeting on Sunday before he was hospitalized on Thursday and Saturday night he passed away. God graciously relieved

him of the struggle to breathe, For several mouths he had to carry an oxygen tank with him.

Bro. Alpha had told the ministers that he wanted to conduct his funeral to tell the people what he believed. The Lord certainly blessed each one to preach the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace, giving God all honor and praise.

When the preaching service was over we sang one of his favorite hymns "How Great Thou Art" I could have almost shouted praises to His Holy name and thought how appropriate this song was after such able sermons. I believe Bro. Alpha would have said amen and amen.

Our brother was blessed to willingly support the church and left her a generous donation in his will. All these things are evidence to me of his love and devotion for his church.

Bro. Adams was born in Pittsylvania County, Va. August 11, 1920 and departed this life Dec. 23, 1995. He united with Malmaison Primitive Baptist Church along with his wife Sis. Maria Adams Sept. 1983.

Survivors include his wife, 3 sisters and 1 brother. Funeral services were held at Wrenn-Yeatts Funeral Home, North Main Chapel by Elder Julian Williams (his pastor) and by Elders C.B. Davis, Jr. and Raymond Goad.

He was laid to rest in Highland Burial Park to await the glorious resurrection of the saints of God. May God give us reconciling grace to say "Thou will be done".

Written by one who loved him,
I trust for Christ's sake.

Peggy Wells

SISTER VILMA GARNER RHUE

In sadness I attempt to write of Sister Vilma Garner Rhue who died February 5, 1996, after an extended illness. She was the daughter of Irvin S. and Pearlie McCain Garner of Newport, N.C. and was eighty-five years of age. She was preceded in death by her husband Elder Jabez Rhue. Elder Jabez and Sister Vilma joined Hadnot Primitive Baptist Church at September Quarterly Meeting in 1948. She served as clerk from 1957. Sister Rhue owned and operated Swansboro Beauty Shop from 1950 to 1970. Elder and Sister Rhue traveled extensively throughout the United States and also visited Canada and Europe, meeting with the brethren whenever possible. They enjoyed having company from the church and always made everyone welcome. She was blessed with a loving family who did everything humanly possible for her comfort.

Survivors include three daughters Agnes Burton of Cape Carteret, N.C. Melba Tripp of Greenville, N.C. and Barbara Cunningham of Morehead City, N.C., two sons, Reginald Rhue of Cape Carteret, N.C. and Joseph Rhue of New Bern, N.C., a sister Mrs. Nell Edwards of Newport, N.C., nine grand children and one great grand child.

Her funeral was held at Munden Funeral Home in Morehead City, N.C. conducted by her pastor, Elder J.T. Prescott and Elder Marvin Brumfield. Burial was in Gethsemane Cemetery.

The many floral arrangements and monetary contributions to her home

church attested to the love and esteem in which she and her family were held. We miss her but would not wish her back in this world of suffering. Written and submitted by a sister, I hope.

Leola Bright

SISTER MARY SHORT SAMUELS

It pleased our Lord to call home Sister Mary Short Samuels. Sister Samuels was born October 2, 1908 and she passed from this life October 29, 1995. She was a daughter of John H. Short and Hester Dalton Short. She was married to Walter Jack Samuels, who predeceased her.

Sister Samuels was a member of Springfield Primitive Baptist Church. She was received by experience and baptism September 14, 1952. Sister Samuels was a faithful member—she always seemed to enjoy the fellowship of the Brethren. She will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved her.

She is survived by one sister, Virginia S. Shelton of Gretna, Va.

Fannie S. Rowland and Ora S. Doss—two brothers; Jehue Short and C. H. Short.

Her funeral was conducted at Springfield Primitive Baptist Church by Elders Marvin Brumfield and Raymond Goad. Her body was laid to rest in the Gretna Burial Park, to wait to coning of our Savior.

Written in Love and Hope,

Carol R. Pickral

Elder Marvin Brumfield, Moderator

Oscar D. Pickral, Clerk

SISTER EMMA SOMERS

Sister Emma Stanley Somers was called home by the Lord on March 12, 1995. Her funeral service was held at Dan River Primitive Church by her pastor, Elder Kenneth Key, on March 17, 1995. She was born April 18, 1900 in Rockingham County to the late Felix Edward and Sally Bell Hubbard Stanley. She was preceded in death by her husband, Brother Jesse Robert Somers, and her son, William Edgar Somers. Survivors include two daughters, Lillie Mae Hiatt of Statesville, and Mary Ruth Lee of Eden, nine grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

Brother Kenneth's choice of the scripture, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." found in Proverbs 31:10,27-28, was most fitting in the funeral service of our grandmother. The Lord blessed her to live her life in such a way that she always put her church, her brethren, and her family above herself.

She asked for a home in the church on July 7, 1929 and was later baptized by her former pastor, Elder David Spangler. The words of her grandson, Steve, best describe her life after that: "After God's light shined in her heart, she never looked back. Her faith was tried over and over again, but it never failed. She was always watching over others, to sacrifice of herself, for them.

Everyone, who knew her, can recount without hesitation the godliness that she possessed and that her life exemplified.

Her life was one of a virtuous woman through her Savior who dwelt in her. She did not eat of the bread of idleness, and she so unselfishly cared for those she loved for as long as she was able. Her joy was to have the brethren visit in her home, which was always a place of warmth and love both to her spiritual and her natural families. Thoughts of her bring to mind the scripture, Isaiah 40:31, "*But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*"

My grandmother would never have wished to be eulogized, and I would never wish to do so. She was a very special lady to me, an inspiration, and an example of one in whom Christ dwelt. She was a blessing to my natural family and to me, unworthy though I am, in our spiritual relationship. We all miss her so very much. The following are some thoughts shared by her grandson and my natural brother, Steve, which describe what she meant to us:

"A few years ago, one of her grandsons was having a heart attack. While in the emergency room, aware of his condition, he was naturally frightened. After first having the natural feeling, he smelled the smoke from his grandma's cook stove, and knew that God was with him.

We feel that our cup ran over, when God blessed us with Granny and Papa

Somers. Our love for them is best explained in the book of Ruth 1:16-17: "*And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die; and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.*"

We were totally helpless the last week of Granny's life while she was hospitalized. We prayed that she knew we were there and that we loved her with all our hearts. Our hearts are comforted in knowing God's promise that he would never leave her, and that he would be with her always, even until the end."

The first two lines of one of her favorite hymns, "*O when shall I see Jesus, And reign with him above,*" describe her feelings in her latter years. We feel she can say with Paul in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*" May the Lord comfort all of us who feel such a loss and grant us grace to accept his will and in all things may the Lord be praised.

Humbly submitted by her granddaughter and one who loved her so very much,

Mary Hawkins

SISTER LAURA LEWIS WOLF

Sister Laura Lewis Wolf was born October 8, 1911 in Roosevelt County, New Mexico (near Clovis, New Mexico) to the home of Ina and T.D. Lewis. It pleased our Heavenly Father to call Sis. Wolf from the walks of this life on December 8, 1993 in a Portales hospital.

She was reared in Clovis, New Mexico and was blessed to have Primitive Baptist parents. She graduated from Clovis High School in 1929, she also attended business college in Waco, Texas.

On November 4, 1935 she was united in marriage to the late Elder Reggie R. Wolf. To this union one son was born.

They lived in Colorado and Oregon most of their married life. After her husband retired they moved back to New Mexico settling in Mountainair. In the early eighties she lost both her husband and son.

She soon moved to Clovis, New Mexico to live with one of her sisters, later to a retirement at Portales.

She joined the Little Flock Primitive Baptist Church, Altus, Oklahoma in May 1987 and remained a faithful member as long as health permitted; traveling many miles by bus to church. It was surely a long and trying trip. Sister Wolf was a firm believer in the doctrine of grace. Between those long trips and not getting to come to Church she was blessed to have many sermons of Elder Spangler, Lambert and many other ministers to turn to for comfort.

Surely we can say with David, Psalms 34:19, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." Sister Laura surely was one of the righteous and one of many afflictions along the way, but we must say we truly believe she is now asleep in Jesus awaiting His second coming.

She was laid to rest in Mission Garden Memories, Clovis, New Mexico.

She is survived by two sisters, Eva Crumley of Clovis and Elsie Stroud of Portales, several nieces, nephews and her church family and friends.

Her funeral service was conducted by her pastor, Elder C.M. Haygood.

It was requested that a copy be sent to the Signs of the Times, to her sisters and a copy be placed in the Church records.

Written in love for my dear sister-in-law,
Elder C.M. Haygood

PSALM 4: 4-8.

Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, life thou up they light of thy countenance upon us.

Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

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SONG

**Courage, my soul, behold the prize
The Saviour's love provides:
Eternal life beyond the skies
For all whom here he guides.**

**The wicked cease from troubling
there,
The weary are at rest;
Sorrow, and sin, and pain, and
care,
No more approach the blest.**

**A wicked world, and wicked heart,
With Satan now are joined;
Each acts a too successful part
In harassing my mind.**

**But fighting in my Saviour's
strength,
Though mighty are my foes,
I shall a conqueror be at length
O'er all that can oppose.**

**Then why, my soul, complain or
fear?
The crown of glory see!
The more I toil and suffer here,
The sweeter rest will be.**

Newton.

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EDITORIAL



ELDER R.H. CAMPBELL

Though a sinner does evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear

God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days which are a shadow, because he feareth not God.

Solomon was a man of God who was given great wisdom beyond that of any man born of a woman other than Jesus Christ him-

self who was also the Son of God. He had asked this of God when he was anointed king over Israel; God appeared to him in a dream and said, ask what I shall give thee. Solomon's request was that he might be given wisdom and an understanding heart that he might be judge of Israel and discern between good and bad to render righteous judgement. The Lord was pleased that he requested wisdom rather than riches and granted his request, giving him a wise and understanding heart and declared that there was none like him before nor would there be any after him. He also gave him riches and honour for which he did not ask; double at the Lord's hand.

This gift to Solomon of God was for a specific purpose and that was that he might lead the nation of Israel in the ways of peace and teach them the truths of God. Solomon set in order many proverbs and sought out acceptable words that were written even words of truth. He taught the truths of God as they had not been taught by those who had gone before. This wisdom was given to Solomon for this purpose and has been a blessing to the following generations as they come on the stage of life and are given, in measure, of the wisdom which the preacher was given in his day.

Generally one thinks of the sinner and the wicked being one and the same; the wicked referring to the man who is a sinner or a man in the act of sinning, but Solomon draws a different conclusion between these two

words. All men sin but that does not mean that they are all wicked or evil, it just means they are human. Man was created subject to vanity which is the source of the sin he is susceptible to; he sees and desires the things that are pleasing to the flesh and this causes him many times to go astray and transgress the laws that were laid down to govern his life. The difference between the sinner and the wicked is the motivation behind the things that they do; their regard or lack of regard for God who created them and their fear or lack of it for Him.

The wicked are those who from an evil heart rebel against all law or restraint against anything they desire to do. They have no regard for their fellow man and there is no fear of God before their eyes; they are not aware of God because he has not revealed himself to them. They are not inhibited by virtue, knowledge of good vs. evil, integrity or compassion for their fellow man. They are proud and boastful of their own wisdom and abilities of the children of God, morals and genuine love and concern for their neighbors and friends.

The wicked are those who were created for the day of evil and this mission they shall fulfil in this life. This does not mean that they go around as a roaring lion seeking who they may devour, but they are of their father the devil and the lusts of their father they shall do. They appear as ordinary people, respected in the eyes of the world and are righteous when judged by the standards of the world. This should not seem strange since satan

himself is transformed into an angel of light and his angels appear as ministers of righteousness, but whose end shall be according to their works for there is no fear of God in their heart. The world in which we all live is their home, they seek nothing more than the things of nature because they have never known anything else.

The sinners, as referred to in the text are those who know and fear God; who live their life here in time looking for a city built by God for them, desiring to do that which is right and good but find themselves failing everyday of their life in the accomplishment of their goal which is to show forth that work of grace which has been wrought in them. They are made to realize that they cannot, of themselves, live up to that law that has been written in their heart and can only plead for mercy and forgiveness for their sin. They find themselves doing the same things again and again after they have solemnly determined that they would not. They find comfort in the above scripture because it declares that it shall be well with them that fear God though they sin a hundred times and their life be prolonged: because this is one thing they feel to know - that they fear God. They fear God and love him at the same time as a child fears and respects their parents yet loves them as much as they know how.

There are several scriptures that refer to the fear of the Lord. One is "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" another "The fear of the Lord, this is wisdom" and "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wis-

dom." All knowledge of the Lord begins with the fear of the Lord and it imparts wisdom to them that know it. There is nothing that gets the attention of man quicker than fear and to know God and his omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresent being instills fear in all who know him. At the same time they feel to know that the very fact they have suddenly been made aware of him is because he has revealed himself to them. As Manoah (Samson's father) said when he saw the Angel of the Lord, we shall surely die because we have seen God, but his wife said if the Lord pleased to kill us he would not have shown us these things; this is their feeling at this time and they are made to marvel at the wonder of it all.

In the beginning of what I trust is an experience of grace there was a long period of time, three years as I recall, that I felt to be lost in the wonder of God's love and rejoiced in it continually. I seemingly could read with understanding and enjoyment all time. I would read hours each day and rejoiced in the preached word and the love and kindness of the brethren. Then there came a time when it seemed the beauty and sweetness began to dim; I became afraid that I was losing the thing that was more precious to me than life itself. One day while pondering the situation, the thought struck me with force that if God called me and set me apart from the life I had previously lived, when I was not concerned about him, surely he would not forsake me now when I needed and wanted his love so badly, or as

Manoah's wife said, if the Lord pleased to forsake me he would not have revealed himself to me as I surely believed that he had.

When man has an experience of grace and basks in the joy of the love of God and then finds that he continues to sin it causes him great concern and fear that he was mistaken in his call. He tries to do better and manifest the miracle that has happened to him in his walk, talk and in all his ways, but learns that he is just not able to direct his steps; then when he reads scriptures such as the text he rejoices to know that even his sins cannot separate him from God's love; from these things which are his heritage among the children of God. He believes with all his heart that he is one of those who fear God and the scripture says that it shall be well with them though they do evil and sin a hundred times.

The Apostle Paul confirms this when he writes Rom. 8 vs. 35. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" vs. 38 "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Sin and the things that surround the Lord's people daily as they journey in this low ground of sin and sorrow, distress them greatly but they shall never nullify that work of grace that is the gift of the Father. Whatsoever God doeth it shall

be forever nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that men shall fear before him.

In bonds of love,
Elder Richard H. Campbell

ARTICLES

THE COMMUNION RING

How many people today remember the communion ring? Some of my memories center around that sacred occasion.

On "Communion Day" my family would be up early to get ready. The chores had to be done and the lunch must be prepared. All of the children had to lend a hand.

When we arrived at the church, Papa would tie the horses under a shade tree off to one side. We all went into the house and singing was begun. It sounded so beautiful, all the different voices mingling together. I remember so well, my Mother's high tenor voice, which could be heard blending so beautifully with the other voices, the soprano, bass and alto. There was no need for musical instruments. There was music there that only those with a "hearing ear and heart" could understand. The hymns were in praise to God. No whispering and laughing was heard. It seemed like all the congregation felt the sacredness of the occasion.

After singing for a while the ministers went into the pulpit and the ser-

vice began with a short hymn and prayer by one of the ministers.

After the preaching service ended, there was a short intermission. The people went outside and the men began carrying the church pews out in the yard. They placed them in a large circle, with a smaller circle inside. A table was placed in the center of the ring and the bread and wine was placed on it with glasses and plates.

I knew about the bread and wine. I had seen it prepared with great care by my Mother. I knew there was something very special about it.

The deacons sat on the benches in the inner circle and the rest of the members, together with the visiting members, sat in the outer circle. It was a very solemn occasion. I, as a small child, stood outside the circle right behind Mama. The silence could almost be felt. I watched as the bread was broken and wondered how the bread could be the Body of Jesus Christ when I had seen Mama bake it. At that time, I didn't know what the word, "Emblem," meant. I hope that it was later revealed to me the sacredness of the scene I had stood and watched. I could feel, even then, that there was something very precious taking place. Many of the people were in tears, all very attentive and quiet.

The deacons passed the bread around the circle with the same quietness which I saw in the congregation.

The wine was served with the same solemnity as with the bread. In my childish mind, I wondered about what I was seeing and wished I could be a part of it.

Now I have a Hope in my breast that I have had a small part, unworthy as I feel to be. I don't know if I have taken the communion unworthily, but at times I have been given a joy that cannot be described. I wouldn't trade the precious privilege of communing with the dear saints for all the wealth this world has to offer. That joy can't be bought nor sold, neither can it be described. It must be felt in the heart. My hope is that I am not mistaken in the whole matter and in the end be a cast-away. If so it will be just, for I know there's nothing good in me. I desire to praise this God who never makes a mistake. To Him be honor, glory and dominion forever.

Edrie Ruth Clifton

THE BAPTIZING PLACE

Memory carries me back to my early childhood. My parents were members of Old Bell Spur Church long before the sad division which took place in the early 1930's. My father was ordained a deacon there, I suppose before I was born.

We would get to the church very early on Sunday morning when there was to be a baptizing. The congregation would gather in the church house, take the songbooks and Bible and walk in a body from the church down a little graveled road for a few hundred yards, singing hymns as they walked along till they came to the water. This water was in a natural basin formed out of solid rock. The

water flowed over the edge of this basin at the upper side, filling the basin with crystal clear water, deep enough to easily baptize in.

When they were at the place, they would sing another hymn. Then the minister would kneel there by the water and I can remember how his voice would ring out across those hills as he earnestly prayed the Lord's blessing on the occasion. I would stand in awe at the sight and sound, not fully understanding what was happening. But in my childish mind, I thought it the most beautiful and sacred sight my eyes had ever beheld. I knew there was something taking place beyond my understanding but, Oh! how I did wish I could be a part of it. I knew these people had something in which I had no part. I could see the love manifested for each other - All seemed to be perfectly at peace.

I wanted so much to be baptized and be one of them, but I seemed to realize it was not for me.

After the baptizing was done the members gathered closely around giving the new member and the others the right hand of fellowship and welcome to the church. They all walked slowly back up the road to the meeting house, went in and sang hymns while the minister and new member changed clothes at a neighbor's house nearby. When they came back in the church, the regular services went on as usual.

As we were leaving the water, I looked back and could see no sign of anything having taken place, but the very place looked sacred to me. Later

on I could understand they were following in the way our Lord and Master had gone and had followed His example!

Now, when I pass the "Baptizing Place," I am filled with sadness. That beautiful basin, the handiwork of none other but the Lord, has filled up with dirt and debris. It does not look beautiful and sacred anymore.

I realize the Lord knows all things and if it is His will He will give someone a desire to restore that baptizing place as it once was because His will is done in earth and Heaven.

But I wonder, is this and similar things only a sign of the "falling away" as told in His Holy Word, the Bible?

Now, in my old age, these childhood memories are precious. I feel I was being given a tiny glimpse of the wonderful workings of that all wise God, who created Heaven and earth, who has never made a mistake and never will. Praise His Holy Name!

Edrie Ruth Clifton

PROVERBS 22: 17-21.

Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowlege.

For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.

That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee.

Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge,

That I might make thee know the certainty of the words or truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee?

VOICES OF THE PAST

THE EARNEST CONTENTION FOR LIVING FAITH

**Preached on the Monday
of December 25th, 1840
at the Opening of Trinity Chapel
Alfred Street, Leicester**

"That ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude:3.

We often read in books the praises of primitive Christianity, and there seems to be a general persuasion in the minds of men that primitive Christianity was, with scarcely any exception, of a superlatively excellent nature; and many speak and write as if the churches mentioned in the New Testament consisted entirely of such eminent saints as have never since appeared, and will never appear again. Now whence are we to derive our evidence of the nature of primitive Christianity? Our only certain and infallible authority must be the Word of God; by which I mean, in this instance, the Epistles of the New Testament. But what do we gather from these epistles but the startling fact that though persecution in its most dreadful form stared them in the face, there were some of the vilest characters possible in the churches formed immediately by the apostles! The saints among them were saints indeed; "great grace was upon them;" and their "work of faith, pa-

tience and hope, and labor of love" abounded exceedingly. This fact admits of no denial; but this acknowledged truth seems to have thrown another no less certain fact into the background, namely, that there were very rank tares among this wheat, "ungodly men who were before of old ordained to this condemnation;" and that these vile characters, described at large in the second Epistle of Peter, and in this Epistle of Jude, were members of these primitive churches. And thus the New Testament churches seem to have closely resembled Jeremiah's baskets of figs: "One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe; and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad" (Jer. 25:2).

Now it appears that the discerning eye of Jude saw these evils in the churches; and that they were not confined to one or two churches, but were spread through them all. Under heavenly inspiration, therefore, he wrote this "General Epistle," so called because not addressed to a particular church, as at Corinth, Rome, Ephesus, or Ghessalonica; but directed and sent abroad to the whole body of Christians, all the visible churches then existing. His mind seems to have been impressed with two prominent feelings. First, "to write to them of the common salvation;" that is, to set before them the glorious truths of salvation, common to the whole body of the elect; and secondly, to "exhort them that they should earnestly contend for the faith which was once

delivered unto the saints." But why was he so pressed in spirit to exhort them thus earnestly to contend? Because his discerning eye saw a dark cloud coming over the churches. The faith once delivered unto the saints was in danger; not in any eternal danger as to the faith of the elect failing, or of God's ceasing to have a Church on the earth; but in temporary danger; and that not from without, but from within; not from open persecutors, but from false brethren.

Time will not allow me to enter fully into this Epistle, nor trace out these blots in the primitive Church, these "spots in their feasts of charity." And yet it may be as well to endeavour to throw a little light on these characters, as briefly as possible, since the same awful characters infest, more or less, most, if not all, of the Calvinistic churches now; and some light may also be thus shed upon the text itself.

It is necessary, then, to observe that these characters were not casual hearers, outer court worshippers, merely members of the congregation, but that they were members of the church. They were clearly in church fellowship, for they sat down to the ordinance. "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear." These feasts of charity (or love) were not indeed the same thing as the Lord's supper, but they always followed the ordinance, and none sat down at the one who did not sit down at the other. They were therefore in church communion with the rest. They are said also to have "crept in unawares;" that

is, into the church, but in an underhand, crafty, and deceitful manner. But, as Jude has drawn their characters, we will, with God's blessing, enter a little into the description that he has given.

They are said, then, "to speak evil of those things which they know not, but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves" (Verse 10). There were things then which they knew not, and there were things which they knew. They spoke against the one, and they corrupted themselves in the other. What were the things which they knew not? The work of the Holy Ghost on the heart, the manifestations of God's presence, the shedding abroad of His love in the soul, the application of the blood of sprinkling, as well as the trials, difficulties, temptations, exercises, doubts, fears, and buffetings that are the lot of the people of God. These were the things that "they knew not;" they had no personal, inward, divine, experimental acquaintance with them; they therefore "spoke evil of them," and called them madness, nervousness, enthusiasm, excitement, delusion, gloom, melancholy, or any plausible or evil name which they could devise, whereby they could cast a slur upon the teachings of God in the soul. But what were the things which "they knew naturally?" The doctrinal truths which they had received in their judgment, the glorious truths of salvation which they had learnt naturally, and therefore only knew naturally. For we must bear in mind that Arminianism had not then

been introduced into the churches, but the pure truth was still preached by the apostles. But "in these things they corrupted themselves," that is, they held truth in unrighteousness, sinned that grace might abound, and "turned the grace of God into lasciviousness," that is, abused the doctrine of grace as encouraging licentiousness. And why? because they never knew the doctrines of grace in soul feeling and personal experience, but held them in a hard heart, a reprobate mind, and a seared conscience.

But they carried about with them certain marks, which Jude's discerning eye saw, and his clear hand traced out.

1. They had "gone in the way of Cain." What Cain's sin, here called Cain's "way?" Was enmity against his brother. And why? Because the Lord had accepted Able's offering, and rejected his. Thus in the heart of dead professors there is a deep-rooted enmity, inward murder, against the real people of God; and the root of this enmity is, because God accepts the one and rejects the other.

2. They had "run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." What was Balaam's error? Light without life, gifts without grace, slavish fear without spiritual fear, and willingness to curse, and compulsion to bless; a seeing but not now, a beholding but not nigh, a desiring the death of the righteous, and a being slaughtered with the Midianites.

3. "And perished in the gain-saying of Core;" that is, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Numb 16). And what was this

gain-saying? "An envying of Moses in the camp, and of Aaron the saints of the Lord" (Psalms 106:16). Thus these characters whom Jude condemns thrust themselves forward to partake of the privileges and blessings peculiar to the people of God, aspired to the ministry, formed a party in the church, and allowed no separation of the precious and the vile; but declared that "all the congregation was holy, every one of them, and that the Lord was among them;" and that therefore to be a member of the church was necessarily to be a child of God.

But they were towering professors, with all this enmity and ungodliness in their hearts; and Jude has used several figures, which point to great appearances, but all destitute of reality.

4. "Clouds they are without water, carried about with winds." What is a cloud? A harbinger of rain, a receptacle of fertilizing moisture, suspended in the air, ready to drop down fatness upon the earth. Sometimes we see the earth parched up and dry, chapped and brown. We look into the sky, like Elijah's servant, if we can see clouds arising to dissolve in fertilizing showers. O! there we see one in the horizon, pregnant with rain. It comes over our heads. But alas! it is "a cloud without water," an appearance without a reality, covering the sun, but wanting the only thing that makes the cloud desirable or valuable. No dew, no rain, no moisture. Such are these dry towering professors.

Lofty in their pretensions, but all their conversation devoid of dew or savour, soaring in the air, hiding the sun, darkening the sky, but dropping no rain, producing no fertility. But instead of quietly dropping down blessings, carried about with winds of error, gusts of passion, and the storms of their own lusts.

5. "Trees whose fruit withereth." The elect are trees, as the Spirit says, "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified." These too are trees, but "trees without fruit," internal or external, "having not the Spirit" (Verse 19), and therefore devoid of His gracious fruits. But fruit they have such as it is, "whose fruit withereth;" that is, even their natural fruit of zeal, consistency, liberality, and simplicity withered up, the juice gone, and the dried skin only remaining. "Twice dead," dead in sins, and dead in a profession; "plucked up by the roots," so that a discerning child of God sees that the root of their religion is in the flesh, and they themselves stand plucked up, and cast over the vineyard, in God's own time, before His eyes.

6. "Raging waves of the sea." The sea bears on its ample bosom the produce of all countries, and its waves bring the loaded ships into harbour. But these only rage and foam against God's tried people, and threaten to bury them, rather than bear them, though in swelling high against the teachings of the Spirit in the hearts of the elect, they only foam out to discerning eyes their own shame.

7. "Wandering stars." Not fixed stars to guide the mariner, not the polar star for him to direct his course by, but stars that wander over the sky, and therefore only deceive instead of instruct, betray him upon the shoals, instead of leading him into the desired haven.

8. But these persons have no doubt of their state, for "their mouth speaketh great swelling words" in self-commendation. They are not plagued as other men. Therefore "they feast and feed themselves without fear." They feed on the letter of truth, on the doctrines of grace in their brain, on the deepest mysteries of vital godliness held in a seared conscience. Therefore they "feed without fear." No godly fear, no trembling awe, no solemn reverence, no holy anxiety, no desire to be right, no dread to be wrong, no doubt if it be presumption to draw nigh, no groanings under inward hypocrisy and presumption, no midnight cries to a heart-searching God to see the ground of their heart, no fervent wrestlings to be upright and sincere before Him, no guilt no self-condemnation nor self-loathing at coming unworthily. O fatal mark! O black stamp, to be devoid of that which is "the beginning of wisdom," and which "God puts into the hearts of His people, that they should not depart from Him."

Now we have no reason to believe that these characters were living in what is termed open sin and profaneness. Had it been so, they would have been turned out of the church; but it is evident that when Jude wrote they

were still in church membership. Their sins therefore were carried on in secret. But Jude's discerning eye, enlightened by the blessed Spirit, saw through all their hypocrisy, and penetrated into their real character, through all their "changeable suits of apparel, veils, wimples, and mantles." He saw then that the faith was in jeopardy, and observing this dark cloud towering over the churches, wrote this epistle to exhort those that were "sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus, and called," to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints." And are times less perilous now? Do not the churches amongst whom the bulk of God's people are swarmed with the very same characters that Jude here points out? The saints of God, then, are similarly called upon not to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints."

Thus much for introduction, long indeed, but perhaps not unnecessary, considering the light it may throw on the text.

And now we come to our text: and the first word which seems to demand our notice is the expression, "faith;" for on that word as on a pivot the whole text seems to turn.

I think we may understand two things by the expression, "the faith once delivered to the saints." First, the doctrines preached by the apostles, and secondly, that inward faith whereby these doctrines are believed in by the heart unto righteousness, and confession made of them by the mouth unto salvation. The doc-

trines of grace were delivered to the saints by the Lord and His apostles; they were entrusted to the saints as to a living repository, and by them they were to be handed down to those who followed them in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. This seems to be the prominent and primary meaning of the text. But on that I shall not this morning dwell, but shall confine myself to what I consider its secondary and no less important meaning - the faith that dwells in the heart of the manifested people of God.

