

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.

Route 7, Box 483

Burlington, N.C. 27215

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 1/79
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

JESUS SAVIOR PILOT ME

Jesus Savior pilot me,
While upon lifes troubled sea.
May I walk e'er close to thee,
Weak, unworthy tho I be.

Often when I try to pray;
All kind of things get in my way.
I am so carnal, so full of sin;
I seldom know how to begin.

Take my hand dear Savior, lead me
Til my earthly journey's o'er.
Lead me gently, Savior lead me,
Let me walk Dear Lord with thee.

When the Saints of God are gathered
On that bright and peaceful shore;
There to praise our Lord forever,
To be free for ever more.

When we shall see thee face to face
Saints shall praise thee for thy grace.
Grace by faith hath made us free.
I pray dear Lord remember me.

Jesus Savior Pilot me,
Tho from sin I would be free
Ever closer to walk with thee.
Dear Lord I pray remember me.

Written by Alice Graham

EXPERIENCE

Glenwood, Alabama

Dear Editors and Elders,

Please find a check enclosed for a one year subscription to the *Signs of the Times*. Please use the balance as you see fit.

I enjoy reading the *Signs* very much and do hope it keeps on, for I enjoy reading of peoples' experiences.

I want to write just a few words about myself. I was raised in a Primitive Baptist home but I never gave any thought to it until in 1942. I was 24 years

old at that time. I had a dream. In it, I saw a communion take place. I saw my Dad wash a man's feet, and the man was not a church member at that time. This took place in January, and I was blessed to see this fulfilled the first Sunday in May. The thing about this is that I was on the outside looking in. I never saw myself as a part of it. This changed something in my life. I wanted to go to church where I saw the communion, but I did not want anybody to know I had that thought.

I went along until June, 1948. My mind was "called away" from what I was doing and I saw things that were beautiful to see. I saw a river of water clear as a crystal come out of the Throne of God and the Lamb in the midst on either side of the Tree of Life. The leaves were so pretty and green and the water was so clear. It was the most beautiful place I have ever seen.

After this a love sprang up in my heart for the Primitive Baptist people. I wanted to ask them for a home, but I felt so unworthy and tried to forget the thought. I traveled along with this for several years. Things began to occur, and again, in all of it, I was on the outside looking in.

In July, 1974, a thought came into my mine - It is a fearful thing to fall in the hands of the living God. I thought on this about a week and went to Church on Sunday morning. Elder Donaldson went in the stand and greeted the people, then turned and looked straight at me and said, "It is a fearful thing to fall in the hands of the living God". When he finished I was satisfied I was in God's hands and had been since the days of old.

The first Sunday in August, 1974, I asked the church at Pine Level for a home with them. My wife and I joined together and were baptized at the same time. When I came up out of the water everything had a new look and I thought all my troubles were over, but

this lasted only a short time. Then came along the want for a better understanding and light. I began to read the Bible. Every time I can now, I read.

I don't think there is anyone ever satisfied after he is brought into the knowledge that Christ is the Son of the living God, and that He rules and super-rules in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

If I have a special chapter of the Bible it is the eighth chapter of Romans.

I did not intend to write this much. I will close in Christian love.

A brother in Hope,
B. F. Godwin

Atlantic, N.C.

Dear Elder Poole,

I am sending some writing to be published in the *Signs* if you think it is worthy of a place. I am a very poor writer. I have never been able to put into words the great and wonderful works of the Lord as I hope I see them. I can only write as I hope the Lord blesses me. So do as you see fit.

Mrs. Eva M. Hamilton

Dear Brothers and Sisters and kind
Friends in the Lord,

I have been reading the *Signs of the Times* and Zion's Landmark ever since right after I joined the church. I have enjoyed the good writings of the Brothers and Sisters. I have written many times in the past and my writings have been published in Zion's Landmark. But these last years I haven't been impressed to write very often. I have been asked several times to write and send it to the *Signs*, but I have never done so before. I don't believe I can write anything of myself that would be any comfort to God's people. The Scripture says it is impossible to please God in the flesh. "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and truth. For the Lord seeketh such to worship Him." He also

maketh His people a willing people in the day of His power. When we are made willing, (and I believe it is through suffering that we are made willing) then we have a hope that it is God working in us both the will and the do of His own good pleasure. With this in mind I will write as He blesses me to do.