Now in examining the faith thus spoken of, it may be as well to see what it is not, before we look at what it is. The faith, then, which is delivered into the heart of the saints from the mouth of the Lord is not, in the least respect or degree, the fruit or production of the creature. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God? (1 Cor. 2:5). It is a faith not to be learnt of man, nor to be procured by the exertions of strivings of the flesh. It cannot be got from the Scriptures by hard study; nay, all the exertion of the creature cannot bring into the heart one grain or atom of it. Natural faith, believing traditionally in the Scriptures, receiving them as a Divine revelation upon the authority of others, and a bare intellectual knowledge of texts and passages, doctrines and mysteries, all fall infinitely short of the saving faith which God communicates to His elect.

The faith delivered unto the saints stands wholly and solely in the power of God. He is the author and finisher

of it in the soul; nor have we one jot more, nor one jot less than He is pleased to communicate. This heavenly grace is breathed into the soul by God the Holy Ghost out of the fulness of the Son of God. "We are the clay, and He is the Potter;" and so far as we are vessels of mercy, "we are the work of His hand." This faith, then, can only be known by an inward experimental possession of it, and all description of it must fall short of what it really is in soul feeling. Now this faith is breathed into the soul when the Holy Ghost first quickens it into spiritual and eternal life; and the work and province of this faith is to lay hold of, embrace, and realize those truths which the Holy Spirit lodges in the conscience. For it is "the substance of things hoped for." That Almighty Teacher casts a divine light upon certain revealed truths, and brings them out of the Word into the heart, where they are fastened and riveted by an almighty power. And faith's business and employment is to act upon, and solemnly deal with these truths, which the Holy Spirit thus brings in and makes known. Faith, therefore, does not sail forth upon the letter of God's Word, that vast and fathomless ocean of truth. Faith stays at home, and does as Mary did, "ponder these things in her heart." All that comes with light, life, and power, all that is commended to the conscience, all that is experimentally brought into the heart, faith deals with. Whatever truth comes with power from God into the soul is faith's food, and true faith can feed on nothing else.

But here many of God's children are often staggered. They read in the Word what faith is, and what faith does: as for instance, that it removes mountains, works by love, overcomes the world, purifies the heart, and is accompanied with love, joy and peace. Such a faith as this many of God's people cannot find in their heart. Again, they see glorious truths set forth in the letter of the Word. They see Jesus there spoken of as a great and glorious Savior. The security of the Church in her covenant Head, the solemn truths of election and predestination, the certainty of salvation to the elect, the blessed teachings of the Spirit in the hearts of God's people, these and other Divine truths many of the quickened family of God see clearly written in the Scriptures. But they cannot get at them, so as to realise them as certainly and eternally theirs. They believe that they are true, but they cannot believe them for themselves, so as to rejoice in them as sealed with power in their own hearts. Now here they are baffled; and feeling that their faith does not relieve them from burdens, remove guilt, pacify conscience, and conquer death, they conclude because they have not this faith that they have no faith.

But is this the necessary, or scriptural conclusion? If faith can only realise, and feed upon the truths which the Holy Ghost brings in, faith in its beginning will deal with what is brought in at the beginning. Now what is a sound beginning? "The fear of the Lord," for that is declared to be "the beginning of wisdom" (Psalm 111:10).

But the fear of God cannot exist without the knowledge of God, for we cannot fear Him whom we do not know. Therefore the Lord Jesus said: "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Faith, then, in its early infantile state, acts upon, and is engaged with this inward knowledge of God, which springs from what the Holy Ghost has revealed of Him to the conscience. But this knowledge of God embraces the knowledge of what God is, of His holiness, purity, power, justice, hatred of sin, and eternal wrath and displeasure towards transgressors. And as we see light only in God's light, when He sets our secret sins in the light of His countenance, faith begins to act upon and deal with these eternal realities. Thus the soul is convinced of sin, made acquainted with the spirituality of God's law, and arraigned at His bar as a transgressor. Under this discover, sin and corruption work, temptations beset the soul, doubts and fears arise, and guilt and condemnation are powerfully felt. Well, but where is faith all this time? Out of sight indeed, but not out of the heart; nay, busy at work, and dealing with these solemn realities, as the Holy Spirit keeps bringing them in. But how is faith evidenced? By feeling. Were there no faith, there would be no feeling. But the presence of feeling shows the presence of faith. Thus the very guilt that the soul feels, the earnest anxiety which it manifests in fleeing from the wrath to come, its groans and sighs for mercy, its strug-

gling forward into light and liberty, as the babe from the prison of the womb, the very doubts and fears that retard its progress, and all the numerous and varied exercises that attend the quickened soul, all, all manifest the presence of faith. Eternal realities are believed in, and from this belief all these inward exercises spring.

Now after a time there shall be a change. The Holy Spirit holds up Jesus in the Word as a suitable and precious Saviour, and brings into the heart some savour of His Person, work, and precious blood. Faith, as before, sees, realizes, and feeds upon this heavenly food. What the Spirit reveals, faith embraces, deals with, and acts upon. Perfect love indeed has not yet come to cast out all "fear which hath torment." But a measure of peace is felt in believing, and faith has at times something more of a comforting nature to feed upon.

It is usually at this season that we are exposed to, and are often entangled by Satan, false professors, and the deceit of our own heart. On one side of the path of life is despair, and on the other side is presumption, two deep ditches, into one or the other of which we are very liable to fall. The soul, then, being somewhat lifted up with views of Christ, often runs eagerly forward, and thus is thrust beyond its real experience. Confident professors always on the Rock, preachers crying out against doubts and fears, and the heart's own deceitfulness, all push the unwary child of God forward into head knowledge beyond heart knowledge. One

does not like to be snuffed at and snubbed by professors, looked down upon with suspicion, and treated as a babe, a weakling, a beginner, and all one's religion perhaps called in question by those who have no doubt of their own. The flesh is pained thereby, galled fretted, and mortified. So having some little ground to go upon, the inexperienced and perhaps unbalanced vessel of mercy, unless well held in, starts forth into the letter of God's Word, to sail on that wide and boundless ocean, without either chart, compass, or rudder. But let a man once go beyond God's teaching, and where will he not get to, unless the Lord bring him back? Well, on the stripling goes, pretty boldly and pretty firmly. Light and life received, with rays of hope and consolation, give him some entrance into the doctrines of grace, into which therefore he boldly steps. Doubts and fears begin to remove, trials and temptation lose their sharp edge, and a temporary ease and consolation are felt. This emboldens him yet more to go farther and farther still with confidence and assurance, as he now finds some comfort and security more and more drawn from the letter of truth. Now, if the Holy Ghost did not keep him, he would rush forward into all the hardened confidence of a dead professor. But the Lord never has left, and never will leave him; nor was he really easy with all his false confidence. Some heavy trial, some powerful temptation, a bed of sickness, such as I believe was made useful in this way to me ten years ago, death near, and hell in

sight, begin to pull down this vain confidence. The soul loses all its fancied treasures and supposed acquisitions, and sinks into poverty and beggary. False hopes begin to vanish, rotten props to be knocked away, and refuges of lies to be discovered. Towering confidence flies away, and the soul falls down into darkness, and well nigh into despair. But why all this? What is the Lord doing now? Why, teaching the soul what faith is, by teaching him what faith is not. He had been making bricks, and collecting slime to build up a Babel with, to escape the wrath to come; touching the ark with Uzzah, looking into it presumptuously with the men of Bethshemesh. Now faith comes back to her true old work, to stay at home, and ponder the things inwardly felt. Our religion is now weighed up, and much, perhaps all, to our feelings, found false. The greater part of it stood in the flesh in more or less of presumption. Now then the soul is driven to close dealings with God, forced up into a corner, whence there is no escape. Before, whilst the soul was in an easy, smooth, lukewarm path, there were few or no close dealings with God. There were indeed seasons of prayer, moments of compunction and contrition, but no close, solemn, personal dealings with a heart-searching Jehovah. Hezekiah was a good man, and had offered an acceptable passover, as well as received answers to prayer and a striking deliverance before ever "he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore." But he never

had close dealings with God until he had the sentence of death in his soul. This pulled down all his religion, stripped away his fleshly hopes, and drove him up into a corner. But where is faith now? Why, busy with the perfection of God, His majesty, heart-searching eye, and unalterable purposes; and suing, sighing and groaning after manifestations of mercy. It is not falling on one's knees, nor uttering prayers merely, that is close dealing with God; nor do I believe there are any of these close quarters until the soul is stripped and laid low. Now it comes as a sinner ready to perish, as a poor outcast, who must have mercy inwardly revealed. Like the poor woman diseased with the issue of blood, it longs to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. In this conflict the soul learns what faith is. Hezekiah was brought to feel that "by these things men live, and in all these things was the life of his spirit."

Under these sharp exercises we learn what faith is, and what faith is not; what faith does, and what faith does not. The dross and tin are purged away in this furnace, and in it faith learns its real measure and stature, its true work and business. The soul is taught in the fires to seek and sue after personal manifestations of mercy, is brought off the bare letter of the Word, and breathes after the teachings of the blessed Spirit as applying the Scriptures with power. What it now therefore receives, it receives as a free gift, for which it must sigh, beg and groan. Its faith can only stand now in the power of God, and is utterly

helpless without Him. And when the Lord in mercy sends help and strength, power and feeling, and draws up the affections to Himself, the soul knows what faith is, by its presence as well as by its absence; by what it can do, as well as by what it cannot do. Thus according to the measure given, the heart is purified, the love of the world cast out, fleshly religion dethroned, and Christ made all in all. There is now a solid acquaintance with the truth, and the poor, needy, naked, and helpless soul rests and hangs upon Christ alone. This faith, according to its different measure in each, was once delivered unto the saints, delivered, not merely in the preaching of Christ and His apostles, but delivered into their hearts. For this faith, then, we are earnestly to contend, as an abiding reality, a separating path between presumption and despair. A faith which stands wholly and solely in the teachings, guidings, and leadings of the Holy Comforter, and received only in such measure, and at such seasons as He delivers it into the heart. But why earnestly contend for it? Why not have peace in churches, smuggle matters up, put goats and sheep into one pen, and so preach and talk as to have a good name among professors? Why not call all that profess, "brethren," and keep things quiet and comfortable? Because having more or less proved the nature of this faith in our own souls, and seen the deceits and dangers of all counterfeits, we must earnestly contend for it. And what then? Why, we must have divisions, troubles, and difficulties. Contend we

must therefore for this faith, not bitterly nor angrily, but earnestly and affectionately; contend for it as a thing of infinite importance, as the only thing really worth contending for; contend for it through smiles and frowns, whether men will hear or forbear.

Jude does not say, Contend for church order, though a good thing in its place; nor for doctrines, though true and valuable; nor for your own reputation, though personally dear; but "for the faith once delivered unto the saints." Because it has made us, each according to our measure, new creatures, wrought an effect on our souls, and upon the possession of it hang our hopes of eternity; because it is the grand turning point between sinner and saint, between life and death. All the people of God quickened into spiritual life have faith, the weakest as well as the strongest; the babe of yesterday as well as the saint of a fifty years' profession. Their faith differs in measure, not in kind. To contend therefore for Divine faith, is to embrace all the living family, and reject all dead professors. If therefore we contend for it, we must give no place to its opposers, not for an hour. We must make no hollow truces, no false treaties, no rotten alliances; and give no quarter to any faith that stands not in the power of God the Holy Ghost. We must allow none to have a grain of real religion, who possess it not. My conscience would condemn me if I did not contend for it earnestly, but my conscience would equally condemn me if I were to contend for it

bitterly. I trust in this spirit I have come to Leicester. I feel that I have not come here to oppose any man, or disparage any man, to minister to any's pride, to set any man up, or pull any man down. So far as I know my own motives (and our hearts are so deceitful that it is hard always to know them), I have come here with a desire after God's glory. Films will come the eye, when we think and wish it to be most single; but I have felt that there being a door opened in this town for experimental truth, a chapel built, and a pulpit set up, I could comfortably and conscientiously enter it to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints." God will own and bless no other cause, and no other preaching but the which contends for the faith that He Himself once delivered. I desire to contend for it earnestly, simply, fully and affectionately; and may we ever contend for it at home and abroad, in our words and actions, as well as in our life, conduct, and conversation.

In this mixed multitude there must be persons assembled from various motives. Some to hear a new preacher, some to pick up something from the pulpit which they may carry away to make me an offender for a word, some to see the new chapel, and some, I trust, to hear what the Lord may speak to their soul. To the last I would by way of conclusion address myself.

If you have any measure of this spiritual faith, you have plenty of trials with

it. The Lord says (Rev. 3:18), "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold." But what gold? - "tried in the fire," no other. Wherever, therefore, the Lord gives faith, He gives trials to prove it. "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire? (1 Peter 1:7). Thus we are tried with unbelief, infidelity, doubts, questionings, and fears; tried in providence; tried by bodily afflictions; tried by the enmity of the world, the opposition of carnal professors, the deceit of false friends, but most of all by our own dreadfully vile and wicked hearts. And yet, with all these trials, some more and some less, all who have any measure of this heavenly faith will and must earnestly contend for it, as the only thing that supports the soul under trials, and as feeling that this faith only "will be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." You therefore, into whose heart God has breathed this faith, will have a cross to carry. You that have it not, and contend only for doctrines, a name to live, rites, forms, and ceremonies of man's invention, and an outside religion, will be loved by the world, and meet with neither outward nor inward opposition. But may we who desire to fear God be willing to endure these things, "receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

January 30.

"The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework." — PSALM XIV. 13, 14.

THIS is a beautiful description of the bridal garments of the Church as the queen. The gold was to be wrought into her clothing, the raiment to be of needlework, intimating that her robe of justifying righteousness was wrought, as it were, as in needlework, stitch by stitch; yet that every thread was embroidered with gold. Here we have the thread of the humanity in union with the gold of Deity, and yet each in such close union that the thread is but one. In gold thread the beauty, the value is in the gold; yet how close the union. Gold by itself could not be made into embroidery. So Deity cannot suffer, bleed, or die; but humanity can in union with it. Thus, as our blessed Lord went through the whole work which the Father gave him to do, his Deity, being in union with his obeying, suffering humanity, stamped each successive movement, as he went through *it*, with all the value and validity of Godhead. It is this union of Deity with humanity which made the work of redeeming love so unspeakably glorious, and so meritoriously efficacious. As Hart says:

"Almighty God sighed human breath."

It is indeed a mystery; but "great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." O glorious mystery!

"The highest heavens are short of this;

**'Tis deeper than the vast abyss;
'Tis more than thought can e'er conceive,**

Or hope expect, or faith believe."

Elder J.C Philpot

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN: I am sending something on my subscription, and thought I would like to say a few things to the dear editors and readers of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. For these many years it has withstood all the fiery onslaughts of its Babylonish enemies, as well as those coming from the camps of Israel. We do not (as some who were once our brethren do) want to look at that as being the grace of God sustaining all old things or all numerous things, but, taking the holy Scriptures as our guide, when we find the "speckled bird" being hated, boycotted and all the venom of the spirit of darkness hurled at her, then we may rest assured that God is upholding her by his grace, reigning and controlling his subjects.

Brethren, the Baptists (there is but one body of genuine Baptists; the balance are impostors, yet God's visible kingdom is not known in history by name, but by her walk and doctrine) have always contended that God was a sovereign Ruler of not only his children by regeneration, but of all the posterity of Adam. Christ taught this glorious doctrine, and all the apostles

taught it after him. From the apostolic church we are able to find a few here and there, down through the ages, who rejoiced in the fact that the God they worshiped was omnipotent and omniscient. But should we lose sight of this visible kingdom we are not to despair, believing that God has failed in any of his glorious promises. He is faithful that promised (Heb. x. 23), and inasmuch as he promised to build the church and preserve her so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her, we may rest assured that to-day he is keeping her as his chosen church. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." - Psalms cxxvii. 1. Here in language that fell from the lips or pen of the sweet Singer of Israel do we find that the Lord builds the house. All plants not planted or builded by him shall be rooted up. (Matt. xv. 13.) We find in a perusal of Old Testament characters that by an eye of faith they were looking forward to the day when the promised Messiah should come. The law they were under was, to all outward appearances, a conditional law. If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat of the good of the land. (Isaiah i. 19.) But how did they come out in such a yoke being placed on them? Their nation was trampled under foot and the inhabitants scattered to the four winds of the earth. Now we understand that this law was literal to them, but it had something hidden in it that had a spiritual signification. We are told that the law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. (Gal. iii. 24).

Dear storm-tossed child, how has it been with you? That law that you thought to be unto life you found to be unto death. Indeed, that law was a gruff schoolmaster. Uncompromising and unmerciful. It demanded all and granted nothing. But, try as you could, you could not get life by it. So when your gods were all used up, it brought you to Christ. But now the Messiah comes! The "in the day" period of time has arrived! Righteousness has looked down from heaven and truth has sprung out of the ground. Fear not, Joseph, to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matt. i. 20, 21.) Take courage and lift up your drooping faces, for Jesus paid the penalty that was justly due as yours. It was his people who were in debt and he came at the appointed time for their redemption. Ten thousand talents in debt and not a farthing to pay. But he canceled the debt and paid with his blood for all your sins. He took the law and it was nailed to the tree of the cross with him. Before going away he established, set up or founded his church as a visible organization. He had, by his own blood, purchased the church, the bride, the Lamb's wife. His salvation was secure, but being timely creatures they were to be left in the world. They were not of the world, as he was not of the world, so their worship, their conversation, was to be as becometh saints. Now, brethren, this church is a divine institution. Christ is

the Head of the church that he alone built. He needed not, nor sought the help of man in building this church. Man could not help when he was crucified. He could not help in any of the work he (Christ) did while here in the world, because all that he did was for the salvation of his people, and vain would be any part man would have in it. In this church he alone gave all the laws and ordinances that she would ever need. Before going away he left them a glorious promise, that when he was gone the Comforter would come. What was that for? When the Spirit of truth is come he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. (John xvi. 13, 14.) This kingdom is built by sovereign, reigning power, and in the same measure that human merits are used in the commencement of it, just so is it kept that way. Have you heard that the church is about gone? Have you been told that Old Baptists need to get out of the rut? Have you heard it said that those churches that preach predestination and one salvation are not progressive and are in a cold state? These things are but the working of the Sarah-minded children of the kingdom. "Look now (Abram) toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." - Gen. xv. 5. This promise was from God, and he said it shall be. Yet we find that Sarah doubted at the promise and set up the

first "ladies aid society." But let us remember that God was to set up a kingdom that should not be destroyed. It shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces all these Babylonish kingdoms and shall consume them (I suppose that is why all Arminians call the Old Baptists parasites, living on their converts), and it shall stand forever. (Dan. ii. 44.) By inspiration the curtains of time were raised and Isaiah was given to look down to that distant date and see Jesus. Hear him break forth in singing, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God. The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Isaiah ix. 6,7. O dust of the earth, where do you come in? O man, what a vain creature art thou, to think that by thy flesh you might perpetuate this kingdom. The Lord alone adds to his church daily such as should be saved (Acts ii. 47), and I cannot find a creature salvation in this, although it was in time. But to the Lord belongs only eternal things. Time is the allotted days of the world, but it is only part of the eternal things of God, so I am persuaded that the things the Lord saves his people from in time is only that everlasting salvation. We are ac-

cused of being the heretics in the new departure, but search history as you may you can find the saints contending that God designs all the afflictions, tribulations and darkness of his people, and that for the trial their faith, which is a time salvation, but wholly of the Lord.

Now let us look at the dear saints of this kingdom. Paul says, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." - Rom. viii. 28. That being true, let us rejoice in a sovereign God, because whom he foreknew them he also did predestinate, etc. Now who is going to distinguish between those things that are called evil as to what work good? Shall we be guided into all truth by the Spirit of truth, or will designing men make the discrimination? Poor, weak, puny man, by nature, cannot discern the things that are working good for His people. If we are led by the gentle influence of the Spirit it is not ours to say that any one of the many evils in the world works, in itself, good, but that all things work together for good. Does this make or cause God's people to be licentious? God forbid. It does not show the love of Christ for his little children to hide behind the face that the Bible teaches all events as working to the good of his people. Instead of that, there is much comfort in the thought that in the days of the apostolic church a people accused them of saying, Let us to do evil that good may come. The writer calls this a slanderous report, and those with the same spirit are to-day making the same

charge. God's people are commanded to do right; nay, it is their duty to do right, and no one can say when he is tempted away that God tempted him. The Spirit alone teaches righteousness. However, let us make it plain that all the wrath of man shall praise him and the remainder he will restrain. This ruling his kingdom belongs to the Lord; if he does not rule it and keep it we are taught that the watchman waketh but in vain. Not only is it necessary that he rule his kingdom. If he did not do that, then we have no assurance that the church will stand any longer. And I firmly believe that could Satan or his hordes thwart God in the carrying on of the work of his kingdom here in the world, that the same power would be able to keep some of the trophies of his everlasting love out of heaven.

In a sweet hope,
Elder W.D. Griffin

MEETINGS

ORIGINAL SOUTH ARKANSAS PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION



The One Hundred Fifty Fifth Annual Meeting of the Original South Arkansas Primitive Baptist Association will be held with Pilgrim Rest Church, Dallas County, Arkansas September 14 and 15, 1996.

The meeting convenes with Pilgrim Rest Church off Highway 167 north of Fordcyce, Arkansas. Take 273 about

1/2 mile. Service will begin on Saturday before the third Sunday in September (September 14-15, 1996).

A special invitation to all Brothers, Sisters and Preachers of same faith to come and be with us if the Lord is willing.

Frances Townley
Church Clerk

SMITH RIVER ASSOCIATION



he Smith River Association will convene the Lord willing; with Union Church, Patrick County, Va. the meeting to begin on Friday before the first Sunday in September, (Aug. 30th, 31st and Sept. 1st.)

The church is located on state road #623. Those traveling 57 east or west turn on Fairystone Park Rd. travel a short distance and turn left on 623, follow to church on the right.

Those traveling north or south on highway 220 turn on State Road 605 north of Oak Level (at blinking light designating sharp curve) Stay on 605 (Henry Road) thru Henry, across railroad tracks for several miles. Turn left on 623 to the church on the left.

Those traveling highway 40 (Franklin St.) east or west turn on State Road 605 about 5 miles west of Ferrum Va. at Crossroad Market, Go through Ingramville over hill, turn right on 623 and follow to church on the left.

We invite all of our faith and order to come and be with us.

W.G. Parsons, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR MAY 1996

A.J. Griffin, Al	\$2.00
Mrs. Florence D. Maxey, VA	2.00
Mrs. Muriel M. Strader, NC	2.00
Mrs. Erby Dalton, VA.....	2.00
Miss Reidy Pickral, VA.....	25.00
Mrs. Elma G. Wilson, NC	2.00
Mrs. Virginia Gladding, MD	7.00
Mrs. Pearl Pendleton, VA	2.00
W. William Edwards, NC	2.00
Mrs. S.L. Walker, VA	7.00
R. Vernan Furr, NC	2.00
Walter Griffith, NC.....	2.00

OBITUARIES

SISTER JENNIE DENTON



ur Lord called home Sister Jennie Denton. She was called from this life in December 1995. She was the daughter of Drew Worley and Pattie Shelton Worley.

Sister Denton attended Springfield Primitive Baptist Church until she moved from this area. She was received by conference June 12, 1976.

Written in Love and Hope,
Carol Pickral

Elder Marvin Brumfield,
Moderator
Oscar Pickral, Clerk

BERNICE GLYNMORE GREER

It is indeed with a sad heart I attempt to write the Obituary of our dear friend, and brother in tribulation, Bernice Glynmore Greer, born May 20, 1904: Mother, Mary Fanny, Fralin Greer, and father, Blanche Greer. They were blessed with six children, Erby, Jesse, Bernice, William, Sadie, and Effie. They lived in the Paynes Creek, and County Line vicinity. Mary Fanny and Effie were members at County Line for many years, until death. All are deceased. Bernice entered into rest, December 17, 1995, after a comfortable active day. Was married to Ivy Mrytle Nolan April 14, 1928. He retired from N.&W. Railway. Survivors are his wife of near 68 years, and two sons and two daughters-in-law.

Robert H. Greer & wife Betsy. Glynn R. Greer & wife Patsy. Grand children Susan Byers & husband Randy, Andy Greer, Brad Greer & Wife Cindy, Sherwood Greer & Wife Madonna. Seven Great grand children.

Dear Bernice, a true friend of County Line helped in upkeep of cemetery, and in keeping grounds in summer and removing leaves in Autumn, always present in all needed help. Never blessed to tell the dear ones how Great things the Good Lord had done for his soul. Was blessed to know the joyful sound of the gospel, and rejoice in it. Desired and lived a quiet, and peaceable life, and to set a good example for his family; Others care seem more important than his own. We feel a great loss but we believe his great

gain far exceeds all earthly loss. May we be granted grace, to ever say, O! Lord thy WILL be done (he is gone from the evil to come.) ISA. 57:1. Services, Lotz Salem Chapel. Wednesday, December 20, 1995; 3 p.m.

Elder W.T. Conner

Elder Noel F. Conner

Interment Sherwood Memorial Park

By request of County Line Church.

(N.F.C.)

MALA VICKERS MASSEY

Mala Vickers Massey, a member of The Durham Primitive Baptist Church passed from this life on October 21, 1995, at the age of 91. She was born on November 17, 1903, to Joseph Hiram Vickers and Flora Whitfield Vickers and was the last survivor of their ten children.

When she was a teen-aged girl she was visited in a dream by an angel dressed in white who told her that the Lord's work with her had begun. This experience of grace was imprinted in her heart for the remainder of her journey in this world and she held on to his hope through many personal sorrows and tribulations. She said that through all her trials she doubted herself many times, but never doubted His promises. By faith she believed the doctrine of salvation by grace and predestination to eternal life for those for whom Christ died. In 1919, at the age of 16, she offered to The Durham Primitive Baptist Church and was

blessed to be an active member for 76 years.

Her funeral was held October 23, 1995, at The Durham Primitive Baptist Church. The service was conducted by Elder C.B. Davis, Jr., and Elder Cleo Robertson. Portions of two of her favorite hymns were read: "Sovereign Ruler of The Skies" and "How Firm a Foundation". Her body was interred at Woodlawn Memorial Park in Durham beside the body of her deceased husband, Brother Cecil R. Massey.

Surviving are three children, Catherine Humbarger, Annie Ruth Massey and Walter T. Massey. Three grandchildren: Ann Copley, Sharon Throup and Jay Massey; and four great grandchildren.

Her love for the church was constant and steadfast and when the time came for her to go Home, The Lord gently loosed the silver cord and granted her spirit a sweet and peaceful dismissal from this life into the marvelous light of His eternal presence.

Her faith might best be described by The Scripture which I found she had written on the back of an envelope shortly before she passed. "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." (I Cor., 29 and Isaiah 64.4). She lived - and died - with this promise in her heart.

Submitted in love,
Catherine M. Humbarger

QUENELL CLARK MOORE

In memory of my mother, Quenell Clark Moore, born to Marion Franklin Clark and Tivis Taylor Clark August 24th, 1908 in Stokes County. She passed away on Nov. 4th, 1995 at the age of 87. She is survived by her husband Gid U. Moore of Alamance Health Care Center, Burlington, N.C. One daughter, Arlene M. Hole, two sons: Marshall and Urvin, four grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by one son, John Marion, one sister and four brothers.

Mother joined with Snow Creek Primitive Baptist Church August 1952 and was baptized by Elder D.A. O'Bryant on the next fourth Sunday morning in September, 1952 church was her delight in life and when she became unable to attend it was her desire to go on as she would say. When she breathed her last breath, I could not weep for her as I felt her sufferings were over and her wish had been granted. She was a firm believer in election and predestination; a true mother in Israel who had been given a sweet hope of eternal life.

A very fitting service was said over her by Elders Jimmy Spencer and Thorton Manley. Her body was laid to rest in Snow Creek Church Cemetery to await the resurrection.

"Sorrowful, Yet Rejoicing"

Desiring that one copy of this be placed in the church records one copy sent to the Signs and one to the Landmark.

Arlene Moore Hole, daughter

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

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

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A SUDDEN CRY

*A sudden cry and a child is born, into
this world and all should mourn,
For many things upset his road,
And heavy laden hangs the load.*

*There are trials and troubles
everywhere,
His part of worries he will share,
But there will be some pleasures too,
In earthly treasures he'll pursue.*

*He'll build himself an earthly house,
To love and worship with his spouse,
He'll try his hand in every greed'
And gather all his worldly needs.*

*He'll think he's happy for a while,
And live in luxury in his style,
He'll brag about the things he's done,
And hide his errors from everyone,*

*Then he'll began to feel a need,
For something more than gold and
greed,*

*A sorrow comes for all his sin,
And he'll began to search within.*

*A sudden cry and a child is born,
Into the spirit of the Lord,
He's cried for mercy from his God,
He's seen the road that he has trod.*

*Soft thoughts appear before his eyes,
Of understanding to his life,
Old things will daily go away,
A new peace given him this day.*

Katherine Mathews

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Elder William A. Winfrey	
Lucille M. Young	

EDITORIAL

BORN AGAIN



Elder C.C. Wilbanks

Jesus said unto Nicodemus, "*Ye must be born again.*" This doctrine is of tremendous importance and is set forth in very simple language, yet it is misunderstood and misused as much or more than any doctrine in the Scriptures of truth. There was a time in my early life when I believed that I could give my heart to Christ at any time, and ask to be born again and I would be born

again. This was and still is the teaching of unregenerate men, yet it is not the doctrine taught by the Holy Spirit to the children who have been "*born of the water and of the Spirit.*" All natural men are born of the flesh, are of the earth earthy, and have only a father and mother of flesh. "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" In 1 Cor 2:14 we read, "*But 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.*" One who has not been born of the Spirit has only a natural or carnal mind, and "*the carnal mind is enmity (hatred) against God.*" Will or can any one whose mind is enmity against God ask to be born again? Surely not. All men are born dead in trespasses and sins, They come forth from the womb speaking lies. (Ps.58:3). Can the dead do any thing? Can they even choose? No, they cannot, for there must be life before there can be any action. Even the elect children cannot choose life, for, "*it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*" (Rom 9:16). Jesus said, "*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*". And in John 1:13, "*which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*"

Let us now ask a few questions. Did you ask to be born? Did you choose your father and mother? Did you

choose the time and place of your birth? Did you have any part in receiving a natural life? Surely you must answer, No, to all these questions. Neither can you choose to be born again. Jesus said, *"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."*

A birth does not give life, for the life must be begotten of a father before there can be a birth, which only makes the life manifest. The seed of all mankind was in Adam in the creation, and Eve is the mother of all in the flesh. Because all men were in the first Adam when he fell in sin they fell in him. A corrupt tree (Adam) cannot bring forth good fruit (Matt 7:18), and we are only Adam multiplied. It is through many natural generations that we are born of our earthly parents. As we were in the first Adam in the creation, so were the chosen of God in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. According to the good pleasure of his will, God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, and made us accepted in the beloved. (See Eph 1:3-5). God is omniscient. He has always known all things, there is nothing new to him. God created all men in Adam and brings them into the world at his appointed time.

From among all of them he made a choice and gave them unto Jesus before any of them were born into the world: their names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world. *"Behold, I and the children which God hath given me."* (Heb 2:13, Isa 8:18). There are many people who say that God would be unjust if he chose some and did not give all men a chance to be saved. I am glad that my hope of salvation is not left to chance, but is in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Does not God have the right to do with his own as it pleases him? In Romans 9:12-16 we read, *"For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."* Regardless of what unregenerate men may charge against God he is holy and just. *"Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."* (Ps.97:2). This would be so even if he should cast all men into the pits of hell. But those he chose he hath loved with an everlasting love and with loving-kindness he

draws them. (Jer 31:3). Because of his love he gave his beloved Son to die for them, to redeem them from the curse of the law that said, "The soul that sinneth, it must die." (Ezek 18:4). Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. (Heb 9:22). He was made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree. (Gal.3:13). Jesus shed his holy and pure blood on the tree of the cross and by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Heb 10:14).

The life of God's elect children was in Christ before the foundation of the world for he is the way, and the truth, and the life, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col 3:3). Christ is the head of the church and the church is his body, and members in particular. (Eph 5:23 & 1 Cor 12:27) In Ps 139:15:16 we read, "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, being yet unperfect: and in thy book all my members were written when as yet there were none of them." Being the body of Christ they have a unity with him that can never be severed. When he hung upon the cross and died we were baptized into his death. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have

been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Rom 6:4-7).

In the flesh we are sinners and will continue to sin till our natural death, for when sin is finished it brings forth death. James tells us that "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death." (James 1:15). 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." (Rom 8:9). We are in the Spirit only if we have been born again of the Holy Spirit, and "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." (1 John 3:9).

After we have been born again there are two men within us. Paul speaks of them as the "old man" and the "new man". The old man is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. This brings about a warfare in us, for the flesh (old man) lusteth against the Spirit (new man), and the Spirit against the flesh. We find then, as did Paul, that there is no good thing in our flesh.

When we would do good evil is ever present with us so that we cannot find how to do that which is good, and the evil which we would not, that we do. But Paul says, *"If I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."* I would suggest that you read the 7th chapter of Romans to get the fulness of that which I have only paraphrased, for it is too long to quote here. But the last two verses we quote, *"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So with the mind I myself serve the law of God: but with the flesh the law of sin."*

Unregenerate men preach that men are made better by a new birth, but we know that the "old man" is not changed at all. Paul did not say, "O wretched man that I WAS, but that I AM." And he thanked God that he shall be delivered from this body of death. In the flesh he was the same as he was before being born again. Are we any different? If we are like Paul then we are crucified with Christ. (Gal 2:19-20). *"For I thru the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 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."* That life is eternal and can never die, but returns to the Father who gave it when death claims our natural life and our body is given to the grave. Our flesh will return to the dust from

which it was made, to sleep unto the day our Lord and Saviour returns to receive it unto himself. *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."* (1 Thes 4:16). And John 5:28-29, *"Marvel not at this: for the hour 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."* Only those who have been born again of the Holy Spirit, in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells, can do good, for Jesus said, *"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."* (John 15:5). Paul said, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* (Phil 4:13). All of our righteousness (self righteousness) is as filthy rags. (Isa 64:6). In Eph 2:10 we read, *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* Shall we fail to walk in them? Never.

All men are born dead in trespasses and in sin, and in John 5:21 we read, *"For as the Father raiseth up the*

dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." And in verse 25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." To me this is speaking of the new birth, the being born again. This is the making manifest that eternal life that was given us in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world. Paul said this is a mystery. "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from 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).

What a wonderful hope this is! even though it seems to fade away so far that we sometimes doubt that we even have a hope. Yet if we have a true hope (Jesus) we will never be without, for he hath said, *"I will never leave nor forsake thee."* (Heb 13:5). Paul tells us, *"-even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."* (Rom 8:23-25). Only those who have been given eternal life can have this hope. Jesus called them his sheep, and said, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish." In order for one to have hope he must have life, for the dead know nothing and can do nothing. Jesus said, *"All that the Father hath given me shall come to me, and I will raise him up at the last day."* (John 6:37). But to some he said, *"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 to me, that ye might have life."* (John 5:40). He also said, *"No man can come unto me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him."*

Brethren, if I have a true hope in Christ it is that my body shall be changed and redeemed from the grave, and that I shall live forever in the presence of the Lord and Saviour. Praise his glorious name for this sweet hope. Can there be anything better for a poor, wretched, sinsick soul, who knows that God would be just in casting him into hell?

Brethren, I realize that I have only touched the surface of this enormous subject, but if the Lord be in the matter it is enough for the time. May he bless the truth and pardon all error. To those whose views are not in accord with what I have written, I desire no conflict. I have set forth only what I believe, and trust that they are in accord with the holy Scripture. May God give you grace to remember me in your prayers of faith.

Eld. C.C. Wilbanks

ARTICLES

Just so sure; as the sun rises in the east; and sets in the west; it is no less sure; that, if you are blessed to speak that pure and Holy truth, as it is in the Lord Jesus Christ; in the hearing, of the self - will worshipers, and self - work mongers; of this world; you, and what you are blessed to stand for; will, assuredly be hated. Now, why is that? To find the answer; just think back to your first experience; in becoming aware, of what you were, in your own fleshly sinful nature's ways; did you not feel completely condemned? of a certainty, you did. Now, is it not a true existing fact? that no one, in their fleshly nature's ways; would dare ask, for self condemnation? I believe not. I also feel, that one who has never felt that, self-condemnation; is clear evidence; that one; has not yet had, an experience of God's grace, or the revelation of the Holy Truth. I realize, that in my writing and talking; concerning these things; I often mention the weakness and wickedness; in and of man's carnal flesh; and some may feel, that it is unnecessary, to dwell upon it to such extent; and I have no desire, to argue the point, with anyone who feels that way; but, will attempt to give a reason, why I do so; - It is my feelings that, in order for one to fully and truly appreciate light; he must first have experienced darkness; and, in order to continue with that appreciation; he or she, must continue to compare; that

stark difference; between light and darkness; and if fleshly nature of man; does not represent darkness; as has to do with our subject here; then, I surely am still, in total darkness. Darkness being, the total opposite of, Light; as is purity, the opposite of filth; as is black, from white; and, as is truth, from untruth or the lie; and, as is Holiness, the opposite from wickedness; then, is it not reasonable, to assume that, if we are not aware of both; we then cannot be fully aware of either one? I feel that we cannot. Therefore, so long as we live here in this body of sinful flesh; we must be kept mindful of its sinful nature; if we are to view its opposite; the Holy Spirit of "God," in His was any working; so as to somewhat, see and feel, their vast difference.

If one is not aware of his 'own' weakness; he cannot have an awareness of, that almighty unhindered power of God; and if such be the case; from where, does the Holy fear of "God" enter in? Otherwise, his fear of "God," would be only such fear, as a man might fear an attacking lion; which, is not that Holy fear; as the born again child of "God," feels toward his "God." Within our realization or awareness, of our own weakness; is, wherein comes our strength, to feel, and believe, in the greatness, of our "Lord and God." Read 2nd Corinthians 12:9-10.

It is not in man of himself; to either save, or help save, himself, or any other; for heaven and immortal glory. For his flesh and blood, cannot enter therein. And, as for his soul; he has no

control; he of himself, cannot see it, touch it; or change it; from black to white, or from white to black, or from lost to saved, nor from saved to lost; for all that; was confirmed and established, in God's choosing of His people; from before any people, were ever in this time existing world. For, whatsoever God confirms and establishes; remains established forever. For He is the unchanging God. He does neither want, desire, nor ask for, anything or anything. He created it all; and holds it all; and controls it all; and does with it all; just as be His own good pleasure, to do with it each and all. And so, He has absolutely no condition at all, in its entirety. His will, purpose and pleasure; just simply shall be done and accomplished, to its every jot and tittle; For He is God; and all He created and made, including the devil; are His tools, to use as He so pleases. And natural man; who thinks himself to be so great; cannot even direct his own footsteps. For they all are directed of God. All strength, what be an absolute necessity, for mankind to live, move, or have his being; is furnished by, almighty God; and that strength He furnishes to each one of us; is measured out, in just sufficient amount, no more and no less; than, shall enable him to perform those exact movements or things; he were placed here for and to perform; and whenever, his allotted days and hours and minutes, draws to a close, for his stay here; "God" just ceases to furnish him strength, and his mortal body dies. It all is just that simple with God. For He giveth life,

and He taketh life away; just as it pleaseth Him. Yes Dear ones; whether or not, we like it, or believe it; every man, woman or child, ever born into this world; is wholly and completely, dependent upon our "Creator God," for our very being, and all whatever takes place with us each and all; either in this world, or that world to come; after this world is no more.

Now, what I have written here, concerning the wickedness, in and of fleshly mankind; was in nowise intended, to reflect upon, his Creator "God;" in His work in Creating man; for, as was all His creations it was good and very good; even also, the satan or the devil; with whom, mankind, has had, and still does have, very much dealings with; in heeding his advice, and following his instructions; just as Eve (the first woman to ever live here upon this earth) did, there in the garden of Eden.

May we be given to see and understand this; The almighty and merciful "God;" did it all, to fulfill His own good and Holy purpose; and therefore; it all, shall serve unto that very end; whereby, his good and holy purpose, shall be fulfilled; to its every jot and tittle; every i dotted, and every T crossed. And all that being so; simply, by reason, He is God. He holds it all in His grasp; and has absolute control over its entirety. Not one speck or grain of dust or sand, can rise or fall, without Him. He set all bounds, and established all goings. All whatever has been; and ever shall be; has already been; in both His mind and purpose; from before the foundation,

of the world. Some say, that what we say, concerning the Predestination of God; does charge Him, with making man sin. But, from my own experiences; all man's sinning; is voluntarily done; through and by, his own carnal satisfaction. Therefore, that sin he commits; is not necessarily, in the thing performed; but instead; in that weakened intent, within his mind and heart; as he does perform it. For the performance itself; is, directed of God. For remember: Man walketh; but, God directeth his footsteps. For man to travel, undirected of God; then, man could be somewhere outside the boundaries, of the knowledge of God; which is an entire impossibility; for, God is infinite; therefore, His knowledge is infinite; He is present in all places and spaces; His all seeing eyes, see all things at all times, even the secrets of man's heart; and though men are sometimes successful, in hiding from others, what is really in their heart; none-the-less; God is fully aware of them all. (Regarding temptation) James 1:13, 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: Man is tempted of his own lust; then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and when sin is finished, it bringeth forth death. Death of a man; is, when his sinning ceases. If a man say, he sinneth not; he is a liar, and the truth is not in him. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Romans (3:23). To be Spiritually

mind; is, to have no desire, for self praise; and, to desire to hear NO praise, of others of mankind; but instead, have a desire, that any and all praise, honor and glory; be directed unto His great and Holy name; the only name, given under heaven or among men, could ever be worthy. For otherwise; it must be and is, vain glory. And, the Lord God, is the only one; who can rightly, impute glory to another; if so be His pleasure to do it; and that being, with His own glorious Self. After all, who else beside Himself; could have any Self glory; to shed upon another? None, I believe. I am persuaded, that were it possible; for all the goodness and greatness, in and of, the True and living "God," be written into books; they would more than cover the whole earth; and reach the height of His throne, in heaven and immortal glory. While, on the other hand; were each of mankinds sins, he and she has committed, since Adam and Eve were driven from the garden of Eden; were the size of a mustard seed; they would amount to more, in number; than all the grains of sand, along the shores, of all the seas. And so, if able to somewhat, contemplate such immensity; do we not begin to see; that purpose, "God" had and has, in there being a hell; and also, His purpose in and for, having sent His only begotten Son down here, in this lowground of sin and sorrow; to pay that awful debt, owed, by His afore chosen people? I feel and hope I do. I feel so sure, that I have no doubt of

this one thing; if Christ, did not pay that awful sinful debt, for this poor sinner; then hell shall surely and justifiably be my stay; when He takes me out of this world. Christ the Lord, is my only hope of heaven. Praise "God," from whom all blessings flow; Of none other, do I wish to know.

Troy G. Shepard

VOICES OF THE PAST

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

GOD'S METHOD OF ADDING BELIEVERS INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH

April, 1955



ELDER E.J. LAMBERT



AN EDITOR forwarded a request to me from a reader in Alabama, to write a treatise on Romans 10:14 which reads, "How then

shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? " I attempt this fully aware of the fact that I must be especially inspired with divine qualifications for this special venture or this attempt will be vain.

We cannot lift a verse of Scripture out of its context and treat upon it independently of its setting and hope to derive a true conclusion. Neither

can we come to a true conclusion without considering all the Scriptures lest there be a contradiction. The fact that this verse is written using all pronouns in third person we must consider who is writing, to whom it is addressed, of whom is he speaking and what is the subject under consideration?

Paul, who was a "servant of Jesus Christ," "Called to be an apostle," "Separated unto the gospel of Jesus Christ," did this writing. He had "received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations." Let us see how Paul was led into this condition. Read the ninth chapter of Acts relative to his conversion. Paul was one of the elect family, "A chosen vessel," beloved of God, and was chosen in Christ before he had this experience. He was full of zeal toward God, but not according to knowledge when the light shined about him. He had breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ and had obtained authority from the high priests to bring men and women bound to Jerusalem who were disciples of the Lord. He was persecuting worshippers of the Christ when he was stopped by Him. We see, then, that Paul was ordained beforehand by God unto the position he was in when he wrote this letter but it took the direct operation of God's Holy Spirit upon both Paul and Ananias, a preacher, to perfect this ordination. He assented to believe in God but not that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. He possessed zeal toward God but not a zeal toward Jesus Christ. He

was a chosen vessel but had not been separated unto the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When you read this account of Paul's experience as recorded in the ninth and twenty-second chapters of Acts you will find that Paul *heard the voice* of the Son of God. This voice had its effect as always. This voice ordered him to go to a certain place "and there it shall be told thee of all things which are *appointed* for thee to do " (Acts 22 :10). At the same time God was working directly upon a preacher, Ananias. The Lord said unto Ananias, "Go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. . . (Go thy way; for he is a *chosen vessel unto me*, to bear my name before Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he *must* suffer for my name's sake " (Acts 9 :11,12,15,16). Read the record. You will see that both obeyed and met. The result was that Paul *heard* the preacher because God had prepared the heart of Paul and had sent the preacher.

Paul *believed* the preacher because God had and was directly working upon Paul and the preacher. Ananias laid his hand upon Paul, Paul received his sight, Ananias baptized Paul, ordained him as a preacher as ministers are ordained today. Paul abode there certain days and straightway preached

Jesus in the synagogues as the Christ, the Son of God. He had now received grace and apostleship. We see that Paul knew by his experience what he was writing in Romans 10:14,15. He knew that God had sent and used a preacher in bringing him into the fellowship of the Church, and in ordaining him as a minister. God hath ordained that a few of the many for whom Jesus died will be added to the Church in this way.

Paul is particularly addressing those who have already been added to the Church in Romans 10:14. He is primarily addressing the Gentiles who have been endowed with the Holy Spirit, who have heard and believed gospel preaching. These have the faith in their hearts that Jesus is the Son of God. These have confessed with their mouths and have been baptized. They knew from experience that there had been a miraculous working. They had heard and believed God-sent preachers. God uses Paul in this letter to preach to them as well as unto us to their edification and comfort. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that *believe*" (1 Cor. 1:21). God is saving them as well as us from erroneous theories and vain practices through Paul's preaching. We want you to understand that Paul is writing to *believers in Christ Jesus*. He is writing of a *people of God who have not yet believed that Jesus is the Christ*.

Paul has under consideration the children of God among the Jews who have a zeal toward God but not according to knowledge. His heart's

desire and prayer to God is that they might be saved. He bears record of this zeal in trying to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves unto the righteousness of God. The zealous law worshippers of this day are in the same category, especially those who are not satisfied with their righteousness but go about trying to establish their own righteousness. I think it is evident that many who are born of God do not yet believe that Jesus is their Christ. They are yet under the law and worshippers of it. One truly born of God finds by sad experience that his efforts to establish his own righteousness are not successful, seeing he falls short of meeting its demands. Paul says in *Romans 10:4*, "**Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**" There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile for the "*same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.*" Then he quotes, "*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*" (*Romans 10:13*).

In response to the quotation, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," Paul asks a number of questions which verifies God's method of saving His people in the sense expressed in the quotation. May we think of this as a golden chain God uses in especially saving a remnant of His elect from the dominion of the law and sin experienced in time. It is His way of bringing some of His children into sweet fellowship with one another. Through this chain He makes them fit and proper subjects

for baptism. Those of you who are "called to be saints," who are members of the Church, know that you heard the truth preached by, or rather, through a preacher. Because that your heart was prepared to hear the preached truth, you heard and believed the truth. You assented to this truth by confessing with your mouth using words of the tongue which was prepared by the Lord. You were received by the Church and were baptized by a preacher. All members of the militant church have heard and believed the preaching of God-sent ministers, and have been baptized in water by a God-sent and properly ordained preacher. These expressions are in strict accord with all cases cited in the Acts.

We want to call your attention to Paul's discourse on Mars Hill in Athens. The people Paul addressed there had an altar having this inscription, "To the unknown God." "As I passed by, and beheld your devotion, I found an altar with this inscription, *to the unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you*" (Acts 17 :23). These were ignorantly worshipping God. Therefore, they were proper subjects of gospel address. Paul preached that God was the Lord of the heavens and of the earth, and that in Him we moved and had our being. He also preached Christ unto them and some believed ! These people were subjects of gospel address because they ignorantly worshipped God. They had been born again but had not yet believed in Jesus Christ. God was directly working with

Paul and some of these people in order to bring them into the knowledge of the *truth*. The result was that "Certain men claved unto him and *Believed*" (Acts 17:34). You will notice that it was *certain* men. It was certain men who had godly preparations. Let us pass to Philip and the eunuch of Ethiopia as recorded in Acts 8:26-39, and see if we do have the same procedure as indicated in Romans 10:14,15.

Here we find that a preacher was sent. Philip was sent to the Ethiopian. The Ethiopian was a worshipper of God because he had gone up to the temple at Jerusalem to worship. The eunuch was interested in the Scriptures because he was reading the prophecy of Isaiah as he rode along in his chariot. He read but did not understand what he read. He wanted to know of Philip if Isaiah was speaking of himself or of some other man. The eunuch was reading the seventh and eighth verses of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. Philip began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus. When they had come to certain water, the eunuch asked, "See here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip answered, "*If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.*" The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Philip baptized the eunuch. The eunuch was born of the Spirit and his heart especially prepared by God to hear and believe the preaching of Philip. Philip was especially sent to preach Jesus to the eunuch. When the eunuch assented to the belief that Jesus is the

Son of God, the eunuch was a fit subject for baptism. The eunuch was born of God and in possession of godly zeal, he was ignorantly worshipping the symbol at Jerusalem and was interested in the Scriptures before Philip, preached to him. The eunuch was, being in that condition, a subject of gospel address. He was alive spiritually but needed guidance because he couldn't understand what he read. The Ethiopian did not know whether Isaiah spoke of himself or of some other man. God used Philip to preach Jesus unto him that he might understand that Isaiah was prophesying of Jesus and not of himself. What was the result? The eunuch believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and was given a desire to follow Him in baptism in water. The eunuch was added to the church in fellowship one with another. Now, read the second chapter of Acts.

You will find that Peter was especially sent and qualified to preach that sermon by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. You will see that it especially pricked the hearts of those individuals whom God had prepared their hearts to receive it. They yet did not understand what to do. They realized they must do something but did not know what they must do, so they inquired, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" These were proper subjects to receive God's commands, exhortations, and testimonies through the mouth of Peter that they might be saved from "this untoward generation" and be added to the Church. They who gave evidence that they had

gladly received His word were baptized. The command to repent and be baptized was the command to outwardly make manifest the repentance that they already experienced in heart by the direct operation of God's Holy Spirit. This was a command to come out from among them and be separate.

Read Acts 10 for an account of Cornelius' conversion. Cornelius was already born of God before God gave him the special vision recorded because he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God alway." God dealt directly with him by commanding him specifically to go to a certain place and call for a certain man who would tell him what he ought to do. God, also, directly qualified Peter for this special occasion. Note that in all cases God directly prepares both the hearer and the preacher, and in all cases cited he used preachers in this special salvation under consideration! You will find that Cornelius told his experience. Peter preached Jesus unto the hearers who had been gathered by God's providence. After seeing the evidence that the gift of the Holy Ghost had been poured out on them Peter commanded them to be baptized.

You who read this may ask, "Does faith come by the preacher?" Paul must have surmised such question in treating upon this text for he reasons that they have not all obeyed even though the sound of gospel preaching has been literally heard by them.

Then he quotes a question from Isaiah 53:1, "Who hath believed our report?" He answers by saying, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" - (Rom. 10:17). Spiritual hearing does not come by the preacher but by the Word of God. God must speak to each and every individual that hears spiritually. This faith is directly imparted to His people as a gift from Him. Some phases of this faith come to a few *through* a preacher but not by a preacher. I have heard it said by ordained brethren, "There will be no preaching unless the preacher comes." Jesus Christ is the Preacher that was anointed for this particular work. He was ordained to preach the gospel to the poor. Unless Christ preaches through an individual there will be no preaching. Unless He preaches to an individual there will be no comfort and spiritual strength experienced. Christ is the Word. Every time you are given to hear Christ preach through His ordained ministers your faith is strengthened and your hope renewed. You are not given to thank the preacher but to thank God for the preaching that you so joyfully received. You admire the minister and thank God for him.

"*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things*" (Romans 10:15). Have you been deeply impressed with the readiness of your pastor to come to you in times of distress when you call upon him? Have you noticed how persistently he goes among his scattered flock to administer words of

comfort? Have you ever experienced a peaceful calm as you watched a minister walking toward you? When your troubled heart has been calmed as you listened to gospel preaching you have thought, "His feet were guided and directed by the providence of God that he might bring glad tidings of good things to me." You have noticed that his walk is graced with humility and meekness. You observe that his steps and actions are carefully and prayerfully taken. His feet are not swift to run into trouble and confusion but he walks beside the still waters. "Surely," you say, "God is guiding his footsteps for he walks in paths of righteousness."

You listen to the words he speaks. They calm your troubled breast and soothe your aching heart. They are words of peace that settle your confused mind. He tells you of good things, that our God reigns in providence and grace, and that Jesus saves you from all your sins. He cries that God is merciful to your unrighteousness, and is a present help in time of trouble. He preaches that it is through the merits of Christ that we have hope of heaven and immortal glory. You desire to be in complete fellowship of the saints. You are made willing to come out from among this untoward generation, follow your Lord in baptism, and be numbered with this peculiar people who trust only in the Lord. May God enable those of you who are not numbered with those who have believed with their hearts and confessed with their mouth to do so. May He give you strength and

courage to "Go home (to the Church) to your friends (those who feel little but trust in God) and tell them how great things the *Lord hath done for you and had compassion upon you.*" Tell your experience. Those of you who are numbered with the church, may God bless you to thank Him for the fellowship of your brethren. May God sanctify these meditations to your comfort and edification is my prayer.

Elder E.J. Lambert

THE RISEN CHRIST

There is no room for quibbling about there being a resurrection of the dead. Opinions we have about when it is and how it is, but we have no right in the world to an opinion about there being a resurrection of the dead. Soon we are to go the way of all the earth. Ere long the enemy death shall come our way. The world of God's children are interested in the matter. It is not something to be dealt with in a light manner, and brushed aside. It is claiming our attention because it concerns us in a weightier way than ever before. Our loved ones are being killed in every manner known to modern warfare. We have seen them come into this material world as human beings, and grow into manhood and womanhood. They - themselves, human beings, flesh and blood folks - are near and dear to us. Our hope is that they are in that glorious number

chosen in Christ Jesus before the world began. In every person there is a hope of seeing again those that have tasted of the graciousness of God that hope is of more concern than to others. It is a hope made alive by the presence of a living being. On this, we desire to treat and to give our reason for the hope that is in us. (1 Peter 3:15) Some hopes are good ones, some not so good. Some hopes are based on creature effort, some on God's work. Some hope that they are not deceived in what God has done, others hope they will hold out to the end. Now what is our hope? Often-times we have talked it over with you, but let us go over the ground once again. Salvation is the theme of the people of God. The angel confirmed Joseph in his fear. Jesus shall save his people from their sins. I want to affirm and stand in the face of all opposition that his salvation is not for spirits, but that it is for people. I do not know of any people but the kind that roams this earth. If there is any inspired description of people that would lead us to think that the people in bible days are any different than they were in the morning of time or down to now I certainly am not aware of it. In the kindest way I want to affirm that the object of all the sufferings of Christ was the salvation of sinners. My hope of heaven and immortality bids me reject every doctrine that is not centered around that thought. There is not (and I believe that all my writing bears me out) a thing else to preach. There is not any middle ground to occupy. Spirits did not have any promise of salvation.

People did. I hope that none believe any less than this, but believe what brethren may, here is where I desire to stand. Moreover, I have never expressed myself on the new birth. I know that two and probably more outstanding thoughts prevail among our people. I know that good, spiritual-minded brethren have been on each side. Generally speaking, our people have differed on it in a brotherly manner. I am glad of that and I do hope that I may express myself so clearly and emphatically that none will ever call in question where I stand. At the same time I do hope to express my views in such a manner, that even though they are rejected, that I will be looked over and watched after by the brethren. This theme of salvation was ever in purpose. (2 Tim. 1:9) It is manifested in time. We have a direct declaration of it from heaven. (Matt. 1:21) It concerns people, men and women. To come into that kingdom concerns people, men and women. There is not a vestige of proof that any thing but men and women was meant by the angel. If that is not what is meant, why did he say people? It was one of the same kind of people that came to the Savior. If Nicodemus was not a man what was he? Was it not a man that Jesus had under consideration? Was it not a man he was talking to? If there had been two hundred, could it not have been said a crowd of people came? And is it not people that are to be saved? To me, Jesus told him that people, men and women, such as you are, Nicodemus, are the object of my coming to earth. To get into my king-

dom ye must be born again. Had he been born once? To be sure he had. He had been born into this material world. That made one birth, that was one time. Now to get into my kingdom you must be born again. Up until now it (salvation) has to do with people, men and women. I am not given to brevity but here is where I desire to stay. The Savior said men, the angel said people, the Savior said sinners. This cannot be explained. Nothing needs explanation that is self-explanatory. It is men and women that are saved by the blood of Jesus. It is men and women that are born again. Now we come to the resurrection of the dead. These men and women that were saved by the blood of Jesus, and that were born into his kingdom, die. No way for them to escape death. Brethren, at this time I believe it was just such characters as you and me that were under consideration by the angel. I believe it was the same kind (as though there was any other kind) being addressed by the Savior when he was talking to Nicodemus. It is the same characters, the same kind, flesh and blood, that are dead. We speak of them as dead men or women, before this we have referred to them as saved men and women or as that man or woman is born of the Spirit. Will the dead arise? The best answer I know to that is that they have. This cannot be evaded, this cannot be compromised, an opinion cannot be had about this. If the plain, simple, inspired writing of the Bible does not mean that Christ arose, what does it mean? Inspiration said he did, but let us suppose that the

account of his resurrection does not mean that he rose. Very well, now just to which of us uninspired fellows is to be entrusted the job of telling what it does mean? Personally I believe that Jesus rose from the tomb. I think it fair and brotherly to tell you while on this particular phase of the subject that it was a flesh, blood, bone body that rose. It had, while pulsating with life, gotten weary, (John 4:6) my body does the same. It had gotten hungry (Mark 11:12) mine does the same. He got thirsty on the cross, (John 19:28) I am sure I would have too. He died as we must die. We know that the children of God must all die, a natural, corporeal death. We did not partake of flesh and blood because he did, but he partook of both in order to become like unto us. Would it not be the most fantastic work palmed off on the children of God if Christ became like them, (that is, was a partaker of flesh and blood) his fleshly body rise and theirs be forever and forever consigned to the power of the grave? This may be true but if it is I have not so learned Christ, but I desire to wait patiently and if I am wrong may God teach me right, and in the meantime teach me forbearance towards those that differ. If this taking of flesh and blood does not mean anything perhaps it does not mean anything to be a partaker of divine nature. If I lose the one am I not in danger of losing the other, and thus becoming a nonentity? Upon what foundation can we rest? If we are partakers of both flesh and blood and of the divine nature, and we are to lose the one how do we know we would not

lose the other? What purpose was served in Jesus taking flesh and blood? Was it not in some grand and glorious way connected with the salvation of the children of God? In what way? In the salvation of the children of God. Primarily his coming in the flesh was for the destruction of death and the power of death and him that had that power (Heb. 2:14) while like them he overcame. No matter how low we get we shall overcome. Any place, thing, event or condition that ever comes against the children of God was met by Jesus Christ. Perhaps some would say if he met it and overcame it why must we follow? It is so good to follow when the way is open and clear, and our Leader has become the way, but we could never have gone forward alone. Going alone and meeting the things Christ endured and suffered for us would have been punishment for us, but following is not a punishment but a blessing. Do the dead rise? Christ rose, was he dead? Now the next question has the kernel of the whole thing in it. Do flesh and blood bodies die? They do. Then the dead rise. Progress in material things is to be desired, but brethren I cannot go beyond this. I may be wrong, yes, but if wrong about this, wrong about all. Sinners are the beneficiaries of salvation. He came, lived, died and arose for them. Then the dead do rise. What is wrong, brethren, with that? I must stand on this, it is my experience. This is what I hope I learned on the plains of southeast Missouri more than twenty years ago. I was alone and away from all big

preachers. Up until this time I had not known the least thing and I did not care anything about Old Baptists. I was reared by them and among them but I had as well been anywhere else for the good it did me. By the grace of God I have been brought thus far in his kingdom if in it at all. By his providence I have been preserved thus far. I have no apology to make for contending for salvation by grace. In purpose chosen before the world, manifested in time as men and women, salvation saves them in body, soul and spirit. Soon, soon I shall be called away. Brethren, my hope is that my body; that sits here at my desk will rise. I have felt that some want to think I have changed, but I have not in the least. I believe that Christ rose from the dead, that he is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high. In connection with the dead rising I must say that I believe in the second coming of Christ. As with the resurrection I believe it too to be in the future. Let us listen to Paul, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." In the same manner and degree that we believe Jesus rose even so do we believe God will bring them that sleep with him. Somebody is going to be alive when he comes. Their being alive will not prevent those that sleep. In some way, beyond my power of description, they have gone on, else how could he bring them with him? In this the dead shall rise first. In some way the child of God does not die. Here is ample evidence that in some sense they go on to God

at death. The evidence is just as strong that he or she has been consigned to the grave. At the second coming they are to be brought from heaven and are to rise from the grave. How long between the rising of the dead and we that are alive being changed I do not know. I do know that it is to be. We that are alive will be changed. I must say it is us, the men and women, children of God that are to be changed. The two groups (those that have died and those still alive) shall be caught up together to meet the Lord. Those that died will then be complete, those still living shall be complete. All shall be together and with the Lord. This is what the apostle commands us to comfort one another with.