We read in John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." Then we read in the same chapter and verse 14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." It is plain to see that the Word spoken of in this Scripture is Jesus, full of grace and truth. Jesus has been with the Father from the beginning and is still with Him today. Dear Brothers and Sisters, Jesus is the only Way by Whom men come to God. There is no other Name given whereby we must be saved.

There are some out all over the land telling the people how to be saved and to accept Jesus or to give their hearts to God. Man's work is in vain, but God's work stands sure and steadfast. The Lord knows them that are His. Jesus said, "No man can come unto me except my father which sent me draw him." When God speaks it is done and when He commands it stands fast. No man can withstand the power of God. He opens and no man can shut; and He shuts and no man can open. The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Jesus kept and fulfilled the Law for His people. They are no more under the Law but under grace. "He came unto His own, but His own received Him not. 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:" (John 1:11, 12). Read the 13th chapter of John and you will find who received Him and who believed on His Name. They were those who were born "not of blood nor of the

will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God". They were born of God before they received Him or believed on His Name. Just as the angel told Mary, the Mother of Jesus, "He shall save his people from their sins."

I don't know that I am one of the Lord's people, but if I am or if I am not it doesn't change these blessed truths. They are sure and steadfast. My heart's desire is that God will draw all His people together as one in Christ Jesus the Lord. Then there will be no name given by man that can separate them. I hope I love all the Lord's people and that I will never offend one of God's little ones. The Scripture says it is better that a millstone were tied around his neck and he were cast into the sea than to offend one of God's little ones.

Mrs. Eva M. Hamilton

When the rays of the sun fall on the surface of a material object, part of those rays are absorbed, part of them are reflected back in straight lines, and part of them refracted, this way and that, in various directions. When the Holy Ghost shines upon our souls, part of the grace He inspires is absorbed to our own particular comfort, part of it reflected back in acts of love and joy and prayer and praise, and part of it refracted every way, in acts of benevolence, beneficence, and all moral and social duty.

Toplady

Martin, Tennessee

Dear Brother in Christ,

I see that my *Signs* is past due. I'm sorry I am late. I am mailing a check for another year. It is good news from a far country to an unworthy creature like me. I seem to be so much of the time in the horrible pit and the miry clay, but at times He plants my feet on the Rock and establishes my going and puts a new song in my mouth, even praises unto God. He is the Rock. His work is perfect. He hath made everything beautiful in

his time. Also, He hath set the world in their heart so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. Jesus said, "I am the way; I am the truth; I am the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me." Known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world. He speaks to His sheep and they hear His voice and they follow Him because they know Him. They follow not a stranger because they know not a stranger's voice. "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. 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, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." (John 10:25-30)

He saved us and called us with a holy calling and may we be blessed to hear that voice when he says, "Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

I'm sorry I am so late. Excuse the bad writing and spelling. May the Lord bless you all in your printing of the *Signs*, which is a wonderful work.

Your unworthy Brother,
(Elder) Elmer Prince

How beautiful it is, how edifying it is to see a life of faith crowned by a blessed death, to hear from the bed of languishing and pain, not the murmurs of unbelief, not the cries of guilt and despair, but the words of faith, hope and love; the voice of thanksgiving and praise! When nature sinks under a load of pain and suffering, when the things of time and sense drop away like the leaf from the autumn bough, when death draws near and eternity opens to view,

when heart and flesh alike fail, then to have the Lord near, whispering consolation and peace, and find Him the strength of his heart and his Portion forever, surely this direct and immediate testimony from heaven stamps a man's religion as truly divine.

O how much of what is called religion bears no such divine stamp upon it; no divine stamp upon the beginning, and no divine stamp on the end! But let men take up with what religion they please, and be as religious as they may, the Lord will own no work but His own, and smile upon no soul which He has not regenerated by His grace.