Elder W.D. Griffin

"Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?" - Proverbs xx. 24.

Does not your heart sometimes quake with fear lest you have nothing but a nominal profession, lest the god of this world be blinding you, and lest your conscience be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? It is good to have such fears. He who feareth not, who has no solemn apprehensions, no anxious inquires, who is never exercised with some internal trepidation of soul, it is much to be feared has never known what it is to have "the candle of the Lord searching the inward parts of the belly." But if God has quickened your soul into spiritual life, and you have ears to

hear, I would just put two questions to you: Have you obtained: righteousness by a manifestation of Christ's righteousness; pardon by the application of Christ's blood; love by a shedding abroad of love; deliverance by a discovery of God's outstretched hand? My other question is this--if you have not, and let conscience bear its honest testimony--if you have never experienced righteousness, pardon, love, and deliverance, is there a cry in your soul after them? Is there anything like fervent supplication that God would bestow them? Is there anything of a groan in the depth of your spirit that the Lord would reveal them? These are marks of life; and he that has these marks will have the blessing, because God has quickened him into spiritual life. It may be long delayed, but it will come at last; "it will surely come, it will not tarry." It may be withheld for wise purposes, and you may have to travel through many a dark season and many an anxious hour, but deliverance is sure; it is reserved for you in Christ, and you are reserved for it, kept by God himself unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Elder J.C. Philpot

PSALM 92: 11-15.

Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

MEETINGS

CONTENTNEA

PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the next session of the Contentnea Primitive Baptist Association will be held with Hadnot Creek Church, Carteret County, N.C. On October 12-13, 1996. All who believe and love the doctrine of salvation by grace are invited.

The Church is located off NC 58 on Pelletier Loop Road approximately 13 miles east of Maysville.

Gene Lupton

EASTERN KEHUKKE ASSOCIATION

The 1996 Eastern Kehukkee Association will convene, the Lord willing, at Tarboro Church in Tarboro, North Carolina. Services will begin at 11:00 am on Saturday, October 5 and Sunday, October 6.

Tarboro Church is located at the corner of St. James Street and Albermarle Avenue, right next to the railroad.

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

John Coker, Church Clerk

SOUTH OUACHITA ASSOCIATION

The South Ouachita Association will be held, the Lord willing, on Saturday and Sunday, September 21 & 22, 1996.

The meeting will be held at New Hope Church, located at Spearsville, La. All lovers of the truth are invited to come and be with us.

Ned Barron, Association Clerk
(318) 778-4217

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The next session of the Staunton River Union is to be held, the Lord willing with Malmaison Church the 5th Sunday and Saturday before in September. A cordial invitation is extended to our ministers, brethren, and friends.

Eld. Julian Williams, Moderator
Peggy Wells, Clerk

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

West Country Line Union meeting will be held with Moon's Creek Primitive Baptist Church the 5th Sunday in September.

The Church is located off of Hwy. 86 between Danville, VA. and Yanceyville, N.C. From Danville turn left at the Parks Spring Crossing go one-half

mile and Church is on the left From Yanceyville turn right off of Hwy. 86 and go about one-half mile, Church is on the left.

All lovers of the truth are invited and especially ministers of our faith and order.

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Moderator
Sister Sue Edwards, Clerk


CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JUNE 1996

Fred W. Murphy, VA	2.00
Mrs. Ruth Dalton, VA	12.00
Mr. & Mrs. Gayle Phillips, AL ...	10.00
Tony & Carla Horton, VA	12.00
Donald R. Arrington, NC	2.00
Mrs. H.C. Houchins, VA	2.00
Mrs. J.T. Flippens, VA	7.00
Mrs. Margaret Quesenberry, VA.	2.00
Mrs. Ollie C. Gauldin, NC	2.00
Mrs. Connie Page, NC	2.00
Mrs. Frances Jarvis, CA	2.00
Eld. David Bailey, WV	2.00
Mrs. Bonnie R. Moyers, TN	2.00
Julian Ray, NC	2.00
Alvin E. Agee, Va	2.00
Harold T. Clayton, NC	2.00
Mrs. Aline C. Jacks, AL	3.00
Mrs. Cliff Weaver, WA	20.00
Mrs. Harold May, AL	7.00
Warren Brown, VA	2.00
Mrs. M.E. Womble, NC	2.00
Mrs. Hazel H. Bryant, Va	5.00
Ina Hendrix, TN	2.00
Mrs. Frances Townley, AR	2.00
James G. Hagler, Al	15.00
Oscar Pickral, VA	7.00
Ms. Mary Lou Crissman, NC	2.00
John T. Brooks, AZ	2.00

OBITUARIES

UZENIA BLACKWELL

rs. Uzenia Snider Blackwell; 86, of 135 Emily St. and 719 Lake June Road, Lake Placid, Fla., died May 16, 1996, at High Point Regional Hospital.


She was born Feb. 21, 1910, in Davidson County, a daughter of Hosey and Joyce Arey Snider. She had lived most of her life in High Point and had retired from Lillie Rubin Department Store in Fort Lauderdale, Fla She was a former employee of Adams-Millis Corp. of High Point and was a member of Mechanicsville Primitive Baptist Church. On July 9, 1932, she married Otis W. Blackwell, who survives, of the home.

Also surviving are one daughter, Mrs. Brenda Gayle Faris of Winder, Ga.; three sons, Otis W. (Bud) Blackwell of 1626 Seven Oaks Place, Jerry L. Blackwell of 506 N. Hamilton St., and Gene L. Blackwell of Durham; one sister, Mrs. Esther Brown of 132 Horneytown Road; nine grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Funeral was held at Sechrest Chapel on E. Lexington Avenue by Elder Bill Ring. Burial was at Floral Garden Park Cemetery.

Memorials may be directed to the American Cancer Society, 1004 N. Main St., High Point, N.C. 27262 or to the donor's choice.

SISTER SALLIE JANE DALTON

ur Lord called home Sister Sallie Jane Dalton. Sister Dalton passed from this life January 8, 1996 She was the daughter of Sam David Dalton and Ida Pickral Dalton.

Sister Sallie was a member of Springfield Primitive Baptist Church. She was received by Experience and Baptism May 7, 1966. Sister Sallie was always a faithful member. She always enjoyed the preaching and fellowship of her Bretheren.

Survivors of Sister Dalton are two sisters Eunice D. Simpson and Maybelle Dalton, both of Gretna.


Her funeral was conducted by Elder Marvin Brumfield and Elder Raymond Goad. Her body was laid to rest in the Gretna Burial Park.

Sister Sallie will be sadly missed by all who loved her.

Written in Love and Hope,
Carol R. Pickral

Elder Marvin Brumfield - moderator
Oscar Pickral - Clerk

ELDER ROBERT LEE HART

LDER ROBERT LEE HART, son of the late Kindred and Louemma Bates Hart was born at Ermine, Kentucky, June 23, 1931. He entered eternal life Wednesday, June 26, 1996 at the Central Baptist Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky being 65

years, and 3 days of age at the time of his passing.


Robert was married to Erva Deane Hampton. He had been a coal miner, but was a brick mason by profession. Robert was a pastor at the Hurricane Creek Primitive Baptist Church in Pineville, Ky. for 30 years. He was a veteran of the Korean Conflict, having served in the United States Army.

Robert is survived by his wife, Erva Deane Hart of Cowan, Ky. One daughter, Jennifer Hart of Cowan, Ky. Three sons: Jerry Dean Hart of Newport, TN. Jeffery Boyd Hart of Kona, Ky. Johnathan Robert Hart of Cowan, Ky. One brother, Malcolm Hart of Ermine, Ky. Three sisters: Hazel Johnson of Barbourville, Ky. Hattie Fowler of Pennsylvania. Mable Schwarzmann of Maryland.

Also surviving are 5 grandchildren along with a host of other relatives and friends to mourn his passing.

By - Elder Alpha Sears

ELDER ROBERT LEE MILES

tis by request we endeavor to write of the passing from this life of Elder Robert Lee Miles on Saturday February 24, 1996 at Community Convalescent Center in Plant City, Florida. He was 81. Born in Homeland, Florida on October 22, 1914. He was a member of The Mt. Enon Primitive Baptist Church Which he served as Pastor until October 1995, poor health causing him to resign.

He lived in Shreveport Louisiana for many years and served churches in Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas before moving back to Plant City Florida in 1986. He was received as a member of the Mt. Enon Church by letter in good standing from Pleasant Hope Primitive Baptist Church, of the Sulphur Fork Association in East Texas. He was ordained of the Old Predestinarian Baptist by request of Mt. Enon Church, the second weekend of November 1993.

If any words of comfort could be written that might comfort those who loved him we refer to the words of his own pen which he desired to be read at the graveside where he was buried. "My errors and mistakes have been many, but by the grace of God I have endeavored to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, Farewell vain world I'm going home, my saviour bids me come, sweet angels beckon from on high, then O how sweet to die. "

May we all take comfort in the sweet doctrine that he preached and the kind spirit of which he spoke when preaching the gospel of grace to the afflicted and poor children of God. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord where there is no more sorrow, pain, tears, death, crying or former things of this old sin cursed earth. Farewell my dear brother, rest in peace.

Brother Miles body was laid to rest in Mt. Enon Cemetery to await the resurrection day. He is survived by his wife Copal, three sons Robert Jr., Joel S. and Harold W., two daughters Mittie

Amelia Scofield and Cristy Anna Walker, two sisters Anna Bell Miles Craig and Mildred M. Cothorn, 18 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren. Final services were conducted by Elder J. Y. McCormick and Elder Fred B. Neikirk at the meeting house of Mt. Enon Church.

Written by request of Mt. Enon Primitive Baptist Church.

Elder Fred B. Neikirk, Pastor
Elder J. Y. McCormick, Clerk

ELDER WILLIAM A. WINFREY

Elder William A. Winfrey was born October 16, 1908 at Kingman, Kansas to W.F. and Eliza (Combs) Winfrey.

He attended school in Kingman, Kansas, graduated from High School in 1927 and then went on to business college in Wichita, Kansas where he met Elsie Martin to whom he was married on March 30, 1930.

Elder Winfrey joined Pleasant Valley Primitive Baptist Church in Kingman, Kansas on the 5th Sunday in July, 1939. His father and mother and his maternal grandfather, A.E. Combs were charter members of this church which was organized in the 1890's. Elder Winfrey served as pastor after his ordination into the ministry on April 29, 1956 until the church was dissolved in 1991.

Elder Winfrey passed away in Liberal, Kansas on June 6, 1996. Funeral services were conducted by Elder Graydon Smith of Spearsville, Louisiana.

Elder Winfrey is survived by his widow, Elsie; a son, W.D. Winfrey; three daughters, Patricia Rothermel; Dee Baker; and Jan Stuker; twelve grandchildren and twenty three great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, one brother and three sisters and an infant daughter.

Written by his family and submitted in loving memory.

**IN LOVING MEMORY
OF LUCILLE M. YOUNG**

A "Sweet Singer in Zion" received the call to eternal rest Tuesday March 10, 1996 after ninety years and six months of life. Her voice, though no longer heard, rings sweetly in the minds and hearts of those whose lives were enriched by her clear strong songs of praise and her examples of love and faithfulness in the kingdom of God.

To anyone who engaged her in conversation for more than a minute would be entertained with her awe-filled thoughts on the majesty, mystery, love and glory of the all wise God she saw with the eye of faith. She was quick to defend the doctrine yet humble in her assumption of her place in his kingdom.

She possessed both the love of God's truths and depth of understanding which exceeded that of many believers. Her writings, prolific in her earlier years, waned as time and age crept up but her love of Gospel Preach-

ing and conversation remained fervently alive until just weeks before her deliverer came to speak eternal peace to her mind, heart, and soul.

Her experiences which she always loved to tell was a beautifully undeniable display of God's Amazing Grace. From that time in mid 1930's she never wavered in her belief in God's ability to keep her safe and in His way. She prayed instead that her belief was truly ground in Him and that he would renew her strength and restore unto her the first joy in His love first felt so many years ago.

Her thirst, never quenched for the Word of God, took her on countless trips to hear it proclaimed for at least fifty years. When poor health prevented her from going she eagerly awaited the return of her pastors who loved to share with her the "Feast of God's Word" they heard at the associations attended. Hearing of the goodness of God proclaimed gave joy and animation to her conversations with family and friends.

Few have been so blessed to attend church as long as she did: for over a year in a wheel chair - some sixty years total. During most of that time she led our songs with a strong, clear, perfectly pitched voice which left no doubt in hearer's ears that hers was a voice fit for heaven where she now adds that voice to the host singing endless praises to the most high.

Submitted by her Loving daughter this Sunday after her death; Sunday, March 17, 1996.

Carrie Jo Williams

Signs of the Times

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

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METAPHORICAL VISIONS IN NATURE'S PARK

*When in nature's grand parks I am posing
And viewing omniferous scenes,
I just wonder if people are dozing,
Or cut off from the outside by "screens."*

*Singing birds often prompt me to linger
And to wonder why I have the "blues,"
When there's such a melodious singer
Who doth gather each day what he "chews."*

*Then I meditate upon the condition
Of the pessimistic people who live—
Hope that I can make it my mission,
"Lots of joy my fellowman to give."*

*As I stand by the brookside and ponder
O'er the beautiful glittering stream,
As it flows o'er the rock—not to wander
But to enter a more copious stream.*

*There's a thought that I grasp in the vision
That we choose the right goal in this life,
Dissuade trouble in making decision,
Persevere, not considering strife.*

*When we're nearing the goal we're pursuing
It is easier to progress than before,
Because, then, we are veritably viewing
That great copious stream we adore.*

*If we study surroundings daily,
And apply the morals we acquire
We will then be approaching life gaily
For my country I'll be a "live-wire."*

Elder E.J. Lambert

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EDITORIAL

DEATH



Elder C.C. Wilbanks

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24.

Jesus spake these words, yet most of the world knows not the meaning of them. They understand the passing of life unto death,

but not the passing of death unto life; for they know nothing of being dead in trespasses and sins. All men are born dead in trespasses and sin; not physically dead, but spiritually, for death means, to be cut off or separated from something. All men were separated from God when the first Adam sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, for God had said, *“In the day thou eatest thereof, ye shall surely die.”* Adam is the federal head of all fleshly men: we are only Adam multiplied. In Rom 5:12 we read, *“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.”* This leaves none that have not sinned, and this is the death Jesus spake of in John 5:25, saying, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”* Neither do unregenerate men understand the true meaning of everlasting life. To me everlasting life and eternal life are the same. If our life is everlasting or eternal it had no beginning and will never end: for it was in Christ before the foundation of the world, but is only now made manifest with the new birth. Jesus said unto Nicodemus, *“Ye must be born again.”* He also said, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.”* Jesus gives them the life that was in him before the world was spoken into existence. He gives them ears to hear and hearts to

understand what the Spirit says unto the church, which is the bride of Christ. They are also given faith to believe in him. There are those to whom this faith is not given, and Jesus said unto them, *"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."*

What evidence do we have that we have been born again of the Holy Spirit? We are made to see that we are sinners and we hunger and thirst after righteousness. If a man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, and all things become new. *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."* Rom 8:16. We are no longer *"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. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."* Rom 8:9-11. Some of the meanings of the word quicken are, to arouse, to stimulate, to become enlivened or aware. These things the Holy Spirit does if he is in us.

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Before we were quickened, we

walked according to the course of this world, fulfilling the desires of our flesh and mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. As Paul said, *"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing."* He also said, *"For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."* Paul was not aware of his sins, *"for without the law sin was dead."* What was the commandment that came? Was it not the holy laws of God? The Lord said, *"I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."* Heb 8:10. In Ezek 36:26-27 God said, *"A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my commandments, and do them."* What a gracious promise this is to poor hell-deserving sinners!

Paul said, *"For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me."* We must also be slain if we live with Christ, *"For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."* Rom 6:7-8 Christ took our sins upon himself and died unto sin once, but he arose from the tomb and now lives unto God. We are told to reckon ourselves also to be

dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We have *"become dead to the law by the body of Christ, so that we should be married to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were in the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."* The letter of the old law was the handwritten ordinances that was against us, and was contrary to us, but they were blotted out of the way, being nailed to the cross of Christ. Jesus forgave all our sins, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ and walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* Rom 8:1-2. Paul tells us that the law entered *"that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord"* Rom 5:20-21. Paul then asks, *"Shall we sin that grace may abound?"* Then he answered, *"God forbid.. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"* Again he said, *"For sin shall not have dominion over you:*

for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"

Brethren, we know that the commandment or law of God is spiritual, but we are carnal and sold under sin. Our old man is not changed with the new birth and he is constantly in warfare with the new man, so that we cannot find how to perform that which is good. But let us not yield to the temptations of our flesh, for, *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* If, however, we yield to temptation we have an advocate in heaven with God, Jesus Christ our High Priest. *"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."* Let us also give thanks unto him daily for all our many blessings.

There is one more death that I will mention before I close this short and imperfect treatise. It is the death that

the children of God who are in Christ shall never suffer. *"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death shall have no power."* Jesus Christ is the first resurrection, and my hope is that I have a part in him.

Eld. C.C. Wilbanks

VOICES OF THE PAST

THE HUMILITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Preached at Trowbridge on Tuesday evening, September 24th, 1850

"Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." (Matthew 18:14).

Should it please the Lord, we will attempt, Firstly, to notice these "little ones;" Secondly, to notice that they have many times great fears whether they shall perish at last or not; and, Thirdly, we shall notice that these fears are all groundless.

I. Our text says, "It is not the will of your Father that one of these little ones should perish." It appears by the connection of the words that these "little ones" are the dear children of God, the great God. Jesus Christ calls them His "little ones." They believe in His name. But it is very striking here to see their weakness; they are as weak as little children. The disciples came to Jesus, and asked Him a question:

"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" There is that in our nature which wants to discover things that are hid from our view; and that nature the children have, even the children of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is sometimes manifested; but it shows their weakness and ignorance. What a mercy it is we have such a compassionate Jesus, Shepherd, and Friend. *"Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst"* - what a humbling reproof to the question! - *"and said, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 18: 1-3) It does not mean the conversion of their minds, merely to believe in God's word. A man may be converted a thousand times from one thing to another, and not have conversion of soul, and the new birth. It is plain here, that except you are brought to see your littleness and your nothingness, as a child, there is no hope of your entering into heaven.

It seems that Christ was speaking something like this when He was referring to His death and sufferings. Peter seemed willing to die and to suffer with Him. Peter professed great things for Christ; he said he was willing to follow Him to prison and to death. When, however, the blessed Lord came nearer to His journey's end, He says to Peter, *"Simon, satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."* But Peter told Jesus he would

go with Him even unto death: ***"Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended."*** (Matthew 26:33) Jesus answered him and said, ***"This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."*** And when Peter came to the judgment-seat with Him he could make use of nothing but falsehood. When one came and said, ***"Thou art one of his disciples,"*** he replied, ***"I know not the man."*** When another testified that he certainly was the man that was with Jesus, he said, ***"I know not what thou sayest,"*** and backed his lie with an oath.

I believe that Peter, when he told Christ he would die with him, really meant what he said. But what are we, when left to the Devil? What was David? What was Noah? What was Lot? What was Solomon? We do not know half of our weakness and the power of the Devil, but as God opens it up to us. Then Jesus says to Peter, ***"When thou art converted"*** - when thou art converted. Now Peter had had regeneration, and had been converted by the Spirit of God; for Jesus says, ***"Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."*** (Matthew 16:17) But when Peter was converted he was changed in his mind, and restored by the love and power of God. He could then speak to the tempted with encouragement, and point them to a blessed Redeemer, that had ***"conquered death, and him that had the power of death, which is the Devil."*** He could ***"rejoice by the power of God, through faith unto salvation,***

ready to be revealed in the last time." God will bring His people into a child-like view of their littleness in their own eyes, to be "little" in their own hearts. How often does the Apostle John write to the "little children!" But, say you, there are "fathers" and "babes", and there are "yound men and fathers." But I find that "fathers" are as bad when God leaves them, and as glad of a little succour from the breasts, as even babes are. They are "fathers" in judgment, and "fathers" in the testimony of the faith that God gives them; but though they are "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might," God will bring them to feel little, very "little ones", in their own eyes.

This is very strikingly set forth in the account we have of the Apostle Paul. It is very evident from Paul's testimony, that he was engaged in a great work, and his labours were in a very great measure owned and blessed. It appears evident that Peter and the rest of the apostles had not that superior knowledge that God had given Paul nor such deep, mysterious views into the truth; for they all and everyone seemed to reverence him as being superior in attainments to them. Peter says, "There are many things" in brother Paul's declarations "hard to be understood" - that is, by the unlearned of God, he does not mean the literally unlearned, but the unlearned by the teaching of the Holy Ghost; he does not mean the literally unlearned, but the unlearned by the teachings of God's Spirit - they that never could understand the mysterious language.

Now if we come to look at the apostle's view that he had of himself, there is never a child of God in the world that would exactly agree with him; but they will agree not to differ with him, nor to be angry with him, nor to contend with him in a jealous way. The apostle says, *"Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."* (Eph. 3:8)

Here is the father and the child, here is a great one and a little one - great in the infinite grace of God, but in himself the least, the very least. This is the very top-stone of realities in religion. How strikingly the Apostle Peter sets it forth, when he speaks of the Church of God: *"Feed the flock of God that is among you, taking the oversight among them, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind."* (1 Peter 5:2) Then he speaks to the young to submit themselves unto the elders. Yea, he says, *"All of you be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble"* - the humble, the lowly, the "little ones," the fainting ones; those poor feeble ones that cannot do without the Lord, that can have nothing but what is from the Lord. So little and so feeble are they in their own eyes, and so unworthy of the least of the mercies of God, that they do know what it is at times in their very hearts and souls to say, Amen, to what the apostle said respecting God's Church. He says, *"He has chosen the foolish things of the world, the weak things of the*

world, yea, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." (1 Cor. 1:27-29) But *"he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."* (verse 31).

These "little ones" are the people who are humble, and who think themselves so unworthy of God's notice that, if they attempt to pray, they think it is presumption to attempt to take His name into their polluted lips. God loves these "little ones", God admires these little things; they are His delight, His pleasure, and they shall live to His honour and glory for ever and ever! What a sweet declaration is that where God says, *"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."* (Luke 14:11) It does not mean that of his own nature, or of his own working, or of his own strength he can humble himself, nor can any one humble himself in his own judgment. You might as well talk of a man that can go and build up a ladder to reach the heavens, or take a telescope and count the stars and bring the number of them down, as talk of a man humbling himself, or humbling his fellow creatures in any way. The power can come from no one but from God. What a cutting question God puts to Job! He says, *"Look on everyone that is proud and bring him low, and tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together, and bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee."* (Job 40:12-14) But till you can do that, there is no strength in you to humble yourself.

That has never been, nor ever will be.

You may talk to men, and by your continual taking you may seem to observe some signs of humility in them; yet, at the same time, there is pride in their hearts, as much as ever there was in any mortal man that ever existed. It is not a feigned humility that God requires; it is a felt one. There never was a poor soul that was brought "little" in his own eyes, "little" in his own strength, "little" in his own knowledge, "little" in everything respecting himself, but who was made to feel so by grace. Grace does it all. Nothing can humble but grace; nothing can soften but grace. Not all the terrors and wrath of God can soften the heart, in its nature, before the power of God reaches it. The law working upon the heart and the conscience does not do what grace does; and, if ever you are brought to experience His grace, you will be filled with humility and brought to lie humbly at His feet. To all eternity the ungodly, with the wrath of God poured in upon their never-dying souls, will continue in a state of hardness while they are in existence; and when this life shall end, they will look up and curse God and their King to a never-ending eternity.

It is nothing but grace that can melt the soul and bring it to feel its own worthlessness and its own nothingness; and therefore God says that He giveth grace to the humble. Grace to humble him, grace to carry him through his time-state, grace to encourage him, and grace to bring him up again. These "little ones" are all dependent upon grace. God says,

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings." (*Psalms 8:2*) He hath ordained praise. They are all babes and sucklings in their own feelings; for they cannot move, cannot proceed, but as they are favoured by the Father of all mercies. They are just like a babe. They cannot speak a word but they have been taught - they must be taught to eat and instructed in everything; they are dependent for every thing all their life long. The Lord says, ***"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth."*** Here is the head, their true head. He says to Mary, ***"Go to my brethren, and say into them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."*** (*John 20:17*) He addresses them as His brethren, as the bone of our bone, the flesh of our flesh. He says, ***"I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes"*** - unto babes - ***"even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."***

II. There is a Brother of ours in the presence of God who knows what it is to go like a little child to be taught, to be instructed, to be led, to be fed, to be protected, to be delivered; and all our help is entirely upon Him; when these little ones hang upon Him, they will be safe for ever and ever. How at times my soul goes out to the Lord when the Holy Ghost sweetly whispers into the ear that He carries the ***"lambs in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young."*** He leads these little ones, His weak ones, and His feeble, stammering ones; He will safely lead

them home to eternal glory. The centurion saw no one so unworthy as he was; but the Lord took him in hand. (Luke 7:7-9) If you have a child, or a servant, and come to see that there is that littleness, and a sight and sense of their own unworthiness, it leads you to have compassion for them more than you would for one this is not so. The Devil cannot bear the sight of a meek child of God. But it is a blessed mercy to be led to see one's own littleness and unworthiness.

It is evident that these little ones are favoured of God; for the Lord has set His love upon them. Yet at times they are in such confusion, and have such sinkings, and have such things to pass through, that there are fears raised in their hearts whether it will be well in the end - whether they shall perish at last. And when this comes into the soul of one of these little ones, why, it is like a hell in the heart. "What!" says the soul, *"to pass through this world, where all is misery, and be lost at last - to perish and never see Jesus, and be sunk where there is nothing but sorrow and gnashing of teeth!"* It shakes him from head to foot! It makes his very heart tremble to think of it! It sinks him into black feelings, that he is ready to give it all up for lost, and say with Zion of old, *"The Lord hath forsaken me, God hath forgotten to be gracious."* "Aye," says David, *"He hath shut up his tender mercies; will he be favourable no more?"* Yea, my friends, Abraham was shaken here when God left him to trial of himself and to the power of the Devil. But God

came and lifted him up again; for he said, *"Fear not, Abraham, for I am thy shield and thy exceeding great regard."* (Gen. 15:1)

When the Devil comes in the heart and raises up rebellion there, it shakes the strongest traveller and makes him sink; yes, and brings him to cry like a child for his Father to come to his help and his support. He begins to think how it will be in the end; and that crafty Devil of the bottomless pit terrifies him, and he is afraid there is nothing in his heart but the old man of sin. What a ransacking there is! The Devil will sometimes bring texts of Scripture. He will perhaps bring the parable of the ten virgins, and say that the soul may be like some of them, have merely an outward show. He never brings these when the poor soul has the oil of joy in the heart; he is quiet enough then about the five wise virgins, for his Master is there. But when He is gone, in comes carnal reasoning, and unbelief backs it by crediting what the Devil has said. "Well," says the Devil, "there were ten virgins, they were all met together, all walked together, and all ate at one table. They all went out together, and when they came to the bridegroom's house, five of them were wise and five were foolish. Now, says the Enemy and unbelief, "you see you are nothing but carnal, you have no life, nothing at all but an empty name."

This brings the soul almost to a stand. But there is one thing that stirs him up, and that is, that the "little one" can go and cry to his Father. One thing you see with little sucklings and babes is that they will talk to their parents.

The babe knows his parent, and therefore he can tell him what he feels, and make known that he has a want; it makes its wants known in "cries and tears." The mother and the father, when the child begins to cry, say, "What is the matter with the child?" Everything must be left for it, and there is watching and nursing of the child, and all possible care is taken of it; for it goes to the parents' hearts to hear the crying of the young child. It has taken this effect upon them, when they have heard their child in distress. This is just how it is with our Infinite Father, when the Devil comes in, and they begin to think that they shall perish at last. Their souls go out to God, anxiously inquiring, "Where am I? What am I? Am I nothing but an empty professor? Am I nothing but a hypocrite? Oh, search me! Oh, try me! Oh, reveal Thyself in my heart! Oh, lead me in the way everlasting!" This is the cry of a child to a Father, my friends; for these are children at the right hand, and they all go to the Lord as unto a kind Father. But when they are under the righteous law of God they cannot call him Father; they dare not call him Father when they are in the midst of their distress. They dare not do it, they are afraid it is presumption; they never can do that cheerfully and blessedly till He calls them children. Oh, how sweet when the soul can say, "Father," and He condescends to call them children! How they go to God with all their cares and troubles, just like little children, for Him to decide everything for them!

It is of no use going to the rest of the brethren to decide the matter. Some will run here and there with their trouble, to this minister and to that; and some of God's children are quite wearied out in this way, for they find there is nothing but a dry breast for them anywhere, let them go wherever they will. They go about where they think there is a godly man, and state their feelings, and ask him what he thinks about it. "Well," he says, "I really believe it is the work of God, and I think the Lord will appear for you; for there is evidently a hungering and thirsting, and they that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6) He tells the soul to wait and to watch. Why, the man can do no more! He cannot bring the witnessing Spirit home to the sinner's heart: *"It is the Spirit that beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God."* (Romans 8:16) And therefore the soul goes away a little encouraged, and, perhaps, gets a little hope. Then by and by something come to his mind, and he says, "How can they tell whether I am one?" Here he comes to see his unworthiness, and he is obliged to go to God as a child. God is determined that He will have His children to find that they can derive no solid comfort but from Him.

III. Then these "little ones" perhaps think and fear how it will be with them at the last. But the Lord says, *"Even so, it is not your Father's will that one of these little ones should perish."* Not your Father's will - your Father's will. Bless His precious and dear name, when He reveals it to our

hearts that He is our Father. "It is not his will that one of these little ones should perish." Well, it is His will that they should go to glory. Not one of them, not the feeblest, not the weakest, the emptiest, nor the vilest of all His little flock shall perish. The Lord says, "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) The kingdom of God is for none else. The proud, lofty professor of religion, who boasts of his talents and of his judgment, God despises, for all this boasting is only a bandaging up for hell. No one will ever enter heaven who has not a broken heart. The poor soul that is little in his own eyes is blessed; for "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Theirs is the kingdom. Heaven is for all God's Church; and His justice, His mercy, and His love, His promises, His oath, His faithfulness, and every part of His glory surround these "little ones." God will take away every tear and every distress; and He says, "I will be round about them as a wall of fire, and the glory in the midst of them." (Zech. 2:5) It is not the will of His Father that "one of these little ones should perish," but they shall be for ever "saved with an everlasting salvation," and shall no more be confounded, world without end.

John Warburton

MEDITATIONS ON
SOLOMON'S TEMPLE
BY ELDER T.F. ADAMS
WILLOW SPRINGS, N.C.

"She hath hewn out her seven pillars."

I do not claim to have superior knowledge over my precious brethren in writing on this or any other portion of God's sacred word. Some have said "the seven pillars" represent the seven churches of Asia. But as we view the natural building of Solomon, we see the building is supported by the pillars, and the pillars get their support from the rock bed underneath. Now the pillars are between the rock and the building, which seems to me to more fully represent the apostles and prophets who were peculiarly fitted and hewn out to withstand the cold, chilly winds, and give succor and support to the children of God by reason of the severe trials and afflictions which they were enabled by the grace of God to pass through. Would you not say that you have many times drawn comfort and peace from their sacred writings, when they were applied to your experience by the Holy Ghost? When the Apostle John was exiled upon the isle of Patmos, he said, "*I am your brother and companion in tribulation.*" Remember that it is when you are in tribulation that He is your bosom friend.

The word "seven" is often used to denote fullness. The above views which I have penned seem to me to be in harmony with the inspired writings

of the Apostle Paul: ***"And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself, being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."*** Eph. 2: 18-21.

"She hath killed her beasts."

The provisions for one day in Solomon's household was thirty measures of fine flour, and three score measures of meal. Ten fat oxen and twenty oxen out of the pastures and an hundred sheep, besides harts and roebucks and deer and fatted fowl. I Kgs. 4:22-23. Was all of this portion of God's sacred word penned just to make history and fill up space? Indeed no. For we are told that ***"whatsoever things that were written afore time were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."*** Before this meal and flour was reduced to its present state, the grain must go through the upper and nether mill stones, then kneaded together and baked in a hot oven. The blood must be drained out of the beast and fowls before they were prepared to feed the hungry of the household of Solomon.

What can these beasts and fowls represent? Do they not portray in types and shadows, the suffering and death of the meek and lowly Lamb of God who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification; and they more particularly point to the Gospel day, when we are blessed to sit down in the kingdom with Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob, and partake of the heavenly feast. But before ye are partakers of this heavenly feast, we too must be crucified with Christ (Paul said, I am crucified with Christ'); and die under God's just and holy law, and have part in His resurrection, before we can eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood.

"She hath mingled her wine." Wine is often spoken of to typify the Gospel of Christ. Song of Solomon 7:9. The mingling of wine beautifully portrays the various gifts, which God has placed in the Church for the edification of the saints. ***"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit, and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord."*** I Cor. 12:45. And God has placed them in order, first the apostles, then prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, ***"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."*** Eph. 2:14. One precious saint will often say, ***"I had rather hear Elder _____ than any preacher I have ever heard."*** Another one says, ***"I had rather hear Elder _____."*** What makes this difference? It is because his preaching is more suited to your experience. How discouraging it would be to the poor servants of God if all the household of faith were to center upon one servant and not a word of encouragement for the rest of us. But our God has so arranged it in His divine providence that each one shall receive his portion in due season, and

get the flavor which is best suited to his or her taste.

"She hath also furnished her table." The table which Solomon set was furnished with a great variety of foods with all the necessary vitamins to supply the body with health and strength, but would you suppose that all the food was good to the taste? My answer is no. For my mother often, when I was a small boy, made me eat many things that I did not enjoy so well, but she knew it was good for my body. If I could have had my way I would have begun with the desserts and ended with desserts. I have often said that the children of God remind me of a family of little children seated around a table which was filled with coarser food and a dish of ice cream in the middle, and without the guiding hand of their mother they will almost invariably start on the ice cream and end on the ice cream. Why is this? The answer is because the cream is more delicious to the taste. But the good mother says you all must eat a reasonable supply of the coarser foods, then I will serve you dessert last. It may be that she has a supply of the better tasting food, but she knows that a well balanced diet makes a healthier child. So our God never questions you and me concerning the kind of food we shall have. If we could have our way, we would live on love, joy, peace and happiness all the time, but ah! when He sees fit He gives us sorrow, trouble and afflictions. Now you can see that all the food that is listed on the menu is not good to the taste, but is it not good for the body? David said, "*Be-*

fore I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." Psa. 119:67. Now afflictions were not good to his taste but through this suffering he kept God's word. Can you not read your own experience here?

"*She hath sent forth her maidens.*" When we are invited to a banquet or feast do we not see the maidens serving the guest? No doubt, but what this was a wonderful sight for the Queen of Sheba to behold in the Temple of Solomon. Everyone serving in the place and order in which this Great King has placed them. Do you know of a more beautiful sight than to see the guests seated around and each humble servant of God handing our to the household of faith such things as his Master has supplied him with? The Lord said to Peter, "*Feed my lambs*" and "*Feed my sheep.*" The Lord did not tell him to convert a goat into a sheep. But the words are simply this, "*Feed my lambs*" and "*Feed my sheep.*" Jno. 21: 15-16.

Through the sufferings and death of Jesus under the law, all the preparation was made for the servants or maidens, to serve in the Gospel day. "*For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed.*" Jno. 6:55.

"*She crieth upon the highest places of the city.*" It will be noticed in the ninth chapter of Proverbs verse 14, that the foolish woman, "*Sitteth at the door of her house on a seat in the high places of the city.*" But the woman who possesses wisdom "*she crieth upon the highest places*

of the city" which is in keeping with the inspired prophet Isaiah, "*and an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called the way of Holiness.*" "*The unclean shall not pass over it; but is shall be for those the wayfaring men though fools, shall not err therein.*" Isa. 35:8. What a comfort to a poor tempest-tossed child of God when the Holy Ghost applies the above words to your weary soul and you are lifted up and sometimes made to feel that you are in the way (Jesus). Abraham's servants said, "*I being in the way the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren.*" Could he fail to reach the designated place since He was in the way? Jesus says "I am the way." He taketh His own sheep and goeth before them.

"*Who is simple let him turn in hither.*" How wonderful is the teaching of the Holy Ghost, though you feel to be weak in intellect, yet by degrees this great mystery is gradually opened up to your poor souls, that Christ Jesus dies for the ungodly. Though you may feel to be a fool, you shall not err therein. We have often heard it quoted "Though fools, shall not enter therein", but the scripture reads "*Though fools shall not err therein.*" Isa. 35:9. The reason that you can not err therein, is because you are in Christ Jesus. Now we are led from Law to Gospel, and our eyes are opened to view the heavenly scene and receive some knowledge of the fact that He (Jesus) is made to be sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in

Him. Then we can get a glimpse of the truth of the inspired Apostle, that Jesus is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

"As for Him that wanteth understanding she saith to him, come eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled. All of this was written for those who die under God's just and holy law, and their souls are raised up into newness of life. Then it is that the Holy Ghost reveals Jesus to them as their precious Savior, for the inspired Apostle Paul said that "*no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.*" I Cor. 12:3. As the veil is gradually being lifted and we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to get a glimpse through the lattice work and view the heavenly scene beyond, we are drawn nearer to our precious Savior, and we can more fully understand that this same Jesus which Phillip preached to the Eunuch was first manifested to us in the person of the Father; second, He was manifested to us in the person of the Holy Ghost. John said, "*for there are three and bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, And these three are One.*" Paul said, "*For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*" Col. 2:9.

Now we can see that the Son is as old as the Father and the Father is as old as the Son. For John said, "*In the beginning was the word, the word was with God, and word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not*

anything made that was made. In Him was life and the life was the light of men." Jno. 1:1-4. This same Jesus which Philip preached to the Eunuch has many names, some of which are recorded by the prophet Isaiah, **"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6.**

The reader may inquire, "How can this Jesus be both the Father and the Son? The term Father means oldest, so in the first administration of the Spirit in our experience, He is manifested to us in the Person of the Father, the Father gives life, then arrests, convicts and condemns us through the administration of the law. Second, He (Jesus) comes to us in the person of the Son. The work of the Son is to fulfill the Law and instruct His people and redeem them from under the curse of the Law. Now when Jesus finished His work in the person of the Son, the Son was crucified and was resurrected the third day, and after abiding here on earth forty days He ascended to the Father.

Now the teaching and instruction which was given to His disciples by this Son Jesus, was concealed in the Law and revealed by Him in the person of the Holy Ghost in the gospel. Before His crucifixion He said, **"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 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." Jno. 14:25-26. Do we not see a manifestation of this Son Jesus exhibited in the person of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost? **"and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:4.** May I ask this question, has there been any change in the presenting the eternal truth of God from that day until this unless we are overshadowed by the Holy Ghost and the Spirit gives us utterance? The Holy Ghost is the revealer of God's word. You may ask, what does the Holy Ghost reveal? Answer: The Holy Ghost reveals to the children of God the things which were spoken to them by the Son when He was under the Law. When the Holy Ghost reveals these sacred truths to you, which is often done through and by his servants, you no doubt have said that I knew that but I did not know that I did know it. Why is this? Answer: Those things were taught to you in your experience by the Son as a convicted sinner under the law, and the truth of this teaching is now revealed to you in the Gospel day by the Holy Ghost. Therefore, Jesus said the Holy Ghost **"will bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."** Many of John's disciples came to the church at Ephesus, and Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost and they answered that we have not so much as

heard whether there be any Holy Ghost, as they had only been baptised by John with the Baptism of repentance. And when they heard the words of Paul *"They were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them: and they spake with tongues and prophesied."* Act 19:5-6.

In bringing my article to a close I will only mention a few thoughts in connection with the sixth verse of the ninth chapter of Proverbs: *"Forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way to understanding."* In looking back through our past experience, as a convicted sinner, when we fled to the law for refuge, we can now see how foolish it was to try to justify ourselves by any works of righteousness which we could do. But, being poor blind mortals we could not see the folly of this work system, nor could we comprehend the truths of the inspired word which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags: and we all do fade as a leaf: and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."* Isa. 64:6. Ah! how true to our experience, we have to be dispossessed of all our legal good, under the Law, and come to the end of our wits and see the justice of our condemnation, under God's just and holy Law, before we can know the true meaning of this sacred prophecy. The Apostle Paul, in giving his testimony, which was dictated by the Holy Ghost written to Titus; which said, *"For we*

ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lust and pleasure, living in malice, and envy, hateful, and hating one another. Titus 3:3. What a dark, rough and rugged route we had to travel before we could see the way of understanding. Our souls were enshrouded with darkness, and not one little ray of light could we see. We were like the children of Israel, when they were oppressed by the hand of Pharaoh in Egypt, enshrouded with a darkness which could be felt. Which also must have been the experience of the poor publican, who could not so much as lift up his head, but smote upon his breast, and stood afar off. He prayed and said, *"God, [he could not then call Him Father. I know this was from my own experience] be merciful to me a sinner."* The scriptures tell us that He went down justified, rather than the Pharisee, who fasted twice a week, and paid tithes of all He possessed, and could not see himself a sinner before God.

In as much as Christ was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification, we too, are crucified with Him. Our souls are lifted up and the Holy Ghost reveals Jesus to us, and for the first time we are given a hope that He is our precious Savior. May I say in my concluding remarks that this hope is so precious that if it were possible you would not exchange it for all the gold and silver that this world affords. Now we can exclaim with the inspired Apostle Paul, *"I am crucified with Christ, neverthe-*

less, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Gal. 2:20. Our eyes are now open, our deaf ears are now unstopped, and our heart is now prepared to receive the true instruction, that salvation is by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, but a gift of God. Is this not the way of understanding?

Humbly submitted,
T.F. Adams
Willow Springs, N.C.
April 16, 1946.

WHAT ARE THE RELIABLE EVIDENCES THAT WE HAVE PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE?

Perhaps there is no subject in which the feeble, fearful, trembling, tempted and doubting children of God feel a greater interest than to know what are the scriptural evidences of being in a quickened and regenerated state; as there can be no subject in which they feel so much concerned. One brother writes that he would be in despair if it were not for one bright spot in his life, alluding to the time when Christ was first revealed to him as his Savior, but recalling to mind his happy frame on that occasion, his hope is frequently revived. In reflecting on this remark we have felt inclined to enquire, Can it be possible that the brother has never had but one reliable evidence in his

long life, that he is a subject of saving grace? We know that it is very natural for us to revert to our first experience when doubts and fears assail our faith and hope in God. We do not object to this calling to mind God's former loving-kindness unto us, as evidences of his saving grace. Jeremiah remembered the time of the wormwood and the gall; from which God had graciously delivered him, and his hope was thereby revived. But is it right to overlook all other evidences and rely only on the first displays of God's love and mercy to us? To such exclusive reliance we object, because it under-rates and overlooks the daily experience of the saints, which although in many instances they may not be as vivid and satisfactory to us as the first, are equally important and reliable, and should therefore be as fully appreciated, not only for the comfort of the saints, but also for the praise of the glory of God.

Because it tends to a repudiation of all subsequent evidences as being less conclusive and reliable, or worthless. How many have hung down their heads despairingly, because their first experiences were not so distinctly marked as those of others of whom they have heard or read; and although they can keep even pace with others in every subsequent step of their religious travel, are all their lifetime in bondage, through fear that they have started wrong, and therefore all subsequent experience has been but a delusion.

It may be that the general practice of our churches in the examination of

applicants for baptism and membership, has been faulty in making the first exercises of the candidate far more important than other exercises. While we love to hear related the more wonderful displays of God's power and grace in bringing sinners to a knowledge of the truth, we should also listen very attentively to "the still small voice," which has whispered peace and salvation to the trembling ones. According to our own observation for more than fifty years in the church of Christ, those who have been the most fearful and trembling, have proved the most watchful and prayerful among the followers of Christ. Some have made us doubt the genuineness of their evidences, by the extravagant marvelousness of what they have related, while others who could scarcely say they had a hope, have showed such evident marks of the spirit of humility, self-abasement, and fear of being a disparagement to the church, that they have taken every step with the greatest fear and trembling, have given us the more satisfactory evidence of the work of grace wrought in their hearts by the finger of God. But we need not advert of observation, nor to feelings of satisfaction, for we have a more sure word of prophecy or instruction, to which we do well to take heed.

The scriptures of truth do not leave us uninformed as the heaven-stamped and sealed evidences of a quickened state. Let us examine some of them. The case of Philip and Eunuch, (Acts viii. 26-39), is in point. Here is an application for the ordinance, and the

great question, What doth hinder me to be baptized? is asked. The man of God who was full of the Holy Ghost, is amply qualified to decide this matter, which concerns all others as well as the Eunuch. How does Philip settle this question? Whatever impediment might be in the way to hinder the Eunuch, is still in the way of all others, and whatever qualifications entitled him to the privilege, are equally applicable to all others who possess them. Philip did not say, If you can distinctly call to mind your first religious exercises, if you saw the flaming gulf open to receive you; and all your sins were distinctly presented to your terror-stricken soul; if you were held in that distressing state a certain length of time; and can distinctly tell how you felt, and what you thought during this time of bitter anguish of your soul, and if you know just when, and where, and how you were delivered, and how you felt at that time; and if you do not now feel too unworthy, to be numbered with the saints. These were not the questions proposed, nor the prerequisites demanded. If they had been it would have debarred thousands of the precious children of God from that holy ordinance, and perhaps the Eunuch himself would have been rejected. But observe, the only question was as to the then present state of the Eunuch, and not a question was asked in regard to his former exercises of mind. "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." Shall any one now dare impose any other requisite than that which the Holy Ghost through Philip then required? That which ap-

plied to one, equally applies to every subject of grace.

But let it be remembered that the question implied more than a formal profession of belief. It is not enough that the natural judgment or understanding should assent to the truth, for it is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. This belief must come from the heart, not the head; for the law of Christ is written in the hearts of the children of God. A new heart is given them, for the old heart is destitute of the faith of the Son of God; and a new spirit is put within them, for their faith is the fruit of the spirit; if, therefore, the candidate believes with all his heart, it is an infallible testimony that he has received this new heart, and new spirit is given him. Now, according to this example, we insist that the church and the administrator should be satisfied that the candidate has passed from death unto life - is born again, and has that full belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, which can only result from the faith of Jesus Christ dwelling in his heart.

There are many who without any change of heart, without any love to God, or knowledge of their own lost and helpless condition, with no saving knowledge of God, of Christ, of the way of salvation, may say I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and speaking after the manner of men, they do; that is, they have a traditional belief; knowing no reason why they should disbelieve what they have read or heard others say; but in the case of

Eunuch, there were strong circumstantial evidences that God had wrought this faith in his heart. His mind was directed to the scriptures; he is found reading the book of the prophet Isaiah; he is buried in deep thought; he is earnest to understand the scriptures. He has a thirst for a knowledge of him of whom the prophet wrote, and although a man of high standing and in great authority, he had a childlike humility, and desired that some one of clearer understanding in divine things should guide him. The minister of Christ is gladly received into his chariot; he has a hearing ear, and an understanding heart, and as he hears of Jesus, as preached by Philip, in his heart receives the testimony, gladly receives the word, and most unwaveringly believes that this Jesus is the Son of God, of whom the prophet testified.

Another evidence of his heavenly birth is given in his desire to take on him the yoke of Jesus, to follow him in the ordinance of baptism. Absorbed in thought as he heard of Jesus, and transported with new light upon the subject and theme of prophecy, and attentively listening to the preaching of Jesus by Philip though he was at that time, he did not pass the baptismal waters unnoticed. "See here is water!" Never before had water presented such attraction to his eyes. Wonder, ye heavens! what heavenly beauty this faith discovers in that water; the footprints of his Savior; the bright example for all his children are seen. Did water ever before seem so lovely? The Savior's high command,

“If ye love me, keep my commandments,” is applied with power. O what a joyful privilege it would be, he may have thought, if I were worthy to follow Jesus in that delightful ordinance! Nay, I cannot be denied, unworthy though I am. Thou man of God, “See here is water! what doth hinder me to be baptized?”

Indeed, we know of no authority in the scriptures for attaching more importance to past than to present evidences of our having passed from death unto life.

The apostle John says, **“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”** Not because our first evidences were so clear, or strongly marked. Not because we have acted so well our part; not because our natures have become better than they were before, nor because we feel that we are now worthy of a place in the house of God, and communion with his saints; but simply because we love them, and desire to be with them.

And Paul says, **“For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”** The test is not laid on what is past; but what is present. If we are led by the spirit of God, it will lead us to Jesus; to his work; to his laws, his ordinances, and to his people. It will make us feel that we are very, very unworthy of his favor, and to admire and gaze and wonder at the manner of love which God hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God.

Another present and reliable evidence that we are the children of God,

is that **“God dealeth with us as with sons.”** **“If ye endure chastening,”** then have ye the evidence. **“But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.”**

How many present evidences are found in the scriptures of our sonship, and heirship, as sons of God and heirs of glory; and who shall tell us that any one, or all of these are less reliable than the first that we ever received?

We would by no means depreciate or undervalue the first evidences which were given us in our new birth; for without that birth we should be forever destitute of all the other evidences. But if we cannot find in our first experience the extraordinary exercises that some others can, we are fully warranted in relying on those which our God has seen proper to give us. If because we cannot tell when, where, or under what circumstances we were born into the natural world, would we be reasonable in concluding that we never were born? The very fact that we are now alive, is sufficient evidence that there was a time when we began to live. If, to-day, we love God, it is because he first loved us. And if we ever have loved him, the evidence is the same, for we could not possibly love him from any other cause.

There is one other evidence we will name, and that is, if we are involved in the Christian warfare, then have we the same evidence of a heavenly birth that Paul had. Until we were born of God the whole current of our nature

ran in one way; our element was sin; it was sweet to our taste, and we drank it as the ox drinketh water. There can be no war where there is one party. In the Shulamite we see as it were the company of two armies. So in every Christian is seen two opposite determined hostile parties. The one is born of the flesh and is flesh; and he held his palace in peace, without opposition, until another party came to occupy the same house, or person. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. These are opposite one to the other; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and so terribly does the battle sometimes rage, that we cannot do the things we would. All who are born of God, but no others, will, so long as they are here in the flesh, find a law in their fleshly members warring against the law of their mind, which will at times bring them into captivity to the law of sin which is in their members. All the doubts and unbelief that ever assailed or troubled a Christian in regard to his interest in Christ arises from his fleshly nature. Doubts, fears and temptations, unbelief and desponding fears, are the artillery of the flesh and of Satan, planted against the law of their mind; but however the faith of God's people may be stormed, faith shall most assuredly triumph ultimately for God giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Dead fish will float down with the current; only the living fish will stem the tide. Those who never have any conflict, can never know the joys of victory. Those who have no

temptations cannot appreciate deliverance. And those who have no clouds must live in a very dry pasture.

Elder Gilbert Beebe, June 15, 1866.

CALLED

Sometimes my mind is led in meditation to the calling of men to preach. With all my misgivings, doubts, fear, unfitness and leanness yet I think that I know that there is no calling to compare with being called of God to preach. There is a sense in which I would be sorry to hear my brethren voice an impression to preach, but in a wonderful way it is the grandest confession that we could hear from them. I have said that all men are called to preach, some by one thing, some by another, but those called of God are so differently called that it would be worthwhile to notice the difference. Preaching to all, may I say except Old Baptists, is a profession to be taken up and laid aside at will. The preaching of this world is like that. Anybody can learn how to preach their doctrine and can quit when the reason confronts them. That is what they say about it. If a young man came to me and wanted advice on entering the ministry I would have no hesitancy in telling him to go ahead. What else could we tell them? If they have religion you cannot get it out of them. Let them have the whole thing! But that handful of miserable half-wit, Primitive Baptist preachers! What about them? Not one of them has ever de-

cided to be an Old Baptist preacher. If, and when, impressed by the Spirit to preach, they all decide that they cannot preach. Strange (to carnality) that learning does not change the viewpoint. The most learned man among us today will confess that I did not get it from man but from God. Those the Savior called around him were usually poor and unlearned. Fishermen, by the most people, are held in ill repute. Why? I do not think it is by just merely a whim of the mind. This is divine arrangement. Suppose fishermen had been in the cream of society, the elite of the day? Peter was given to boast of his ability. If he had had a high and noble natural calling he surely would have boasted, but the Savior called him from the net to the ministry. Sometimes a noble, mighty, wise man after the flesh is called. Paul did not say that none were called at all, but not many. The world and the fulness thereof belongs to God, and if it is in keeping with his will to call a well educated man, it does not take any more effort nor any different tactics than with the poorest of the flock. This world takes into consideration a man's personality, looks, learning and everything else that would insure success, but generally speaking God does not do that. Instead of calling that kind he calls a man from the net, plow or shop. God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. I think we have this verified on the day of Pentecost and other occasions. It amazes college professors that an Old School Baptist preacher can speak an hour extemporaneously.

Where does it come from? From above, where every gift comes from in the spiritual field. Not only has God chosen the foolish but the weak as well. He just will not fit into the modern ministry, but a man of that kind that has the wisdom of God given him can stand up and give the church a good gospel sermon. God has not only chosen the foolish and weak but base things and despised things, and that is not all he has chosen things that are not to bring to naught things that are. Ponder with us on that for a little while. God choosing that "are" can easily be understood, but choosing that which is "not" is something mysterious. I do not understand it, I am at a loss to explain it, but I desire to believe it and, if my experience is that of a gospel minister, I have felt it. This choosing of things that are not is still more of a mystery when we come to the purpose of it. It is to bring to naught things that are. "O the depth of the riches both of wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. 11:33. None can tell why God does this, none can tell how. No need to be searching as to why a little foolish, weak, base, despised (and even one that is not minister can turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6), but look a little closer at your calling brethren! My mind keeps turning to that. Something that is not bringing to naught that which is! Explain it I cannot, experience it I hope I have. Many years ago I was impressed with preaching but I could not do it. I thought I had it hid and I was resolved to never

reproach the church by going behind the sacred desk, but a certain day came and I was at a place of meeting. A man was preaching who never had been looked upon by some as anything but a fool, but I left there completely overcome in tears. I was the something, he the not but it was I that was brought to naught. I love the old man today because I that God chose him to bring me to see how completely I was not. Let me notice again that God did not choose these men and make them foolish, weak, base, despised and not, but that he chose that kind. Everyone of them feels all this as their experience. They know what they are! They live with a man who is all this!

Elder W.D. Griffin

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JULY 1996

- 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
- S.R. Fanning, TN 2.00
- Eld. Marvin Brumfield, VA 2.00
- Mrs. Carrie McDaniel, VA 2.00
- Mrs. F.K. Morgan, AR - In memory
of husband F.K. Morgan 20.00

OBITUARIES

IN MEMORY OF
SISTER ORA SHORT ADAMS

If the Lord will bless me, I will endeavor to write the obituary of our beloved Sister Ora Adams. She was born April 27, 1910, in Pittsylvania County and passed away February 2, 1996, in Lynchburg General Hospital at the age of 85.

She was the daughter of the late James Short and Martha Cox Short. She married our late Brother Delmas Smith Adams on January 2, 1926 and to this union five children were born.

Sister Ora is survived by two daughters, Martha Dalton and Hilda Worley of Hurt, twelve grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. She was preceded by three children, two sons, Percy Adams and Brother Wayne Adams and one daughter Carol Meador.

Sister Ora was a firm believer of salvation by grace, she was given hope and asked for a home with Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church on August 9, 1953 and was baptized on September 13, 1953. She was faithful to attend her meetings, to support her church and loved her brethren.

Sister Ora was blessed with hospitality and loved the visits from her family and church friends. The door of her home was always open with love.