J. C. Philpot, 1854

EXTRACT FROM WARBURTON

"One who professed to be my friend told me that he was afraid I was turning Antinomian. 'Antinomian!' said I, 'what sort of people are they?' 'They are those,' replied he, 'who deny the moral law to be the believer's rule of life, which is a most awful doctrine, and leads to all manner of sin.' 'Moral law,' said I, 'What is that?' 'It is that just and holy law of God,' replied he, 'in which He commands us to love and obey Him.' 'What?' asked I, 'Do you mean that law which Paul meant when he said, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them'? Do you take that law to be your rule of life?' asked I. 'Surely I do,' said he, 'and all those who do not are Antinomians.' 'Then,' said I, 'I am one of those Antinomians. Blessed be God! He has delivered me from that law. Christ has obeyed it for me. and has been made a curse for me, and has gone to the end of it for my poor soul.' I asked him how he felt that law, what it did for him when he was under it, and how he had been delivered from it. Upon this subject he could say nothing, but he maintained, that believers were required to be obedient to the law, as well as to believe in Christ. But I insisted

on it that there was obedience and blessed obedience, too, in Christ, which did my soul good, pleased God, honoured the law, pardoned all my sins, confounded the devil and made my soul dance for joy. I told him it was my meat and drink to do the will of my God and Saviour, who had done so great things for me. 'When I was under the law,' said I, 'I had no obedience, but was full of anger, rebellion and wretchedness, and sometimes felt such wrath that I could have pulled the Almighty from His throne for not having made me a beast that has no soul to appear before so holy a God, who cannot acquit the guilty. But now, having been delivered from the law, and having the love of the Lord Jesus Christ shed abroad in my heart I can believe in Him, obey Him, praise Him, thank Him and adore Him night and day.' "

John Warburton, Mercies of a Covenant God

Dear Brethren in the Lord,

I have been very much strengthened here of late, hearing from the gospel Ministers bringing glad tidings of great joy, as they deliver the messages that God hath sent them to deliver, including the Pigg River and Smith River Associations, and from the *Signs of the Times*.

I read the writing from Sister Julia Myers. I told her I enjoyed it, and she replied that she could not have kept from writing. I could understand her.

When anyone can write or preach the Truth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is only when they are blessed and moved by the Holy Spirit of God.

I had a nervous breakdown some years ago. I quit reading and quit going to church meetings. I decided there was not anything to any of it.

A dear Sister at the Association at Leatherwood Church some years ago asked me to write to the *Signs* because she enjoyed my writings. I did not say

anything to her, but my mind was that she would never read another line from me.

On the Sunday following, I went to the meeting at the Head of the River. Brother Spangler was blessed to preach so wonderfully, how that Christ died on the cross shedding His blood for His people and had finished the work His Father gave Him to do. I left the place feeling better. Later on I had a mind to write again to the *Signs*.

I enjoyed reading Elder Agee's writings in the September issue. The only way anyone can judge is hearing what they believe, why they believe, and where they got their belief, and from whence it came.

As I read his instructions to the brethren who have good wives, though they do not go with them, "Be good and kind as you can to them. The Lord works wonders", I thought of a scripture which is found in I Cor. 7:12-16. The 16th verse says, "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife".

This, to me, means saving from trusting in false doctrine. We read in I Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;" I Cor. 8:3-6 says, "But if any man love God, the same is known of him. As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him.

I have noticed the capital letters from the small letters. In Malachi 4:2 the word, "Sun", and the word "Son" are in

capital letters. John 3:16, 17, we read, "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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

We read in Psalm 110 where it says, "Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power,". I hear it quoted, "My people shall be a willing people in the day of my power", which means the same thing. Power means authority.

A few people have told me they enjoyed my writings. It did not puff me up, put made me thankful that we had some witnesses to the Truth that we love.

We hear it all over the land the name, Reverend so and so, but in Psalm 111, verse 9, "He sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and reverend is his name.

We read again in Matthew 23:9, "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." Also in John 17:11 we read, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

May God continue to be merciful to us and our loved ones.

Mattie Underwood

Strong, Arkansas

Dear Editors of the Signs,

My subscription has expired and I am sending a check for one year. I hope you receive it in time. I enjoy reading the *Signs* very much, and always look forward to each issue. I enjoyed the Editorial in the February issue by Elder W. D. G. very much. He is a faithful soldier of the cross, who like the Apostle Paul, shuns not from declaring the counsel of God, who fears not man, nor seeks to please man. As the Apostle said, "For if I yet pleased men, I should not be

the servant of Christ". He only fears God with a reverence, and Godly fear. He described the church of the first born in his writings so wonderfully. I believe it as he described it, and rejoiced in those precious truths. I hope this poor sinful wretch is included as a member of the general assembly and church of the first born.