Sister Ora became ill and was confined to the hospital for several weeks

before her death. Her family stood by her side and did all human hands could do for her to make her comfortable. The Lord saw fit to call her home on February 2, 1996. Her funeral was conducted at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church, 2:00 p.m., February 5, 1996 by her pastor Elder Raymond Goad and Elders Marvin Brumfield and Larry Hollandsworth. Her body was laid to rest, in Weatherford Church Cemetery, beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the glorious resurrection morning.

She will be greatly missed by her family, church and friends. May we all that mourn her loss be reconciled to the will of our Heavenly Father who never makes a mistake, it is He who giveth and He who taketh away.

Written By: Pam Betterton

Elder Raymond Goad, Moderator
Elder Marvin Brumfield - Asst. Mod.
Sister Phyllis Goad, Clerk

CURTIS CARL DODD



At the request of Old Mt. Church I will try to write an obituary of Our Brother Curtis C. Dodd, Who passed away in Martinsville Memorial Hospital, Jan. 3, 1996 at the age of 85. Born March 25, 1910 in Pittsylvania county Va. He was A son of Claude Cleveland Dodd Sr. and Suenette Bryant Dodd. He was married to Virginia Appling Dodd who died Dec. 18, 1991. He first worked for Dan River Inc. and later worked as A loom fixer for Fieldcrest Mills in Eden

NC. until his retirement. He joined Old Mt. Primitive Baptist Church, and was Baptized Aug. 18, 1968, by Elder Wallace Smith. Was A loving faithful member until 1989, when circumstance beyond his control, he was put in A Nursing home, where he lived until A few days before his death in the hospital. He leaves to mourn two sons. Pete Dodd of Goose Creek Island, SC. and Roy Dodd of Brisbane, California. three sisters, Margaret McNichols of Blairs, Doris Barker of Ringold, and Agnes Vaughn of Danville; five brothers, Charlie Dodd of Elon College, N.C. Albert Dodd, Melvin Dodd and Bobby Dodd all of Danville, and C.C. Dodd Jr. of Blairs; seven grandchildren and several great-grandchildren. The funeral for Curtis Carl Dodd formerly 1106 Wyllie Ave. was conducted 11 a.m. Wednesday from the chapel of Barker Funeral Home by the Rev. Dr. Charles B. Searce. Interment was in Highland Bural Park. He was layed to rest beneath A beautiful mound of flowers, A token of love from his family and many friends to await the second coming of Christ. Done by order of Old Mt. Church April 21, 1996.

Elder C.B.Davis, Moderator
Sarah Barker, Clerk

COLOSSIANS 3:3-4.

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.

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

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1012 Bennett Circle, Keeling, Virginia 24566

SONG

**JESUS, my love, my chief delight,
For thee I long, for thee I pray,
Amid the shadows of the night,
Amid the business of the day.**

**When shall I see thy smiling
face—**

**That face which I have often
seen?**

**Arise, thou Sun of Righteousness!
Scatter the clouds that intervene.**

**Thou art the glorious Gift of God
To sinners weary and distress;
The first of all his gifts bestowed,
And certain pledge of all the rest.**

**Could I but say this Gift is mine,
I'd tread the world beneath my
feet,**

**No more at poverty repine,
Nor envy the rich sinner's state.**

**The precious jewel I would keep,
And lodge it deep within my
heart;**

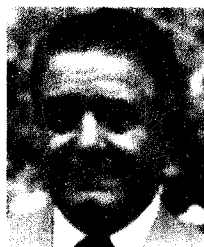
**bt home, abroad, awake, asleep,
It never should from thence
depart !**

Beddome.

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EDITORIAL

ALL IN ALL


Elder C.C. Wilbanks

"Christ is all, and in all." (Col.3:11).

What a tremendous declaration of truth this embraces. This is the total sum of the gospel of Jesus Christ and his salvation of his people. His people are the ones chosen in him before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love. Their names were written in the Lamb's

book of life: not one name shall be added thereto, nor one name removed from that book. These people are called by many names: the sons of God, children, sheep, the elect, the church, the bride, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, etc.

Christ is our all. Everything that we are and every blessing we shall ever receive was given him of God, *"Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace which was given us in Christ before the world began."* *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him give us all things?"* Christ is our life, wisdom, righteousness, redemption, sanctification, justification, prophet, priest, King, hope, faith, advocate, mediator, love, strength, bread, well of living water, etc... Volumes might be written upon each of these, with God's blessings, but I would write only a few words upon some of them, and pray that God will give me his gracious guidance.

First and foremost is life. Without him we are nothing, we are as the dust from which we are made. We were given life in Christ when God chose us in him before the foundation of the world. *"For in him we live, and move, and have our being; ... for we are also his offspring."* The life that was given us is eternal and will never die. This natural, fleshly body in which we dwell will surely die, but it is only our dwelling place while here on

earth. If we be Christ's children, he also dwells in this body with us. Jesus said, *"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."* Why do we love him? *"We love him, because he first loved us."* Not all men love him. Unto the Jews who sought to kill him Jesus said, *"I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you."* Unto them he also said, *"But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish."* The life that Jesus gives is the life given him before the world began. Of this life he said, *"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."* All men are born dead in trespasses and sin. This is the death Paul speaks of: *"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* And, *"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."*

Jesus is our redemption and sanctification, and the price holy justice demands is death: *"for without the shedding of blood there is no remission."* Jesus shed his blood on

the cross of calvary. He is our redeemer, *"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,"* *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers if flesh and blood, he also 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."* Jesus could lawfully redeem us, for we were his; and he could satisfy God's holy justice by shedding his blood in our room and stead; for we have a living unity with him. *"We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."* This man, Jesus, *"after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."* *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."* As our high priest he offered himself a sacrifice unto God, and he himself was the sacrifice. When Jesus died on the cross, his people, his church, his bride was in him: *"For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body."* *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even we also should walk in newness of life."* If Christ had not been raised up from the dead there could be no resurrection for us. But

he *"was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification."* *"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."* Therefore Jesus is our righteousness and justification.

Jesus now sits in the right hand of the throne of God as our high priest, our advocate with the Father, our judge, and our King. Let us approach unto our high priest in supplications and prayers, 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."* It seems to me that I fail dreadfully in approaching him, but when I am blessed to do so, it brings a season of rejoicing to my soul. Jesus said, *"No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* John wrote, *"And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."* As our advocate, Jesus pleads his righteousness in our behalf, for our sins were imputed unto him and his righteousness was imputed unto us by faith in him. Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God, believing what God had promised: (for all the promises of God are sure in Christ, *"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and Amen, unto the glory of God."*) therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. *"Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to 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." *"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."* How do we attain faith and belief and hope, (for these can not be separated)? Jesus said, *"It is the work of God, that ye believe on him who he hath sent."* Paul said, *"Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake."*

Now let us consider faith, believe and hope, for, *"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."* How, then, do we attain unto them? By *"Being born again; not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."* The 'word of God' is Jesus Christ, for, *"--and his name is called The Word of God."* *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."* Grace, faith and hope are gifts from above, *"-- from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."* *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him give us all things."* *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* To have a hope in anything we must have some evidence that it will come to pass. Our God given faith is that evidence, and we

must walk in that faith and not by sight. Faith causes us to believe the promises of God, and gives us hope that we are embraced in them. If we could walk by sight, what need would we have for hope? *"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that which we see not then we with patience wait for it."* Jesus Christ is our hope, and he hath promised, *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."* Our hope of salvation is in Christ, and God *"--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 ."*

Let us pass on. Jesus is also our judge. *"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."* *"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles."* I believe we stand before the judgment seat of Christ every day, and we must bear his judgment, for the Father *"hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."* Jesus said, *"I can of myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the*

will of the Father which hath sent me." This is not the judgment of that final day, for Christ has already suffered the penalty for our transgressions, and we shall never perish; but in the flesh we sin daily, and our judgment is instantly given: for he chastens us. *"My son. despise not the chastening of the Lord, not faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."* *"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons."* His chastisement is not in anger, but in love. His chastisement is a portion of the manner in which he loves us. *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God."* His chastisement shows us the errors of our ways and leads us into the path of righteousness.

Jesus is our Prince of Peace. *"--and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."* Jesus said, *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* No matter how we are troubled, afflicted and persecuted; when our sins rise up as mountains before us or we sink beneath the raging billows, if Christ speaks "peace be still" to us, as he did to the winds and the sea, then we are instantly at peace, and we can sing praises unto his holy name.

Jesus is our Lord and King. *"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.*** the LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory."* A king must have a kingdom; people to rule over, and servants. In the book of Daniel we read, *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."* This kingdom is the kingdom of God and his people. The kings of these other kingdoms shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: *"for he is the Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."* *"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven."* Our King has ever gone before us and fought our battles, and he has always won the victory. The scripture says, *"He will swallow up death in victory."* *"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Jesus was our king when he was born. When Pilate asked if he were a king, he answered, *"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."* Though he is our King, he became a servant. *"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*

Our Saviour has risen from the dead, and he shall give us the ultimate victory when he shall return again without sin unto salvation. *"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."*

Brethren, is this not our blessed hope? Surely we greatly desire to hear our King and Saviour say, *"Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editors of The Signs:

It's been nearly 22 years since I last wrote to you dear people; and The Good Lord willing, I am writing today to say I would like very much to renew my subscription to the Primitive Baptist paper. It's been so long since I've subscribed I don't know if the address is correct or not, or if The Signs is still being published. I hope and pray it is. Back in 1974 the subscription cost was \$4.00 per year, and Elders David Spangler & John D. Wood were the Editors among others.

I have been blessed by God in many ways - and chiefly, from my way of thinking, is a belief in salvation by grace to sinners like me, as taught and preached in The Old School Baptist doctrine.

I have kept all the Signs I took during the 10 years or so I subscribed, and have most of the copies of my mother's from back in the forties. I'm also blessed to have "*Hassells Church History*", Elder Durands "*Fragments*" and Elder Lambert's "*Tried in the Furnace*."

I've raised 4 children and am still married to my husband of 38 years. A lot of grief and sorrow as well as little bits of joy here and there have been my lot. I don't feel any different now

than I did 20 years ago as regards to my belief. But in those day's I put my Lord aside and my husband (a non-believer) first in my life. The only Old-School Baptist's that remain in this part of the county besides myself are my 98 year old mother and a brother Ed Larson both living at Mead. My aunts who were firm believers are dead and gone (Mary Edkard - Haseltine Allen - Eve Floyd I tried a few years ago to get in touch with some of the people in the church at Naces, Wash. but did not have any luck..... I've also tried going to a little non-denominational church that has been started near where I live, but find it as I knew I would; nothing there for me The people are nice enough, and sincere in what they believe but its just not the same.


I'm enclosing a check for what I hope and pray will be the beginning of a renewal of my subscription to the Signs, and God willing, if it should come to pass, I hope to never let it expire again.

If this \$10.00 more than covers the cost for a year - please use the balance for the indigent fund.

From One whose hope has never been taken from her - Tho it grows mighty dim at times.

Love, Caroline Martin
Rt. 1, Box 690
Davenport, Wash. 99122

Dear Editors and Friends
In Christ Jesus,

 ur belief and hope in Christ Jesus brighten up a dark world. The love and fellowship we have for one another is a gift of God. Truly he is the giver of every good and perfect gift and the Father of Lights as we are told in the scriptures.

The last issue of the Signs was a sweet comfort to me. Its words of praise and honor and glory are so good to read, and rest to the weary soul. What a blessing to receive a precious publication like that each month - and we are blessed with a few others. Our Saviour said He would not leave himself without a witness.

Our hope in Jesus makes it easier to press on in this old life.

As the wise one said, we hope we can continue to pray with and for one another and we hope we will continue to be blessed with sweet worship services in the Lord.

How will you, the quickened believers, know there is nothing better than the comforting presence of the Lord. He is charity in faith, hope and charity. We recall that faith and hope look for that which is to come but the charity of our Saviour comes into fulfillment in a better world and is never ending, and the anchor of the soul in His people. I do hope I am one of them.


Again we thank you all for your labor of love and your every effort in getting the Signs to us.

As you all know, the whole book of Hebrews is wonderful. I recently read a little in it and found the promise as

written near the end of Chapter 8 about the new covenant especially comforting to quickened believers: Part of verse 10 .. *"after those days sayeth 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:"*... 11 is valuable too. On to verse 12 *"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."* In chapter 9 the precious promise of Christ redemption continues stating that He is children's high priest in V. 12 or by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption for us. V.14. *"How much more shall the blessed of Christ, who though the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."* If we are in that wonderful Scripture we are safe.

Sister Nancy Rose D. Ferguson

Dear Elders and Editors;

 ime once more to renew my subscription for 2 yrs. I look forward each month for the Signs - they bring food and comfort, which is not supplied by mortal man, but entirely by our heavenly father.

I do not wish to complain, but I do miss not having a Primitive Baptist Church out here. I was directed to a church that called themselves primitive baptist but they do not seem to

believe in God's predestination of all things and as I talked to the preacher on various subjects - he would say "Well you see, we don't see it that way." They did not use any musical instruments in their services and said, as I think we all feel that God supplies the music and it originates in the heart. I attended their services for a month or two. They treated me well and I tried to do the same toward them, but I did not feel at home with them. I did not tell them why maybe I should; but I just quit going. I've read I believe in the Bible where it says "*come out from among them and be ye separate*" and have wondered if it might apply to me in this case. I do believe that our all wise God has a purpose in all of these churches or they would not be - but at the same time I want to go where God is given all praise honor and glory. God requires no help from mortal man. God is all powerful, and supplies all our needs, for which I hope I am grateful, but fear many times I am not.

In Christian Love,
Minnie Cunningham

PSALM 111:7-10.

The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure.

They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.

He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.

VOICES OF THE PAST

FROM ZION'S LANDMARK

(May - June 1996)

"Walking About Zion," appeared in *Zion's Landmark* during the year 1869, by Elder Isaac N. Van Meter (1816-1894) of Illinois. (*Zion's Landmark* was hardly two years old when it was published.)



his article was one of several chapters that was first published in pamphlet form in which Elder Van Meter left on record many things that he had beheld in a vision of the church to take place in these latter days and times in which we are now living.

While at the time the churches and associations at large were abounding in a wonderful state of peace, having just been separated from the worldly, missionary system that had been introduced only 40 years earlier (1832-1840), yet, he saw in this vision a great pall of gloom again enshroud her, which was yet to take place in a dilemma of unknown proportions. Elder Van Meter fully describes the church's perplexity and plight in this article, as he had beheld in his vision.

When I read it recently, my mind was immediately carried to very recent years, if not deceived, with his description of the trial and affliction of the true, militant church, as seen in his vision that accurately describes and coincides exactly with the same trial and affliction that we have just

experienced, and appears to be an ongoing thing at this time.

If it is possible, I would appreciate seeing this article republished as it appeared in Zion's Landmark 127 years ago. Elder Mewborn, I am enclosing a copy of this article for your use and review. If you should feel it best not to republish, just cast it aside. On the other hand, I believe many people would be glad to read it again at this time.

It is Inevitable that Elder Van Meter was greatly blessed of the Lord, and that we have now lived to see his prophecy come to pass after all these years. This dear elder, I believe, saw the church delivered from the great red dragon when the watchman in his vision said, I must leave Zion under this cloud for the present, and seek a place where the light shineth. God had already prepared a place for His light to shine, even in the wilderness, where He would feed His church, here in the world a thousand two hundred and threescore years. See Revelation 12:6. He signed (or closed) his article, " A VISITOR."

From an unworthy one, I trust, grieved for the Cause of Christ

WALKING ABOUT ZION

In my tenth visit to Zion, the city of the great King, I saw, as was intimated in my last one, a great change take place in her peace and prosperity; a cloud arose and overcast the city with gloom, and its inhabitants were brought into trouble, mourning, and woe.

Although the task is an unpleasant and painful one, I must, for the information of the reader, and as a warning to those who shall live hereafter, give a true and faithful history of what I saw and heard. As soon as I got within the city, I saw that a great change had taken place in many respects, and although the form and structure of the place, with its gates, streets, and courts were about the general aspect of underlying things was greatly changed, and the customs and habits of its citizens were very different from what they were when I last visited the place. In the first place I observed that darkness and gloom brooded over the city, and lowering clouds hung heavily upon it, so that nothing could be seen clearly, but everything the eye beheld was enveloped in gloom. I noticed also that the business of the city, and the well ordered labors of the King's servants, were well nigh suspended and their work deranged; I thought I could see, also, a want of that true friendship and love I had formerly observed among the inhabitants, and even a coldness and reserve among the watchmen.

Under my deep mortification and grief at this sad state of things, I groped about the city in quest of some one that could tell me the true cause or causes, which had so sadly worked to produce so great change; but I knew not whom to approach. There appeared to be two or more parties in the city, and each was ready to screen itself and cast the blame upon others. I fell in company, however, with an old experienced watchman, whose

care-worn and honest countenance inspired me with confidence, and from him I obtained the following detailed account of the causes and the nature of their troubles.

He told me that, in the first place, he would begin with the watchmen themselves, many of whom were as much to blame, if not more, than the other citizens of the place. As it was their sacred trust, by the order of the King, to watch over the city and its inhabitants, and both by precept and example to teach the laws and obligations pertaining to the kingdom, the King had commanded them most solemnly, saying: *"If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, I will require the blood of the slain at his hand. (In substance.)" Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he heed it not, thou hast delivered thy soul.* (Ezek. 33:1, 9). *"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain."* (Joel 2:1.) *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers."* (Acts 20:28.) *"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine."* (II. Tim. 4: 1, 2.) *"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good*

works." (Titus 2:7.) *"He that is the greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."* (Luke 22: 26.) *"Let each esteem others better than himself."* This, and much more, had the King commanded His watchmen respecting their trust to the subjects of the King, and to one another and fellow laborers in the good cause. The station these men filled was so exalted and honorable, and the promise of the King to protect and support them so positive, that one could hardly conceive how they should ever become delinquent or unfaithful in the discharge of their trust. And yet it was even so with many of them. My old informant told me that by degrees many of these watchmen became careless about watching over the city, and some even slept while the enemy was about. Some wanted to change places with others and not labor where their King had placed them at the petition of the citizens. Some became envious and jealous of others whom the King had set in a conspicuous place, and whom the people esteemed higher for their work's sake and faithfulness.

When they convened, the people at their solemn assemblies, instead of each one feeling, as heretofore, to prefer others to take the lead and to give them the uppermost seats at their feasts, some were found to be jealous of others' good names and gifts, and sought to injure their good standing and influence, and to strive to get above them. Some went so far as to even make his brother an offender for

a word, and would hint to the citizens behind his brother's back, that he was not true to the King. Thus, matters worked among the watchmen, who should have been the last men in all the King's dominions to give offence; and soon it was manifest that confidence and unity were much impaired among them, and many began to absent themselves from their solemn convocations. While these examples were set by the watchmen, and they were thus delinquent in their trust, it is not surprising that the citizens should also become Indifferent, and even corrupt in practice. "Like priest, like people," was as true in this case as it was in the days of Hosea (chapter 4:9.) The citizens became slack in their trust to their King and to one another; they neglected their obligations; they forsook their meetings; they neglected to read the King's laws asking His advice, and because Iniquity abounded, the love of many waxed, became cold. Backbiting and fault finding took the place of charity to others no more guilty. Instead of bearing the burdens of others, and being ready to sympathize with them, too many were found ready to add to their affliction by siding with their accusers. Some became tired of the King's service, and would even speak slightly of His laws and ordinances. These were often found working for their own selfish aggrandizement when normalcy would have required them to have been engaged in the King's service. In this way and many others, I was told, did the watchmen and the citizens provoke the displea-

sure of the King of Zion; while, at the same time, my old informant, and some other faithful watchmen, were engaged day and night in reproving, rebuking and exhorting, with all long suffering and doctrine, saying in the name of the King: *"Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove the candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."* (Rev. 2:5.)

Those unfaithful watchmen were, many of them at least, such as had crept into the city unawares, for the want of vigilance on the part of the porters and others, and had been employed as watchmen without the King's authority; many of whom were enemies to Zion and to her King. Their intrigues had, however, drawn away some of the King's servants, and their dissimulations had deceived many of the true friends of the King. The city had been much filled up of late by accessions from the surrounding nations, who had witnessed her prosperity, but unfortunately for her peace, many of the uncircumcised had been admitted through carelessness with a desire to augment or increase their numbers, on the part of the citizens. But alas for Zion the once happy and prosperous city the light and glory of the earth. After she had thus provoked the King, had gone astray from His commandments, had left her first love; and after she had been admonished and exhorted from time to time by her faithful servants, to whom she turned a deaf ear, the light of His countenance was withdrawn and dark-

ness enveloped the city. A thick cloud also hung over the place, seeming to portend a storm, and intervened between the citizens and the throne of the King. Few people could be seen in her streets, and she looked desolate. One of the watchmen mourned her thus: *"How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary. She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks."* *"The ways of Zion do mourn because none come to the solemn feasts."* (Lam. 1: 1, 2, 4.) *"How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger."* (Chap 2:1.) *"How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed! The stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street."* (Chap. 4:1.) *"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help."* (Hos. 13:9.) I must leave Zion under this cloud for the present, and seek a place where the light shineth.

A VISITOR

ROMANS V. 18.

"Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."



his, like all the inspired epistles, was addressed to the people of God expressly, and to them

exclusively. Paul, after announcing himself as a servant of Jesus Christ, and his official character, an apostle separated unto the gospel of God, &c., thus defines the subject of his address: *"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints."* Although this department of the church was in Rome, and probably the members were generally Gentiles by nature, still they, as well as the Jews, were strongly inclined in their natural judgment to the legal notion that has always prevailed among carnal men, that the salvation and justification of sinners, depends, at least to some extent, on works to be by them performed as the condition on which they are to be saved. No error has ever been more prevalent among the fallen sons of Adam, more opposite to truth, nor more pernicious in its nature and tendency. Hence, we find the apostle Paul, in all his epistles to the saints, laboring to enlighten his brethren on this subject, and to clearly demonstrate to them that, By grace they are saved, through faith, and that not of themselves, for it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast: for says he, *"Ye are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that ye should walk in them."*

The text presents only a detached part of the argument of the apostle in establishing the true ground of justification and salvation. The term "justification," in this connection, is used in reference to the justification of the ungodly, and is therefore spoken of as

being through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. By which redemption God's children are not only redeemed from punishment, but from all guilt. Being washed from sin and transgression in that blood which cleanseth us from all sin, and clothed in the perfect righteousness, of him who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. To justify such as have never been involved in sin, only requires an exhibition of their righteousness. Thus, in the exhibition of the holy law of God, God's righteousness appears, and he is justified, and every mouth is stopped, and all the world is guilty before him. Not that the exhibition of God's holiness is the cause of our pollution and guilt, but it

is that which makes our guilt apparent. We were found in opposition to God, enemies to him by wicked works. The law, therefore, which manifests God's purity, proves that we are guilty, carnal and sold under sin. But the justification which is unto life, in our text, applies to the gracious work and righteousness of Christ imputed to the saints, by which he has taken away their sins, washed and cleansed them in his own blood, and brought in for them everlasting righteousness. Hence, it is said, that are freely justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Now, in order that we may know upon what principle God can be justified, and the justifier of them that believe, we must be made acquainted with the gospel. The law, as we have seen, shows how God is just in con-

demning sinners; but the gospel alone can show how "Mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Merely the substitution of an innocent and sinless victim in our room and stead, to suffer all the penalty of the law due to our sins, could not effect this, unless that sinless victim stood in such relationship to us that he could legally represent us. Truth says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die" Mercy cannot meet this truth in any way that would detract from the nature of truth. Truth has said, God is a jealous God and that he will in no wise clear the guilty. How then can mercy reach the case of guilty sinners without doing violence to truth? Such a meeting of mercy and truth is impossible unless the guilty sinner can be made perfectly free from guilt. But, as we have said, to merely visit the penalty of the guilt of sinners on one who is spotless, innocent and pure, would not sufficiently secure the truth and justice of the law of God, for truth has said, "*The soul that sinneth it shall die.*" Not another, that has not sinned. Hence, mercy cannot meet truth on any such ground. To condemn the righteous and to justify the guilty are alike incompatible with law, with truth, and with justice. Now to show how the law is honored, eternal justice perfectly satisfied, and truth maintained inviolate in the justification of the ungodly, is the very point which the apostle has clearly established in the text under consideration, and its connection. In the latter part of the fourth chapter, and immediately connected with our sub-

ject, Paul shows that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the saints, and that Christ was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. And to show how, and upon what ground, his righteousness can be accounted, or imputed to us, he refers, in the parenthesis, from verse 13 to 17th, inclusive, to the figure divinely authorized, for the illustration of this most important point. In elucidation of the doctrine of atonement, he says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (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. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one 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. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men" &c.

Now, let us carefully examine this illustration. "Adam is the figure of him

that was to come." And in applying this figure the parallel is run of the imputation of sin, judgment, condemnation and death by and through Adam, who is the figure, and of the imputation of righteousness, justification and life by and through him that was to come, as the antitype of Adam, or as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.

As Adam is the figure specially provided and given by authority of God himself for the illustration of this mystery, it is very important that we observe the scriptural testimony of this important figure. Who and what is Adam? We are informed, Gen. v. 1, 2, "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." Adam, as the figure of him that was to come, is a plural being, in the day when God created him. Embodied in his person was his wife, and in his loins were all the families of the earth. And God called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. This one form, into the nostrils of which God breathed the breath of life, was all the human family condensed in one boldly form. This unit by the decree of the Creator was to be fruitful and multiply, until all that was in that unit should be developed. It was Adam in the unit, and it is still Adam in multiplication or development. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of Adam is Adam. Before any of the sons

and daughters of Adam were born, while the whole human race was a unit, by one offense or transgression of the authority of the Creator, sin entered the world. And death by sin, and death passed on all men, (that is, on all the unborn race,) because all had sinned. Not one of the posterity of man was yet born when all had sinned, and death has passed on all men. As further evidence of this, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned, after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Before the birth of Cain, the whole human family was driven out of Eden, and could not eat again of the tree of knowledge, and, as from the expulsion of Adam to the time of Moses, the preceptive law was not given, those over whom death reigned by, and as a consequence of their being sinners, it proved conclusively that they were all identified in Adam, and all sinned in him.

It is therefore plainly to be seen that in the declaration of our text, "Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Adam was all men, and all men are Adam. All men, in this case, signifies all that Adam was, and all that Adam is, and all that Adam ever will be, sinned in Adam, judgment came upon them, then and there, while

thus embodied in him, unto condemnation. All men, therefore, in this case, clearly means all that Adam represented as their natural earthly progenitor, and no more. On this principle, Paul argues that when Christ

died for us, we were even then sinners. Some of us were not born into the natural world for nearly two thousand years after Christ died, yet when he died, more than eighteen hundred years ago, we were all sinners. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly"; we were then ungodly, and for that reason Christ died for us. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Now for the application of the figure to the second Adam, Jesus Christ, who is the Lord from heaven. The first Adam was not spiritual, but natural; he therefore represented his posterity, not as spiritual, but natural beings, as earthly beings, as living souls, and not as quickened spirits. Still the natural, earthly Adam, was the figure of him that was to come, namely, of Christ. As the natural Adam clearly represented and embodied an earthly race of human beings, so Christ the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven, the spiritual Adam, and the quickened Spirit, as clearly, fully and completely embodied in his mediatorial Headship of the church, all of the spiritual family, or all of that seed which was ordained to serve him, and to be counted to him for a generation, whom he should see when he made his soul an offering for sin, and in

seeing, be satisfied. As then all the members of the human family are partakers of, and involved in, the original transgression which brought sin and death upon all flesh, so all the members of Christ, whose spiritual and eternal life was given them in Christ, their spiritual Head, are as fully embodied in Christ, and as perfectly represented in him, as the great and glorious law-fulfiller; and as by relationship and identity with the first Adam, his transgression is reckoned to us, so by our spiritual relationship to, and identity with Christ, as the Head over all things to his church, all his members are represented in his righteousness, and on this ground of relationship, the free gift comes upon them all unto justification of life. In regard to the words "all" and "all men," which occur frequently in the apostle's argument on this subject, they imply just what they express. All men, in relation to the natural Adam, are all the human family as such, for they were all created in him, stood in him, and sinned and came under condemnation and wrath in him. The same term, "all men," when spiritual men are referred to, means all who are the members of Christ, or the seed of whom he is the spiritual progenitor. And farther, of the children or members of the natural Adam were made sinners, while they personally lay unconsciously in the loins of their earthly progenitor, almost six thousand years ago, so all the children of God were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, almost two thousand years ago, when he (in due time)

died for them, and arose again for their justification, and while they were undeveloped by personal and experimental development or manifestation.

Again, as the decree of Jehovah went forth, saying, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and did irrevocably secure the natural generation and perfect manifestation in time of the whole natural Adam, and all that was created in him, so the decree of God has gone forth equally firm, a irrevocable, that all of Christ's seed shall serve him, and be counted to the Lord for a generation; that they shall all be taught of the Lord; that they shall be a willing people in the day of his power; that they shall all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

As the fullness of the measure of the stature of the earthly Adam was perfectly open to the omniscient eye of the Creator from the creation, so the perfect proportion, symmetry and measurement of the mystical body of Christ was always with the Lord. Christ could and did, by the mouth of the psalm say, "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."-- Psalm cxxxix. 15, 16. Therefore, as by the offense of one, (Adam the first,) judgment came upon all men, (who stood and fell in him,) unto condemna-

tion. Even so, (or exactly so, after this similitude in perfect harmony with this figure,) by the righteousness of one, (Christ, the second Adam,) the free gift came upon all men, (all the members of Christ) unto justification of life. This free gift has come, and it has effected its object, and they upon whom it has come, are fully, freely, effectually and forever justified and reconciled to God, in Christ, raised up together, and they sit together with him in the heavenly places.

“And not only so,” says the apostle, “but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. This was when, in due time, Christ died. But now being called, quickened, born of God, we have personally and experimentally now, received the atonement, and in consequence of having received the reconciliation or at-one-ment, “we now joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our carnal, fleshly, Adamie nature, is still under death; for, “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”--Rom. viii. 10, 11. The old Adamic man must be dissolved and fall, for dust it is, and unto dust it must return. It shall be sown in weakness, dis-

honor and mortality, but it shall be raised in power, honor and in immortality. Our flesh shall therefore rest in hope. It shall be changed and made like Christ's glorious body, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

“This flesh shall slumber in the ground,

‘Till the last trumpet's joyful sound;

Then burst its bands with sweet surprise,

And in the Savior's image rise.”

Lengthy as our article is, we have but glanced at the subject. Volumes might be written, and the subject still be unexhausted. May the Lord apply truth to our hearts by the Holy Spirit and pardon error, for the Redeemer's sake.

Middletown, N.Y., July 1, 1856.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

HEBREWS 6: 9-12.

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Elder R.L. Dodson,
Dear Brother in Christ:

If it will not tax your patience too much I feel I would like to give expression to my thoughts in regard to the scriptures recorded in 2 Peter 2:4, also Rev. 12:9. That in 2 Peter reads, *"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness,"* etc. That in Revelation reads, *"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon: and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."* Rev. 12:7-9. These two parts of Holy Writ, while they may bear no relationship to each other, are equally confusing to some of the Lord's little ones. Sometimes we find it less difficult to tell what these things do not mean than what they really do mean. So if God will guide my mind and pen I would like to present my version of this for the consideration of our dear brethren who read the Signs: *"The angels that sinned and were cast down to hell."* It would be dreadful to anticipate even the possibility of any of the angels of the paradise of

God sinning and thus forfeit their home in those regions of bliss. This thought really deserves to be dismissed without comment. Firstly, because they must be born of God or they cannot enter into the kingdom of God or they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, and whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin because he is born of God. Secondly, sin is condemned in the flesh and those disembodied spirits are not encumbered with a body of sinful flesh as we who are yet thus encumbered. Thirdly, Jesus has said, *"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* I can see no advantage in a good hope through grace if, after we have attained to that glorious state we are still in jeopardy of being cast down to hell. The Catholic clergy claim their ability to pray a soul out of purgatory which claim is, to say the least, fantastic, but it is no less absurd and incredible than to suppose that God would cast one of his holy angels down to hell after having received him in glory. So we will dismiss this theory as being altogether unfounded. But the apostle's words are not idle words, so we must look for a better solution than this. He is referring to the old world as will be seen by reading this chapter. God's people, Israel, are the angels under consideration here, and the old world, of course, is that old or legal dispensation wherein the people were under the law of carnal commandments. His people did sin most flagrantly. They trampled under foot the holy law of God until they *"have all sinned and come short of the glory of God,"* and God did cast them

down to hell. Not an imaginary abyss burning with fire and brimstone but delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. As a recompense for their sin he sent Nebuchadnezzar who razed and destroyed and carried the people into exile seventy years. Briefly stated, these are the angels that sinned and this is the hell into which they were cast. We notice that "Noah, the eighth person" is brought to our view in this connection. Noah, the only one whom God saw righteous in that generation. All the rest were counted as exceedingly wicked and this would necessarily include the family of Noah with the rest. As it applies to God's people now so it applied to them. They were by nature the children of wrath even as others. They did nothing to merit the favor so abundantly bestowed upon them. *"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 are ye saved.)"*

Perhaps no clearer demonstration of God's election can be found in the Bible than this. Noah, a preacher of righteousness, a type of Christ, was commanded to build an ark, a type of the church. This he did alone. He sought no help from any source only from God, and no help was provided him. Thus Christ said, *"Upon this rock I will build my church."* Likewise he went forth in the work alone. He asked for no human aid and any and all who pretend to be helping God must be accounted impostors. *"Noah*

the eighth person," Besides him, in his family there were seven souls which represent a full or whole number. God said, *"Come thou and all thy house into the ark."* Thus we see the whole family gathered into the ark with Noah, their head and husband. Looking now at the antitype we see the whole family of God gathered into the church with Christ, our exalted head and husband. As before stated, the family of Noah was among that wicked generation hence they did not enter the ark on account of their righteousness or good works but by the virtue of the righteousness of Christ, our exalted head. *"This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."* *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."*

In Revelation it is said, *"And there was war in heaven."* I hope no one will be presumptuous enough to suppose this chaos existed in those regions of eternal bliss. This cannot be, although there be some who refer to this scripture to prove the devil was once an angel in heaven but he sinned and thus became a devil. How absurd and incredible, I have not words to express. How could any one suppose that God Almighty is so lax in his government as to allow one of his holy angels to sin and sink so low in infamy as to become his adversary. Who would suppose there are temptations in heaven that are more alluring than the shining courts of glory? This war in heaven was the culmination of one

of the things of which John came to bear witness which it was said must shortly come to pass. *"The kingdom of heaven is at hand."* And this is the heaven in which this war was waged and not in heaven above where all is love. This war no doubt represents the early persecution which the saints of the Lord were called to endure when the Pope ruled high handed and supreme, having both secular and religious authority and many of the saints who had the courage to withstand his tyrannical rule suffered martyrdom at his pleasure. Blood flowed to the horse's bridle. Let not our brethren be misled by this. This does not mean the blood was two feet deep or more which is must have been to reach the horse's mouth; but the bridle is that by which the beast is controlled. He is held in check, he is turned hither and thither. Says the apostle James, *"Behold, we put bits in the horse's mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about the whole body."* Thus the blood of the saints flowed unto the time when this beast, the dragon, was checked in his unholy holocaust. *"Michael (Jesus) and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."* John *"saw an angel, (which no doubt represents the power of the Holy*

Spirit of God) come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. and he laid hold on the dragon that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nation no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." *"Thus Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels. and prevailed not."* This was a bitter conflict but Michael prevailed. The dragon was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him. This perhaps, is the first element that split away from the true church and they remain separate and apart from the true church to this day. They were cast out into the earth. They went out from us because they were not of us. This dragon is called the Devil and Satan. As John stood upon the sands of the sea, he saw a beast rise up out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns. The sea, no doubt is a symbol of the legal dispensation, his seven heads representing full or complete authority. His ten horns represent the ten commandments of the law by which he persecuted the saints who recognize the complete redemption from under the law by our Lord Jesus Christ. The ten crowns upon his ten horns representing his regal powers so it mattered not how or in what way the saints offended his satanic majesty they were tried and convicted accord-

ing to the law of carnal commandments. No doubt their greatest offense was their zeal and desire to worship the true and living God. The dragon, or devil, gave this beast his power and authority. And even he had no power other than that what was given unto him, so hence this war in heaven, power was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. Michael prevailed, Jesus died that through his 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. It was God's people who were in constant fear of death: the death penalty hung heavily over their heads. But it is God's people who rejoice in a complete deliverance from the bondage of corruption under the glorious liberty of the children of God. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Satan is a vanquished foe. Jesus reigns. He reigns victorious over heaven and earth most glorious. Jesus reigns.

(Elder) L.L. Schenck
"SIGNS" - November 1950

PROVERBS 22: 1-4.

A Good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.

MEETINGS

MT. OLIVE CHURCH

Mt. Olive Church's annual meeting, the first Sunday in November and the Saturday before in San Antonio, Texas. We invite all brethren who would like to come and meet with us.

Anyone who wishes more information can contact me at 12705 Tantara Dr., Austin, Texas 78729 at (512) 258-7094. They may also contact Elder Malcolm Burkhalter.

Yours in Christ,
David Harrell

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR AUGUST 1996

H.P. Conner, VA	\$2.00
Clarence M. Kearns, NC	2.00
Mrs. Annie Reed, VA	10.00
L.W. Myers, VA	2.00
William Vick, TN	5.00
Mrs. Janie Fanning, AL	2.00
Mrs. Janie Fanning, AL	50.00
In memory Of Mrs. Lucille Young	
Mrs. Minne Cunningham, OR	7.00
A Friend	50.00
Mrs. Grace Berry, TX	47.00
C.W. Wood, VA	7.00
Larry H. Gibson, NC	2.00
Jerry P. Cockman, NC	15.00
Mrs. Hazel Branche, VA	5.00
James T. Howard, AL	14.00
Eld. Wallace Harvey, WV	5.00
Mrs. Bertie F. Brown, NC	4.00
Monral Hinkle, AL	2.00
Hassell A. Hale, VA	7.00
Eld. Carl Terry, VA	2.00
Eld. J.T. Prescott, NC	7.00

OBITUARIES

ELDER GERALD D. SHIPMAN

It is with great sadness, yet confident hope in the mercy of our Lord, that we report the death of our beloved pastor, Elder Gerald D. Shipman. Elder Shipman was 70 years old when he went to be with his Lord on July 10, 1996.

Elder Shipman was ordained to the ministry on August 16, 1959, at Mount Olive Primitive Baptist Church in Stockdale, Texas. He followed in the ministry his father, John W. Shipman who was ordained in May, 1915, at County Line Church, and his grandfather, A. D. Shipman of Perry County, Tennessee, who was ordained at Cedar Creek Church on September 11, 1882. Elder Shipman served Mount Olive Primitive Baptist Church until his death. He also served Mount Zion Church in Weslaco, Texas, Little Flock Church in Altus, Oklahoma, and Shepherd Fold Church in Houston, Texas.

Elder Shipman is survived by his wife, Darlene Shipman of San Antonio, four children: Gloria Merkel and her husband, Bud, of San Antonio; John William Shipman of San Antonio; Perry Shipman and his wife, Bobbi, of Boerne, Denise Alexander and her husband, Mike, of Divine. Elder Shipman is also survived by six grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Funeral services were held at Mission Park Funeral Chapel South in San Antonio with Elders C. M.

Haygood, W. M. Burkhalter, and Jimmy Hamrick presiding. Graveside services were held at Oak Island Cemetary at Oak Island, Texas, Elders C. C. Morris, David W. Harrell, and Brother Bob Nixon presiding.


Elder Shipman loved being among the Old Baptist people. While he was fervent in preaching, he was also kindly and gentle among the brethren. His last trip was to the fifth Sunday meeting in Winnsboro, Texas, where the writer perceived him to be at peace and in good faith. He appeared to be having a wonderful time. At the last meeting of the Pleasant Valley Association in San Antonio, Elder Shipman begged that we would continue preaching all day, which we did. The writer made the comment from the stand that he understood Elder Shipman's desire because we never know when it will be our last opportunity to meet together in this life. Some of us preached twice that day to fulfill his wish that we continue a little while longer in the things he so loved. We will miss him greatly, but we rejoice that he is now with his Lord and sees most perfectly those glorious things he saw only dimly here.

For the last year or so the church has been meeting in the home that Elder Shipman and Darlene had rented in San Antonio. We continue to meet there. Anyone wishing to communicate with Sister Shipman or any of the church may do so at 13951 Cedar Canyon, San Antonio, Texas 78231 - 1984. We are small in number, but for the foreseeable future we will continue to meet, Lord willing, at Sister

Shipman's home and continue on in the hope of our calling for the glory of our precious Lord Jesus.

Written and submitted by
Elder David W. Harrell
at the request of Mt. Olive Church

HATTIE H. STEGALL

s Elder Wallis Smith read Proverbs 31:10 - 31 at her funeral, the family thought how well that scripture depicted the life of Sister Hattie Stegall. She worked long, hard hours for many years caring for her family. Even before she married, she had to help shoulder the load, growing up as the oldest girl in her family. She always set a bountiful table for family and friends.

She trained her children to care for others and they were devoted to her. It was her desire to always stay home, not to be a burden to anyone. After she became too disabled to stay alone, two of her daughters, Janie and Virginia, took turns staying with her, with others helping out. Then toward the end, they stayed together. With the help of Home Health Care, the family was brought closer together during this experience. When she could no longer serve others, it was her desire for the Lord to take her home. As her three daughters and a devoted daughter-in-law stayed with her, she quietly slipped away on July 15, 1996, at 1:45 a.m.

Sister Stegall was born Hattie Wilmer Holley on December 22, 1899, to John and Jenny H. Holley. She married Clarence G. Stegall on September 23, 1917, who departed this life on March 20, 1983. They both were baptized by Bro. Wallis Smith the same Sunday morning in 1963 and were members of Old Mountain Church.

Sister Stegall leaves three daughters, Janie Wyatt of Danville, Virginia Turner of Axton, and Irene Oakes of Museville, and three sons, Charlie Stegall of Whitmell, Richard Stegall and William "Bill" Stegall of Danville. She was predeceased by one son, Percy Stegall, of Hurt. She is survived by 12 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, and four great-great grandchildren. She was predeceased by five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The funeral was held at Wrenn-Yeatts Westover Funeral Chapel by Elder Wallis Smith and Elder C. B. Davis. The body was laid to rest beside her beloved husband in Highland Burial Park under beautiful flowers to await the great resurrection when her Lord and Savior returns.

She is greatly missed by her family, neighbors, and friends. Her life covered 96 years of great changes in economic and industrial developments but aren't we thankful that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He cares for us.

Written and submitted by
Irene Oakes, Her daughter

Signs of the Times

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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, welting 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

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast.



ELDER R.H. CAMPBELL

God base their claim to the inheritance that is laid up for them that love God: those who are called according



Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Faith is the foundation upon which the children of

to his will and purpose, and it is the gift of God to them. It is the rock upon which the building is set that groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom all the saints are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit.

The rock in scriptures, signifies permanence, endurance and solid unwavering support for that which is built upon it. The wise man builds his house upon the rock and though the rains, storms and floods come the house stands because it is founded upon the rock. Deut. 32 vs. 3,4 *“Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgement: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”* God is the rock of Ages and is perfectly solid and sound, no weakness and cannot fail to support, sustain and endure until all that is built upon him and by him shall be fulfilled. God is the rock and in his infinite wisdom and mercy has designed the plan of salvation in such a way that he gives unto all of the heirs of grace a little of himself and that spirit that is given to them is called faith. It is God’s gift to them and it insures that they will remain in the household of faith through eternity. It is as sure and steadfast as the rock from which it was hewn. This faith is the anchor of the soul, entering into heaven itself whither Jesus the Author and finisher of it has already gone for them. This anchor will always remain firm and strong, and though the individual may seem to maneuver

around and away from the anchor, there is always and indestructible connection between them so that they can never drift away and be lost.

Deut. 32 vs 31 *"For their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."* This is referring to a very froward generation, children in whom there is no faith: they know and understand only the things of nature and since God gave man dominion over his creation here in this time world they presume to have power in and of themselves. They are as the nation who thought to build a tower unto heaven. Their faith is in their own natural abilities but the tower of Babel was never built and the house that is built on the sand (natural faith) shall surely fall. These are those who measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves among themselves and boast of the wonderful works they are doing in the name of their god, but their god is not as our God their own testimony bearing witness. They are working in vain to build the house to show to the world the glory of their god and his kingdom; which consists of the things of nature, while the saints of God are standing, in awe and viewing the beauty of the city built without hands as its glory and wonder is revealed to them.

Jesus once asked his disciples, *"whom say ye that I am."* And Peter replied, *"Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God."* Jesus then told Peter that he was a blessed character to know this and that flesh and blood had not revealed it to him but God who was in heaven had revealed it to him.

Then Jesus said *"thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* Certainly Jesus did not mean that the Church would be built upon the man Peter but rather the blessed character that had been blessed of God with this knowledge for that specific time. The man Peter, immediately after this occasion, rebuked Jesus when he told them that he must die and Peter told him that he would not let it happen: not the same testimony as the blessed character that knew that Jesus was the Son of God, just a short while before. That was a special blessing bestowed on Peter for that particular occasion because they did not possess faith at that time. The gift of faith comes with the gift of the Holy Ghost which was given them on the day of Pentecost after Jesus' death. The rock on which the church is built will withstand the assault of the gates of hell and only the blessed child of God fully protected by the whole armour of God and the gift of faith can endure the trials and afflictions that will confront them in this life.

1 Cor. 3 vs. 11-15 *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire: and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward:*

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. These are some of the most comforting words to be found in all of the bible because they state that salvation does not stand or fall on the efforts or works of the creature. They stand or fall based on the foundation which they are built upon: if it is the ability of the creature it will not stand, but if it is founded upon God's gift to them in the person of Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, it will stand the test of time and eternity. The above scripture teaches that works cannot save, but neither can works cause them to be lost. The point is whether the works be good or bad whether they burn or abide; whether it be gold or stubble, it is the foundation upon which they are built that make the difference. It is Jesus the author and the finisher of that faith which is the gift of God unto them by his unmerited grace and mercy.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee: and shall say destroy them." This is the heritage of the saints of God: the plan of salvation was engineered before time began, the results were determined and the execution of it in time is as the designer, perfect in every little detail. The knowledge of these things is made known to the heirs of this salvation as they journey in this low ground of sin and sorrow, and they see and are made to realize their own frailties and shortcomings. They read the promises to a poor and afflicted people and

know that this is the only plan that can reach them; and as the blind man they begin to beg for mercy and grace to be applied to them. They know that they cannot attain to these things of themselves and pray. Lord have mercy on me a sinner. The grace of God gives them faith, and mercy overlooks their weaknesses and loves them with an everlasting love, in spite of their sins and backslidings.

Down through the ages the patriarchs, prophets, apostles and men in all ages have obtained a good report; believed the worlds were framed by the word of God; subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, quenched the violence of fire, were stoned, sown asunder and slain because of the faith that they had. I have heard many say, oh if I could only have faith like that, well you do if you have any faith. There is only one faith and that is God given and it will survive any test that you are put to. Just be thankful that you have not faced any of those extreme tests that others have, yet; but if you do, you will endure them as they did, by the grace of God and the everlasting arms that will not let you fail to glorify him in all that you do.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith;" We have the witnesses of our brethren since the beginning of times as recorded in the scriptures, those who we commune with today and the

witness that has been placed in our hearts and soul. We can never fail if we keep our eye and heart on them; it is when we begin to look around us get our vision clouded by the things of nature that we get in trouble. As the old saying goes we can't see the forest for the trees. Faith sees the forest, the broader picture and enables the children of God to press on to the mark of the prince of the high calling, in spite of the sins that do beset them on all sides. Faith endures the present, looking to the future and the promises of things to come that are worth more than this world and the fullness thereof; these things that await the saints of God will stand forever. 1 Peter 1 vs. 4, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*"

Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements and his ways past finding out! It is not necessary that we understand, just that we believe and have faith in the giver of ever good and perfect gift who has given this gift of faith as a seal that they are His.

In bonds of love,
Elder Richard H. Campbell

ARTICLES

This morning; as is often the case with me; I find this question upon my mind, and in my feelings; What do I feel and believe; where it has to do with the reality, of the true and living Three-in-One God; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit; these three being, the whole and complete ONENESS, of, THE God?' how, first of all; I feel, there is no more profound, and sacred subject; one's mind could ever dwell upon, or speak or write concerning. Therefore; it is my deep desire; that, as I endeavor, to write this down it could be His Holy will to lead, guide and direct my mind's thoughts, and this writing. For I feel that to be the one and only way; this could ever result in being to the praise, honor and glorifying of His great and Holy name; the only name ever named, in heaven and among men, could ever be worthy of any and all praise both now, and forever more. For I feel that if my natural fleshly self be let to exercise itself while writing this; then, it shall be no more than filthy rags, in His sight. And thereby be, to the dishonoring of His Holy and Righteous name. And I feel, there is at least one sure way could be to that dishonoring of His name; which would be the extending of any praise or honor, unto any one of humankind; for anything

he may do, or not do. For, if it be good; then it came from God and if it be bad; then it came from the flesh of mankind. For, if any good ever be performed, THROUGH (not by) any man; then, it had to have come about; only, because of the Holy Spirit of God having worked in him, both to will and to do, of that good. For, in the flesh of man, there dwelleth no good thing that is good, in His sight. John 4:24, God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. God is self existant. God is eternal; He is without beginning or ending. He is the unchanging God. He has forever known all things; therefore, He can never learn any new thing. There can never come anything; that has not already been, in both His mind and purpose; back in eternity, before the beginning of time; and so, He can in nowise ever be informed of anything, nor instructed in anything. He knoweth the deep secrets in the hearts of all mankind; and knoweth, even our dreams before we dream them. Heaven is His throne, and the earth, (from which we are made), is His footstool. He is everywhere present and nowhere absent. God is fully aware of all of that the earth and seas consist; and of all that is above, below, and around them; for He is the Creator and Maker of them all. He is ever fully aware of our every thought; and our every desire of both heart and mind; and our every

step or movement, where we all are, and where we are going; and when we arrive; and when our end shall be. He brought us all into this world and will take us all out of this world, in and at, His afore appointed time, place and manner. Death and hell, nor the devil and all his angels, can never effect one iota of change in all its entirety. God is the beginning, the continuation, and ending, or all things. Of all that ever exists outside Himself; His almighty power, does control it all. Now some might ask; well, what about all that wickedness mankind does commit? His answer is this; even the wrath of man shall praise Him; and the remainder of wrath He will restrain.

I believe and feel, it is well and good with us when we are given to feel and see our own smallness and weakness and self helplessness; for it is only then; we are able to see and feel that very truth; of our complete and whole dependence upon our God and Lord for our every furnishings; both naturally and Spiritually; it is only whenever we realize, our own self weakness and nothingness; we are prepared for to look up at His greatness and goodness and cry unto Him for our help. It is only under just such circumstances we find ourselves to be in; we could ever utter or groom a true and pure prayer unto our God and Lord, or see and feel, the very Holy truth, for what it really is. It is only at

such time our thoughts could somewhat be compared with His thoughts; or come to realize of His ways to some degree.

Galatians 6:3. "For if a man think himself to be something, he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. Man in his own fleshly nature's ways; is the very hallmark of deception; and can glory only in his fleshly self; which is, false pride, and selfishness. God is NOT man; He is a Spirit a Holy Spirit. Isaiah 55:8-11; For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Now, Dear little children; with hope in Him are not His shalls of certainty so beautiful and comforting to your very soul from time to time?; I feel they surely are.

In the hope, I could be your brother in Christ Jesus; I say; Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen: Galatians 6:18.

Troy G. Shepard

VOICES OF THE PAST

"A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. — PROVERBS xiv. 16.

I BELIEVE no living soul can be satisfied with a notional religion: though a miserable backslider, and driven into the fields to feed swine, he cannot feed on their husks, but sighs after the bread of his Father's house. The eyes being enlightened to see the nature of sin, the justice and holiness of God, and the miserable filthiness of self, the quickened soul can find no rest in anything short of a precious discovery of the Lamb of God; and the more that the soul is exercised with trials, difficulties, temptations, doubts, and besetments of various kinds, the more does it feel its need of that blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel. What is a Christian worth without inward trials and exercises? How dead and lifeless are our prayers; how cold and formal when the soul is not kept alive by inward exercises! Where are the sighs, cries, groanings, wrestlings, and breathings of a soul that is at ease in Zion? The world is everything and Christ nothing, when we become settled on our lees, and are not emptied from vessel to vessel; but inward exercises, fears, straits, and temptations stir up the soul to cry, and pray, and beg for mercy. The certainty, the power, the reality of eternal things are then felt, when guilt, and wrath, and fear, and disquietude lay hold of the soul. Mere notions alone of Christ, false hope, a dead faith, a presumptuous confidence, a rotten assurance, are all swept away as so many refuges of lies, when the soul is made to

feel its nakedness and nothingness, its guilt and helplessness before God. And thus all these inward exercises pave the way for discoveries of Christ—those views of his blood and righteousness, that experimental acquaintance with his Person, love, grace, and work, which is life and peace.

Elder J.C. Philpot

THE REFINING POT.

“And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off, and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.” - Zech. xiii. 8,9.

“He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.” - Mal. iii. 3.

God's dealings with national, typical Israel are of very much interest to the church of Christ. Therein is discovered to us the attributes of the Lord, and in this nation we have a portraiture of the manifold vicissitudes that pertain to the children of Zion even to the present day. This people were exceptionally favored above all the nations of the earth. To them were committed the oracles of God; blessings peculiar and abundant were their heritage. At times they worshiped God in grateful praises for his sovereign graciousness unto them, but ah, how soon they forgot his works, they corrupted their ways, debased themselves in their forgetfulness and wandered treacherously from

the Lord. They knew what it was to flourish beneath the smiles of the Lord, and to fade and die beneath his rebukes. How often the Lord wrought for his name's sake, (Ezek. xx. 9,) shewing them mercy and delivering them from their adversities. In reading the history of Israel we see that severe indeed were the fiery ordeals they were subjected to. Look at this: *“Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead; in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord God. Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger, and in my fury, and will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.”* Ezek. xxii. 18-22. Ah, though the furnace was so severe there were ever some silver, some that were precious in the eyes of the Lord, a remnant according to the election of grace. so in Zech. xiii. 8,9, *“Two parts therein [saith the Lord] shall be cut off, and die; but the third part shall be left therein.”* This third part are his very people, and they confess the Lord to be their God. By fiery trials the Lord separated them from

their idolatries, uncleanness and witchcraft. He purified them by the spirit of judgment and of burning from all the foreign mixtures that had become mixed with the pure worship that God had ordained among his people when he redeemed them from the house of bondage. Moab was the Lord's washpot, (Psalms lx. 8,) and Babylon was also the refining pot for Israel. Seventy years they were in that fiery furnace to purify them from idolatry. Though the fires of exile and captivity were painful, their songs were hushed, and in sighing and weeping they spent this long night of affliction, yet all worked together for good. There they bemoaned themselves, and sighed and wept, but the morning came, and they came forth with singing (Isaiah xxxv. 10,) and laughter; yes, the bright shining silver sang, "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Are "the third part" his people? Are they silver and gold? Then he will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried. In graciousness and faithfulness, for his own glory and their good, the Lord will bring the third part through the fire.

It is not my intention to recite the narrative in particular, in which is told the fulfillment of this prophetic word in typical Israel, but, the Holy Spirit enabling me, I will present some glimpses of the subject as have ever been and are now experienced by those who are in truth the people of God. "*I [Jehovah of hosts] will bring the third part through the fire.*" "*He [Christ, the Word made flesh, the messenger of the covenant,] shall*

sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." By these declarations of the Scriptures the Refiner is no other than God. This being so it is our comfort, as believers in God, to be assured that he is not trifling or experimenting with his people; he is not using them as playthings when he turns his hand upon them (Isaiah i. 25,) and puts them in the refining pot. The little that we know of God persuades us to believe that he is holy and wise, gracious and almighty. All his ways are judgment, just and right is he. When his saints come forth of this and that, and all the fiery furnaces that the Refiner puts them into, will they not be to his praise and honor and glory? In very truth they will; my soul is exultant in truth they will; my soul is exultant in the thought. It is so sustaining and uplifting to have right thoughts of God. The Refiner is the Lord of hosts, the silver is his own elect, his redeemed and regenerated people, whom he hath eternally loved and hath predestinated unto eternal glory. The silver is owned by the Refiner. Who then shall question his sovereign right to do with his own as seemeth good in his sight? The sorest chastenings of our heavenly Father are for our profit. (Heb. xii. 10.) Our Refiner knows that there is much dross mingled with the silver in his people; we think we know it, too, but he better knows it than we, and what is more, he knows just exactly what fire and what degrees of fiery trials will separate this and that alloy from the silver, bring it to the surface, and that only his own hand that put us in the cru-

cible and melted as can purge away the dross. Have you not prayed, dear child of God, that you might more brightly shine in the beauties of the Savior? Yes, you say,

"I asked the Lord that I might grow

*In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face.*

'Twas he who taught me thus to pray,

And he, I trust, has answered prayer;

*But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair."*

O, there is much chaff to be burned up, and tin and dross to be purged away all the days that we are in the earthly house of this tabernacle. Well, child of God, how many times have you been in the refining pot? What fires have you been brought through? and in what furnace of affliction are you now being melted? To tell all your answer would be a long account. The Lord has many fires, and fire after fire to bring his chosen through; some of his dear children are seldom out of the melting pot. The furnace of affliction in which the Lord has his chosen may be, in his providence, some outward earthly trial. It may be the blasting of our temporal prosperity; we are called upon perhaps to see nothing but shattered hopes and blighted expectations. Perhaps by God's dispensation we find our bodily health declining, and wearing and painful sickness is

our lot. Then how sore to meet with bereavements, when strong ties are rent and torn. But there are living troubles which are as a living fire; some such afflictions are never breathed to any other, but are as a continuing furnace to the soul. Then, when it pleaseth the Lord, he can so kindle a fire to melt us that the common cares of life are a daily furnace to us. Or our Refiner's fire may be the fiery darts of the wicked, the buffetings of the messenger of Satan, the devil's cruel insinuations and accusations. What a harassed life some of God's dear children have; all their surroundings are such that we wonder they endure such fiery trials. O they are not utterly consumed, the Lord, the Refiner, loves them, and his invisible and gracious hand sustains them. A child of God cannot always say with Job, *"I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came."* - Job. iii. 26. Our circumstances may have been very different when trouble came. Trouble came; unsent? Never. Let us not believe such atheistical stuff. Trouble came, the fire burns, the child of God is in the crucible, and soon he is melted because of trouble. The affliction of the silver is not to destroy the silver, but to refine it. The bush that Moses saw burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed; and Moses said, *"I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."* - Exodus iii. 3. And I am sure if we have eyes to see the elect of God in the refining pot, if we have a heart to enter somewhat into the intimacy be-

tween the Refiner and the silver, if we can view the scene taking place in the crucible, we shall say, This is a great sight, such a sight which if once seen can never be altogether obliterated from memory's vision.