The following was written several months ago, but I felt like I still wanted to send it.

Dear loved ones in Christ,

You are the dearest people, so humble, lovely, and kind. As my mind seems to be led of the Lord this morning, tears of sorrow and joy in the Lord, concerning His goodness and mercy upon His people, fill my heart. His people are an afflicted and poor people, who weep and mourn in Zion. They are comforted at times amidst all their trials, tribulations, troubles and afflictions, by that still small voice, or words of comfort spoken from our Lord through His humble ministers who preach the gospel of peace and glad tidings of good things.

Dear ones in Zion, have you not felt at times that our precious Lord still furnishes a table before us in the presence of our enemies at times. As David said in Psalm 23, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever". In Hebrews 3:6 we read, "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

Dear ones, I felt this morning I was weeping with the ones that weep, and rejoicing with the ones that rejoice. I desire to suffer the afflictions with the righteous rather than to enjoy sin for a season. "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) Jesus said, "Take up thy cross and follow me." "My people shall be a willing people in the day of my power." "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. Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand."

Where He leads them they will follow, even if it is through the firey furnace, through floods, through the desert, or in the waste howling wilderness. He tells them, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer I have overcome the world." "It is through much tribulation that ye enter the Kingdom." "Fear not little flock for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "The kingdom of God is within you." "This is the kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor given to others, but will break in pieces all other kingdoms." The Lord is sitting on His throne of glory, ruling, and reigning in His spiritual kingdom, and his apostles are sitting upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Written in love.

Mrs. Lula B. Fox

Riner, Virginia

Dear Editors,

If you do not have room to print my experience in the wonderful *Signs* it will be alright.

I am at home now after an operation. I miss my dear husband so very much, but the dear Lord is able to walk by my side. I stayed with my daughter and family, Mrs. Donald Agee, after I came out of the hospital. They have been wonderful, and the dear Lord's presence was with me all the way. Oh! how wonderful to have the Christian's hope. Without Him we can do nothing. With Him we

can do all things.

Also, all of my loved ones and my Christian friends have been just wonderful to me, including our dear pastor, Elder Raymond Goad and wife, and Elder Roy Agee and wife.

I want to give the Lord all the praise, glory, and honor for giving me such lovely Christian sisters and brothers.

I do hope you can visit us at our church at Valley View. We meet the third Sunday in each month.

I am glad to see the young Elders helping with the *Signs*, and I am thankful to have the older ones still with us, too.

In Christian love,
Beulah A. Wells

On this date, April 28, 1978, I am moved to write a little of my experience. While a young girl I felt a great burden in my breast, especially during the fall. I did not know that Fall meant the harvest.

While my youngest brother, Roy Altizer, was so seriously ill I gave up my job as a telephone operator to help my mother wait on him. He would ask my mother to pray and he would feel relieved afterward. The last time my mother asked if he wanted her to pray for his relief and he replied, "Not this time. But if I live longer I want to join the Primitive Baptist Church and be baptized". He passed away shortly after that.

After his death my three sisters and I became members of Valley View Church. I have been through many trials and afflictions since that time. When our only baby to live was born, I promised God that if He would allow her to live I would give Him all the praise, glory and honor.

My husband and I have been blessed to see our grandchildren. And then after a lifetime of happiness together, along with some dark clouds of afflictions, he passed away on March 23, 1978.

I am scheduled to enter the hospital tomorrow. After my husband's death, and before I knew of my physical condition, I said, "Whatsoever the Lord has in store for me will be alright". "If it be His will I would like to enjoy my friends and my church longer, but His will, not mine, be done." This morning I awoke with tears in my eyes and these words from a song my brother, Roy, sang was running through my mind:

"Sometimes I grow homesick for heaven
The Lord has prepared for His own,
When all the redeemed of all ages
Sing glory around the white throne."

I know not what the future holds, but I know Who holds the future.