To a right apprehension of what is to be witnessed as we contemplate the children of God in the fire it will be borne in mind that all is not silver in the pot, there is dross there also. The child of God has two natures, one pure silver, the other all alloy, veritable dross, though some of it may very much resemble silver. The silver is the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, and the dross is the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. (Eph. iv. 22-24.) Having this well understood I would that we together might look into the crucible and see the tribulation of the silver therein, and let us know that while we are obtaining some glimpses therein that there is One who sees far more and deeper than we, One who sees all; the Lord, the Refiner, sitteth near by, his heart and his eyes are there perpetually. (1 Kings ix. 3.) He has dominion over the fire, and in wisdom regulates its intensity; nothing is taking place in the refining pot without him. By the heat of the fiery trial the child of God begins to be moved, as silver he is troubled; the varied alloys of our carnal nature also are agitated in affliction's furnace. That one and the selfsame person should be agitated by such contradictory emotions is a mystery. In the refining pot the child of God becomes melted;

yes, the new man is molten, and is moved like melted, boiling silver in the refining pot, and the dross also is put in motion by the fiery ordeal. What strugglings what warfare is experienced by the tried soul. As the silver and the alloy are boiling, at certain stages they are so mixed, there is such confusion of the substances, that the child of God cannot himself determine what is silver and what is of the flesh. O this he learns, that he is frail and sinful. So mixed sometimes are the silver and dross that the poor soul in the furnace cannot determine whether he is a child of God or a child of the devil. *"When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path."* - *Psalms cxlii. 3.* So our Refiner ever distinguishes, ever knows the sighs and yearnings of the silver. *"The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts."* - *Prov. xvii. 3.* While the child of God is in the crucible he is being tested indeed, for consider what darkness he is in much of the time. The providences of the Lord are often as an impenetrable cloud, and blind unbelief, that foul, God-dishonoring dross, comes the surface, and our tried souls are entombed in its dismalness. Ah, yes, there boils up out of, the depths of our sinful hearts murmuring and rebellions, and we pray, but all our prayers are not silver prayers, there are dross prayers, peevish cries; we pray, Take us out of the fire, but we are still kept in, the fire still burns, our Refiner blows upon it and it becomes the hotter. Yes, in affliction's furnace the

believer will find thoughts bubbling up, imaginations of the carnal mind, and in passing through these fiery trials the Lord purposes to separate the dross thoughts from the silver thoughts. Many have been and are our thoughts of God, of his providences and of things that we imagine to be the truth; we cherish them as silver, but they are base alloy. Ah, what misconceptions we are liable to; we sometimes think that God is altogether such an one as ourselves. Silver thoughts are ever according to the testimony of the holy Scriptures, and those that are not sustained by the word of God, no matter how pretentious, no matter how we have gained them, no matter how they appear to shine, no matter how much we hug them to our bosom, they are nothing but very dross and scum, and in the refining pot we shall find it to be so to our soul's discomfiture. God's fires are where the wood, hay and stubble, where heresies are consumed. The false, the counterfeit, that religiousness that originates in our flesh, the erroneous ideas which we thought were right, and were friendly to Christ, are now in the furnace discovered to us to be opposed to that true and vital knowledge of God, (2 Cor. x. 5,) and all such by sore tribulations are separated from the faith which is of the operation of God. Yes, the refining pot is the place for the destruction of inherent Arminianism. Self-righteousness is only wood, hay, stubble, and affliction's fire will burn it up. As the dross comes to the surface we look into the refining pot, and nothing but this offensive scum is

seen. We say, Is this a child of God? Look at Jonah in the refining pot in Nineveh and its vicinity; he is exceedingly displeased, and very angry and even in the face of God he spits forth this: "*Ido well to be angry, even unto death.*" As we stand by and look upon this, depicted in the fourth chapter, do we not blush and feel ashamed that such behavior should be in any creature? Surely this is dross. Is there any silver in Jonah? Yes, look beneath this shameful scum, look at him in the belly of the whale, in the second chapter, and there the precious grace of God, the silver, is seen. The Lord of hosts sits as a refiner and purifier of silver, and as the dross comes to the surface it is his work, because of his great interest in the silver, to remove all the base scum away. Let us not overlook this one thing as we consider the elect of God in the furnace of affliction, that amidst all the severity of their trials they are given to prove the unfailing mercifulness of the Lord their God. Our Refiner loves his own, he ever has compassion for his silver. He, the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect through suffering when he was put to perfect grief for the atonement of our transgressions. He saw the travail of his own soul and was satisfied; yes, for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. So he sitteth as a Refiner and witnesseth the travail of soul of his tried people, his beloved silver ones, in the refining pot. He sees the end, that they shall come forth to his praise,

they shall very gloriously reflect his own image.

*"I feel at my heart all thy sighs
and thy groans,*

*For thou art most near me, my
flesh and my bones;*

*In all thy distresses thy Head
feels the pain,*

*Yet all are most needful, not one is
in vain.*

*Then trust me and fear not, thy
life is secure;*

*My wisdom is perfect, supreme is
my power;*

*In love I correct thee, thy soul to
refine,*

*To make thee at length in my
likeness to shine."*

The Refiner takes away from time to time the upboiling dross; he has no pleasure in this scum, for it mars the divine excellence of his silver. Yes, tried one, thy Refiner will take away the dross from the silver, and thou shalt come forth from the fires a vessel well pleasing in his eyes. (Prov. xxv. 4.) Though in your trials you find so much that is not pure and gracious and Christlike, though your melted soul is feelingly buried in this all upboiling scum, and your heart aches to find there is so much of it, thy loving Refiner will purely purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin. (Isaiah i. 25.) By divine teaching errors are swept away, for God's word, his truth, is like fire. The gracious teachings of the Spirit of truth (John xvi. 13,) separates us from our mistaken ideas of

doctrine, and we are made quite willing in our fiery temptations to have all heresies carted away to the dunghill. The people of God are glorified in the truth, but errors dim the lustre of the faith of God's elect. O the grievous scum of the depravity of our flesh, what shall cleanse this away? Only the hand of the once crucified One can purge it from thy aching conscience. Yes, the dear Refiner who sitteth near by will put forth his hand, and the voice of his pierced hand removing the scum will say to the heart of his silver underneath, This is my blood shed for the remission of sins. O blessed removal of the dross by the precious blood of the Lamb! At such a moment as this the silver, though still in affliction, can look up with smiles unto the face of the Refiner, saying, I have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Scum, vain imaginations, delusions, heresies, murmurings, unbelief, atheisms, all such are not evidences of the grace of God; they are not to be exhibited, looked upon or mentioned as evidences presenting us as the children of God; such is in all mankind. Such things are vile, they are not precious, and to be as God's mouth we must in our testimony take forth the precious from the vile. (Jer. xv. 19.) Sin in its every aspect is to be loathed, to be refused, to be condemned; we are not to smack our lips over it as though it were enjoyable, good to eat. O Lord, "thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." - Hab. i. 13. And shall we feast our eyes

on sin? Surely if we are of God, born again, born of God, if we are silver, our heart-aching prayer will be, Take away all iniquity, and we shall be ashamed, and mourn, and loathe ourselves for all our iniquities. Can such an one whose conversation is not chaste be found mingling among the saints; who tells, with a grin on his face, an obscene anecdote? Shall I by word or look, or in any other way, be a partaker? God forbid. O God, have mercy upon me. How dare such a person profess the name of Christ? How dare they invade the society of believers in the Lamb of God? Child of God, let that one whose life is such be unto you as a leper; keep no company with such. O pray to God to keep thee from this walking pestilence. O flee, in thy heart, to the pavilion of thy God, in the secret of his tabernacle thou shalt find a refuge, and there pour out thy sighs in the hour of temptation. Thy merciful, succoring God "shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." - Psalms xci. 4. It is so gratifying, moving our souls in thanksgiving to God, that his grace was so sufficient for the apostle Paul that he could write, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." - 1 Thess. ii. 10.

Many are the conflicting thoughts and the prayers of the elect of God while being brought through the fire, for in the Refiner's fire, of whatsoever nature it may be, we are melted and sink down in the crucible, and wonder

why it is that we have fallen into such temptations. In gloom because of the uprising dross, and agitated by our trials, we know in truth that no chastening is joyous, but grievous, and it is not easy for us to understand that any God-glorifying fruits can come out of such distracting, heart-burdensome, burning dispensations. Look into the refining pot and see the children of God therein; you say, I do, and I see some of them have hard thoughts of men, of things and of God; they murmur, and some in rather loud tones express their peevishness. This surely is dross and scum. Yes, but if you have good hearing incline your ear over the refining pot, and from underneath all this scum you shall hear the sighs and prayers of the melted silver. "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? - Psalms xiii. 1. "Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" - Psalms x. 1. The very time when he is so much needed we fear he has withdrawn, and has taken away his mercies from us, and amazed and disconsolate we ask, "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? - Psalms lxxvii. 7-9. Do not these complaints very clearly declare that the Lord is the One so needful, so desired? Look at Job when he was in the furnace, you may see the dross. Ah yes, he spake "words without knowledge." In the day of his grief

and desperate sorrow his speech was as the speech of one that was desperate. (Job vi. 26.) The dross came to the surface, but let the dross be taken away from the silver and how affectionately we look at the molten silver, at Job in his afflictions. His bereaved soul cries out, "O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!" "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." And then so nourished was his faith and hope in God that he says, "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." What a comprehensive view he had of God's providence, and how gracious was his soul's acquiescence to the afflicting dispensations of God when he exclaimed, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" - Job ii. 10. All afflictions and chastenings endured by the chosen of God are for their good, and the fruit of it all is God-glorifying; so even while in the fire the silver is found to glorify the Lord God. For however inconceivable to the carnal mind, the child of God spiritually thrives in affliction. Melted in the fires we are separated from fleshly dependencies.

*"Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer,
Trials bring me to his feet,
Lay me low and keep me there."*

"O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." - Isaiah xxxviii. 16. "They shall call on my name, and I will hear them."

That is, the melted silver shall call upon the Refiner, I, the Lord, will hear them. He is so near the refining pot.

*"He knows how deep their
groanings are,*

*And what their secret sighs de-
clare,*

*And for their comfort has ex-
pressed*

*That all such mourning souls are
blest."*

In trouble they visit their God and pour out a prayer while his chastening is upon them. The word prayer here means "a secret speech, a whisper." Yes, the cry of the tried heart is only for the ear of the Lord. So very gracious is our God that when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, saith the Lord, will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them. Prayers, silver prayers, from that heart prepared by the Lord are the forerunners of his decreed mercies. Such prayers are not tin prayers; silver prayers are not asking amiss, but asking according to the will of the Lord our Refiner.

"They shall call on my name, and I will hear them." In our affliction we are moved by the Holy Spirit to seek the Lord. No other one can afford us help. Ah, it may be before we were brought into trials we were careless, wayward ones; but now in our tribulations where shall we go? to whom shall we look? "When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God: and they remembered that God was

their rock, and the high God their redeemer." Listen to the silver praying, *"Take away all iniquity."* - Hosea xiv. 2. Take away this hateful dross that darkens my life, mars my peace and shuts out from view the face of my Redeemer. In the chastening fires we are brought into implicit reliance in the atoning blood of Christ, more and more endeared to us becomes the hope of the gospel, and we look with all desire to the merits of our Savior, and when the Comforter applies the blood of Jesus to our sin-aching hearts, then the scum is gone, and the silver face looks up to the face that looks down, and that look of the Lord, the Refiner, says, Thou art mine, my delight, my Hephzibah, and the happy silver says, The Lord is my God. Many are the sighs and cries of the tried saints for resignation to the divine will, and that they might as dear children bear the indignation of the Lord, endure reproaches for the name of Christ, and that they might be kept ever worshipping the everlasting God. The furnace of affliction most surely brings the children of God into more intimate communion with the Lord; here their faith is purified, errors are purged, and they are brought into the necessity of a deeper and more extended knowledge of the characters that Christ sustains to his own. If passing through the fire is to burn up the dross, then let the Lord do with me as seemeth good in his sight. Unlike material silver from which all alloy has been purely purged away, and is then pure silver, the child of God becomes while in the world again and again

mixed with dross. *"How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!"* - Lam. iv. 1. Ah, it becomes tarnished, corroded with earth's defilements. The dross accumulates, it grows up from our depraved nature and mingles itself with the silver. Ah, some of the dear family of God are only out of the furnace for little moments. These little seasons are quietness and joy, and radiant in gratefulness, they reflect the smiling face of God. Then if needs be the Lord puts them in the refining pot again. Surely his purposes are wise and gracious. Though the silver be tried in a furnace of earth and purified seven times, (Psalms xii. 6,) will the silver in the end find fault? will there be a murmuring thought over any or all the seven fires? O there will be perfect acquiescence, there will not be a lisp of complaint, but this shall be the heart's sweet song: My Jesus hath done all things well. The Refiner in all graciousness clears away the dross, and looking into the furnace he sees the melted silver, sees in his tried ones his own image, and he says, It is my people, and the silver's heart responds, The Lord is my God. Would you see a child of God brought through the fire? then look at this picture. There stands Simon Peter in the palace of the high priest warming himself at the fire. Ah, Peter, the Lord has put you into the refining pot, and underneath satan kindles a fire, for he has desired to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat; he has insinuated that you are nothing but chaff, and you have thought you are the finest of wheat, all

wheat and no chaff, for you have said, Although all should be offended, yet will not I. The fire is kindled, and Peter in the crucible will soon begin to be dissolved by the vehement heat of temptation, and we shall see what silver and what dross he is composed of. The Refiner is near by. *"A damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee."* This was a hot fire, and Peter is melting hot within, the silver and the dross are all in commotion, and up to the surface comes the dross, and Peter *"denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest."* Another who saw him *"said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man."* What, do you think that an oath for confirmation will end the strife, silence your accusers and cause them to believe your lies? Ah, sinful Peter, this is very dross. The fire still burns, and Peter is boiling with emotions; yes, the silver is in motion and the dross is in motion. About the space of one hour another accuser came, and his accusations and questionings were as a vehement flame under the refining pot. This accuser confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him, for he is a Galileean, (the accuser was one of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman, whose ear Peter cut off,) and he saith, *"Did not I see thee in the garden with him?"* O Peter, where is thy vehement courage now? will you cut him down with your sword? Ah, the once brave Peter is now a very coward. *"Then began he*

to curse and swear, saying, I know not the man." What, lying, swearing, cursing? Whom was he cursing, himself, his accusers? Was it that he was cursing Jesus? O execrable scum! This is the very scum of scum. Can there be any silver in the refining pot? Yes, for our Savior told him before he was put in the furnace, *"Thave prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."* While he was lying, while he was swearing to confirm his lying denials, yes; even while he was cursing, Peter knew, the silver knew, Jesus; the silver ached, the silver sighed, the silver was ashamed. The silver, deep down in the crucible, hidden from all human view, blushed and dared not lift up its face to the Lord. (Ezra ix. 6.) Three horrible boilings up of vileness; once, twice, thrice, enough: *"Thou shalt deny me thrice."* Not four times. *"And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice."* Look into the furnace, and there to our view is Peter, and we say he is all dross, all depravity, he exhibits the very scum of the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. This is all that is outward of Peter in the crucible, and we say, O Peter, thou art so unlovely. *"The Lord turned and looked upon Peter."* It is the moment, the set time for the Refiner to skim away the odious scum. Christ looked, O that look! He looked upon Peter, he looked and looked and

looked all the dross, all Peter's dense, corrupt scum away, and Peter is transformed. Jesus looked upon him with eyes of injured love; that look said, I have prayed for thee. He looked in such compassionate forgiveness. O that look was the look of the suffering Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, and thus Jesus the Refiner took away the dross from the silver. The Refiner looked upon the silver, and Peter (not scum and dross Peter, but silver Peter,) looked upon the Refiner. Who can tell the story of what transpired in the soul of Peter when his eyes met the eyes of the suffering, compassionate Jesus? The lying, swearing, cursing Peter is transformed. The Lord with his eyes, which are as a flame of fire, so looked into the crucible that all the dross was cleansed away, and Peter went out and wept bitterly. O thou art silver Peter. Thy bitter weeping is sweet to us. O Peter, thou art lovely, thou art all fair, there is no spot in thee, nothing but silver now is seen. The broken-hearted, melted silver is all aglow with the likeness of the Lord, the Refiner, who himself is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, and he went out and wept bitterly.

Frederick W. Keene

ISAIAH 25:1.

O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.



O the dear children of God that name means more than all earthly names combined. It is the one name that has in it all the qualities of every other name. Everything that a mother, father, brother or friend might be to you, Jesus is that and all other things needed. To the man that knows him not the name means nothing. It does not have any attraction that other names do not have. This is the King. He is the creator, keeper and disposer of all things, yet he is not acknowledged by all to be the Supreme Ruler. Many say he is King but their actions betray them. They even confer with him and *think* that he rewards them for coming to him. Really and truly many think, they are in touch with him because they think he is like themselves, a trader. He is measured as being just like us except we think he has what we want and that we have what he wants. Such, in a nutshell, is the foundation of all Arminian religion. It would be hard to explain which is the more important, what we have or what Jesus has. But after having, as I humbly hope, battled with that spirit in my own bosom up until now without having come off victor to the extent of getting rid of it, and seeing it manifested every day in my fellowmen, and hearing it from the work-monger's pulpit, over the radio and on the printed page, I have fully decided that what we have to offer him far outweighs what he has to offer! Just think about it! Any one of Adam's children has God and Christ and the Holy Ghost completely balked! They have done all

they can! God tried folks the law question, but *he* knew so little how hard-headed man would be that in desperation he *allowed* his Son to come down here to see what *He* could do. He came and did what he could and, according to what we believe in nature, he wanted us all to exert ourselves and help finish what was started. But after the plan was perfected (?) Christ and his Father were waiting to see what would take place. This work being an experiment they could only hope for the best! We *think* their plan included everybody, but it was planned for us to start something! Get up out of the mire and go to God! Dig out of the horrible pit and meet God with your achievement in your hands and praise for yourself on your lips! *Quit being lost* in the wilderness and start out and above a things do not wait for the Beloved to come down after you! Christ has eternal life for us and he *wants* to trade it to us for our works!

Under such an unscriptural doctrine I want to know who is Sovereign? I have purposely put a capital to the word. Which is helpless God or man? God will not and does not and *cannot* do anything until the man will let him do it. God has, if such be true, gotten himself into the most awful predicament that has ever been recorded! Search history, and no man has been as completely outdone and baffled as God. Man has had God on the Jump ever since the morning of creation, but God has been so completely out-classed in thought and action that He is inactive now until the man makes a move! There was a

people that carried material to the smith and had them a God made (Isa. 46:6) and set him down. *He just waited. When they got ready they picked him up and moved him.* Every brand of conditionalism, in or out of the church of Jesus Christ, has that kind of a God. Is it a fact that every tongue must confess and every knee must bow? If so, what fact is to be confessed? Why is the knee to be bowed? Which was it spoken of, the creature or the creator? If God has at any time, place, or in an condition in the church or out before or after any creature's regeneration, desired anything that he did not get at that time and for whatever length of time it was, he was compelled to confess to all the angelic hosts that the creature, man, was his superior, Furthermore, whatever length of time God has been wanting or desiring anything, just that long he has had his knee bowed in submission to that that kept him from doing his will. This matter of confessing him and acknowledging him is of primary importance. It was so important that it be done, that God swore to it. What power can cause the oath of God Almighty to be broken? If all power in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18) is into the hands of Jesus over all flesh (John 17:2); all judgment is given into his care (John 5:22) and even evil men cannot do anything except they be given power from above: (John 19:11); how . can the oath of God respecting the confession of every tongue and the bowing of every knee be nullified: (Isa. 45 :23)? Every child of God has confessed that he is the Governor of

Israel (Matt. 2:6). We look at Israel as they came from Egypt and they all confessed to the authority of Joseph. Not only did the Israelites but also the Egyptians had to bow to the iron rule of God. Every Jacob has had to bow to the Great Finder of the sheep. Every preacher has been compelled to confess by tongue and bow in humble submission to Jesus. Not a single one has ever failed to acknowledge him in all the way they have been led. David's experience and Paul's experience corroborates in detail. Jacob and Peter each had to acknowledge that their salvation was of the Lord. Ananias and Sapphira tried to keep from confessing the whole truth but it just could not be done. The result to them was, after all, a complete bowing to the Lord. Peter's effort to keep from it ended in a dismal failure. Not only did he have to confess to the sovereignty of Jesus, but he had to confess it before men. That is not all. His pertness, lying, profanity and conditionalism is recorded so that *all* may see it, and those thus led and exercised by the Spirit may see and avoid his mistake. Look into the lives of every Bible character and this lesson stands out. They have all confessed that they are nothing and less than nothing, and have had to bow in (not arrogant, boasting, truckling, but) sweet, humble, obedient submission to his will.

The kingdom that God set up (Daniel 2:44) was an eternal, unconditional, sovereign one. It stood forever. Every subject of it must confess to the eternalness and sovereignty of the King. It was not left to other people. Every

subject must confess that it is not unto us but unto him belongs all honor and glory. This is a precious doctrine. The Son of God has come in the flesh and tasted death for every man that he might *bring* many sons to glory (Heb. 2:9-10). As far as him failing, the Scriptures are as silent as death about it, but as for bringing them in all accounts of his contact with; men in the Scriptures, he always brings them. They are willing to come. The religious world may hoot and scorn at God and Christ and the Spirit bringing them against their will, but that is not what they know but just what they think. Ah, yes their experience began in a time of love (Ezek. 16:8), and the love of God and the Lamb was bestowed on them and gave them precious desires, and a chain was placed around their necks. Jesus began to lead them and teach them and they follow him whithersoever he leads. Their lips have been touched (Isa. 6:7) and they have been given the tongue of the learned (Isa. 50:4). In everything they acknowledge and confess him. They bow in humble submission at a throne of grace and beg him for strength to keep them. The sweetest and most amazing doctrine that ever came to any poor sinful wretch is, that not a single one has ever been turned away empty. Precious Jesus!

Elder W.D. Griffin

ROMANS V. 3-5.

"Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed."



I have felt for some few days that all the hope I have is centered in the above Scripture, and that only because of my tribulation I have evidence that I am what I hope I am: a child of the living God. I used to think before I had a hope that because of my troubles I was not one of the Lord's people, that his people never saw any trouble, that it was a season of rejoicing with them, and that it was only those who have trouble that were left out, therefore I could not glory or rejoice in my trouble. But I think I see things differently now; that it is only the Lord's people who have trouble, and each and all of them do have trouble. When I first saw this Scripture I could not see how any one could glory in tribulations, because naturally tribulation is trouble and doubt, worry and suffering, and how could it be that one could glory in these things? But it seems at present my hope is centered in my troubles, and because of these troubles I hope I have a hope. From reading I have found the Lord's people have been a people of trouble all along, and in doubt a great portion if not all the time; for they think, I would not see trouble if I knew these things; but what we see we do not hope for, and if these things were made sure to me I would have no tribulation, patience, experience or hope. But it is not this way, so I have these things, and one goes with the other and all are one. I have no doubt that if I be dead with Christ I also live with him. I know these things, for as sure as I am dead with him so sure I live with him; but I have only a hope that I am crucified with him, and by tribulation I have this hope. It seems small at times, but when it is the smallest it is most sweet and dear to me; all the hope I have is that when God's only

begotten Son died on the cross he died for me, and that in his resurrection I was resurrected, born in new life, life without sin, pure, perfect, spotless and blameless in the sight of the Father. If I am not now clean I can never be, for this cleansing was done in his death, and the life was in his resurrection. Our Savior suffered and was troubled while in the flesh, and therefore we cannot expect anything else. It seems I am troubled for the sins I do now, and continue to do, not those I have done, and I grieve because of my weakness.

I went to meeting yesterday feeling fairly well, but when I saw those whom I love, and hope love me, I felt that I was entirely beneath their notice, and it would be better should they not condescend to notice me at all; but yet notwithstanding all this I desire their love and fellowship. When I tried to talk with them their words sounded sweet and full of meaning, while mine echoed back to my ears as hollow and nothing, and better unsaid. My talking is a continual annoyance to me anyhow, but it seems impossible for me to refrain from it, especially when with those who are His, and when at my work or by myself I think of their sorrows and tribulations, and my eyes scale the mountain's peak. I am made to glory in my tribulations because it works patience; I am patient because I cannot be any other way; I cannot hurry things nor hinder them. My troubles make me patient. I am waiting to be free from this downcast feeling. This patience is part of our experience. I used to think when people spoke of their experience it was up until they received this hope and ended then, but I now think and know that mine is not ended, that my experience goes on as I live, therefore I can tell my experience only in part, I can only

tell of things I have passed through, and if I am his I will continue to have experience; these experiences give me hope. I had an experience before I had a hope, but did not know it, for if I have a christian experience Christ was working in me when my troubles began, and things were being made plain to me, but I did not know what for. The first thing made plain to me was my lost and helpless condition, and this is still clear and plain to my mind as far as I am concerned, and if not saved by God's grace I am not saved at all. I am not ashamed of a hope in this Power, because it is pure, perfect and strengthening. Why should we be ashamed to hope in the Power that is superior to all others? Are we not proud of the strength of our national government, proud of the strength of it, and not ashamed to stand under her flag? We are proud of it because of its superiority; how much more should we be proud, and not ashamed, of a hope in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, because we know beside there is none other. His strength is all we have; his love and strength are what we depend on; we know of his strength and hope in his love. But we glory in tribulations, because tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed.

If you will pardon this intrusion I may never do so again. I enjoyed the association; the preaching was a calm sea to me.

If one at all, the least of all your brethren,

F. SELBY FISHER.

[The above letter was written to Elder B.F. Coulter, of Philadelphia, Pa., and by him forwarded to us for publication.- ED.]

NOTICE

FOREST GROVE
 OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CHURCH
 P. O. Box 4092
 Salisbury, MD 218034092

The Forest Grove Church, an autonomous Church of Christ of the Old School or Primitive Baptist order, met at its yearly meeting in a session for the purpose of adopting the following resolution:

Be it resolved that

The Forest Grove Old School Baptist Church at Parsonsburg, Wicomico County, Maryland, this 15th day of September 1996, acknowledges as valid and inviolable the ordination of Donald Alexander McColl done in council of the Covenanted Baptist Church at Ekfrid, Ontario, Canada, on June 26, 1966, and published in the September 1966 Signs of the Times.

Be it further resolved that

A copy of these proceedings be permanently a part of the church records and that a copy be prepared and signed by the officers of this meeting and the several members of this church to be delivered to Elder McColl.

Victor H. Laws, Moderator
 Elbert M. Robbins, Clerk
 Ethel Holloway, Member
 Olive Hastings, Member
 Marietta Robbins, Member

MEETINGS

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 Hale Terry and if found qualified in accordance with the written word of God at the satisfaction and discretion of their judgement 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 ch 1. 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

PSALM 33:1-5

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.

Sing unto him a new song: play skilfully with a loud noise.

For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth.

He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR SEPTEMBER 1996

Mr. & Mrs. J.M. Marshall, VA	5.00
Jewell & Hannah Archer, AR	2.00
E.R. Or Edna Graves, AL	5.00
William A. Ramsey, AL	5.00
Mrs. Beulah Nichols, VA	2.00
Eld. David Harrell, TX	7.00
John H. Coker, NC	2.00
Mrs. Hazel F. Jackson, NC	7.00
Jack T. Dossett, NC	2.00
R. Allen Carroll, NC	2.00
Mrs. A.R. Patterson, LA	7.00
Mrs. Caroline Martin, WA	5.00
Mrs. Donald Arne, S.D.	40.00

OBITUARIES

MAE IRENE MUSGROVE


Although we in the flesh mourn our loss, we humbly bow in submission to the will of God, who has called our beloved sister in Christ Jesus home to himself. We surely believe, as did she, that Jesus is her Saviour, and that he has called her home to himself. Her church home was Concord Primitive Baptist Church.

Sister Mae Irene Thompson Musgrove was born April 24, 1924 in Monroe, La., and passed away October 12, 1996 in the hospital at Bastrop, La.

Sister Mae is survived by her husband George K. Musgrove, Sr., 4 daughters and sons-in-law, Catherine & Lloyd Harrell -- Bastrop; Joyce & Shorty Dupre--Ville Platte, La.; Eliza-

beth & Larry Elkins--Bastrop; Roxanne & Keith Barton--Bastrop; 5 sons & daughters-in-law, George Musgrove, Jr.--Bastrop; Bobby Musgrove--Bastrop; Johnny & Fredia Musgrove--Bastrop; Jerry and Ginger Musgrove--Collinston, La.; Larry & Elva Musgrove--Bastrop; 1 sister, Jewel Musgrove--Bastrop. She is also survived by 27 Grandchildren and 29 Great Grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her mother and father Letha and Irvin Thompson and 2 brothers, Earl and Walter Thompson.

Funeral services were conducted Oct. 14, 1996 by her co-pastors, Elders Theron Jones and Clifford Wilbanks, and she was laid to rest in the Concord Church Cemetery.

Elder C. C. Wilbanks

ST. JOHN

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

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