Your sister in Christ,
Beulah Altizer Wells

Route 5, Box 301

Goldsboro, North Carolina 27530

Dear Christian Friends,

Greetings to you in the bonds of love and fellowship. I feel impressed to write a few lines, Lord willing.

I was blessed today to attend our Black Creek Union held with Healthy Plains as host, four able ministers were present. The preaching was as manna from heaven. One dear elder spoke from Heb. 4:1-11. I am still enjoying the sweetness of his sermon. What joy and peace we share when taken away from the cares of everyday living and given a few moments of gospel rest.

If not deceived, and I don't think I am, my single desire is to walk pleasingly in the sight of God. It was God's will to bring me to the knowledge of truth in my early teens. With the passing of time this knowledge grows more precious.

There is so much I do not know, but there is this I do know - Jesus is our Great Salvation and it is by the grace of God that one receives this salvation. I realize that we must live our appointed time in our body of flesh, but don't you at times feel as Paul. "I would be absent

from the body and present, Lord, with thee." I Corinthians 5:3. I sincerely hope that I am no longer entangled with the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof. The burning desire in my breast is this - that by the grace of God I know something of the labor of love. When I shall be called from this life may it be God's will that I enter into eternal rest.

I cherish an experience of grace written for me by my precious mother. I have her permission to share this with the household of Faith. My mother didn't get much natural education, but she is richly educated in the school of grace. I believe the only diploma she is interested in is a home in heaven. My mother and I have a beautiful relationship and I cherish every moment spent with her.

May God richly bless us and Keep us in the hollow of His hand.

A little sister in hope,
Dora Ellen Vick
Pittman Grove Church

EXPERIENCE

Dora Ellen, my dear child,

As I can't get my mind on my work today, I will try to do what you ask me to do for you some time back. I feel just as unworthy now to attempt to write as I did years ago when I tried to write and would end up burning what I had written. I hope the God of all power will give me strength and guide my hand to write only what is the truth for your sake as well as mine.

Dora Ellen, I don't know hardly how to begin, but I do know nearly as far back as I can remember I felt that I knew there was a power stronger than man's power. I would have serious feelings about myself and would want to get by myself and cry. I would not even know why I was crying and I didn't seem to have fun playing with other children. These feelings stayed with me off and on after I was in my teenage. Sometimes the feelings were worse than others. I went on in this way until a few years

before I was married. My burden would get so heavy at times that I wondered what was going to happen. I felt to be one to myself and didn't care for the good times other young people seem to enjoy. I tried to think it was because I was left at home with no one except one brother and my father. My mother passed away when I was very young and then my brothers and sisters were all married and gone except one brother who was younger than me. Most of my time was spent at home alone and I thought this had something to do with my feelings. There would be times I could see my way brighter, but those dark and lonely days would come back.

A few months before your Daddy and I were married I seemed to feel better. I felt that I had found one person on earth who cared for me. I was hoping that my life would be more at ease and for a short time it was. Soon these feelings began to come back and I tried in every way I could to keep them hid. When I went to bed at night I would lie for hours shedding tears and trying to ask God to have mercy on me. This went on for years. Everytime these unworthy feelings came back they would be worse.

In the year 1936 my burden was so heavy at times that I thought my time to leave this world was close by. I could hardly sleep and had a desire to talk to someone, but felt that no one would want to listen to me. I could only beg God for mercy. One night it seemed I had stood about all I could without telling someone how I felt. I spoke to your Daddy about how I felt. He tried to tell me how wrong I was for feeling that my friends had forsaken me and that our friends were good to us. I told him they were his friends and that no one cared for me and in spite of all I could do, I began to shed tears. He asked me if the church was worrying me. I told him no, that I was not fit to even think of the church. We had been going to church when we could and I enjoyed going, but I never thought I would join. I lay awake

for a long time that night after everyone was asleep. I was thinking about what Leland said and I tried to pray to God if the church had anything to do with my feelings, if He would let me sleep I would go to church the following Sunday and ask for a home.

God knew I was telling a story, but I really thought I was telling the truth. He blessed me with a good nights sleep. I don't even remember hearing my baby cry during the night. Next morning I felt better and did for the rest of the week. It was the week before the fourth Sunday. I thought I would go to church at Upper Black Creek on Sunday and join if they would have me in the church and be baptized Sunday evening. That was my plan; not God's. I went to church Sunday feeling the best I had for a long time. I enjoyed the preaching and singing and got along fine until the doors of the church were open and they began to sing. The feelings that came over me, I can't tell you or anyone else. It just seemed to me if I stayed in the house I would die. I got up and went out and waited for Leland to come out after church was over. After that Sunday my burden was worse. I decided that anybody that could lie to God as I had was not fit to even go to church and I decided to stay away from the church and live the best I could at home. So I stopped saying anything about my feelings. This went on for a year or longer.

We moved from where we were living and I thought the change would help me. I did feel some better for a while, but soon my troubles were worse than ever. My health grew from bad to worse. Some of the children were sick nearly all of the time. I just felt that all of this was put on me because I was so full of sin. I felt that I was the biggest sinner on earth; not fit to live and less fit to die. Finally I had the greatest desire to go to church I had ever had, but then we didn't have any way to go nor any money to pay anyone to take us. No one lived close to us who I

thought would want to go to a Primitive Baptist Church and that was the only church I wanted to go to. The burden I was carrying was getting heavier all the time, but the worst was still ahead. I got where I didn't care to live and begged God to take me out of my troubles.

Dora Ellen, please don't let what I'm about to write upset you for it's not because I didn't want you, it was a thing I couldn't help. I feel it was a very sinful thought for me to have. You ask me to write this for you and I want only to write the truth as far as I can remember and I can remember the things that happened during those years better than I can things that happen now. This was a few days before you were born. I tried to pray that God would take both of us. I didn't want to live and didn't want to leave a baby for someone else to bring up. I guess I thought the rest of the children and Leland would be better off without me. To tell the truth, I don't know what I was thinking, but I do know that it was not God's will for either one of us to die. As for me, I thought my prayers were being answered. Everyone around me thought I was dying. I thought I was too and I was not the least bit afraid. I could feel death coming on and I couldn't talk or get a long breath. I was just weaking away. The doctor came back and with God's help I was soon better. God was showing me what a power He has. Then there I was seeing myself a bigger sinner than ever before.

Before you were a year old, you were taken sick. I was afraid this would be the way God would punish me for the many sins I had committed. This time my prayers were for you to live; not to die. You got well, but my troubles stayed with me. I was always afraid something would happen to you. This went on for over a year. I was taken sick again and thought I wanted to die. There seemed to be nothing ahead for me but troubles and they were getting worse all the time. I got seriously sick and the doctor had me sent to the hospital. I was so sick that

I don't remember leaving home and don't remember getting to the hospital. I was unconscious for three or four days. When I regained consciousness, I was told that my baby was dead and had been buried. The thoughts of all that had happened were almost more than I could bear. What I went through lying on that hospital bed no one but God and me will ever know. I can't tell it all. While I was there I had a dream; I guess it was a dream. I don't know whether it was day or night, but I saw myself lying on a high bed. It was as white as snow. There seemed to be two of me. I could see myself on this bed and down below us were all you children running around trying to get to me. When I woke up I lay for a long time wondering what it meant and it came to me as plain as if someone spoke these words, "you children needed me". Before then I didn't much care if I lived or died, but from then on I wanted to live and go back home to Leland and you children. I couldn't get back fast enough. After I got home my burden was heavier than ever to think how I wanted to be taken away from my family and then to see how much it meant to them to have me back.

After I came home I found out that my brother died while I was in the hospital. They were afraid to tell me about it until after I got well. It just looked like trouble at home was piling up again. This was in September of 1939.

I went on with this burden till the spring of 1940. I felt if I couldn't get to church I would go crazy. By this time we had moved again and no one in that neighborhood went to church and we still had no way of our own to go. I would speak about going to church, but that was as far as I got. I would dream of starting to church but would never get there. Then one night I dreamed I went to church. It was night and I had a lantern for a light. I had to go a long way through the woods, but I wasn't afraid. I went until I found this church. It was in the woods. I walked up to the door

steps and didn't see anybody. There was a light inside. I stood for awhile not knowing whether to go in or not. A voice said, "Pull off your shoes and go in." I pulled off my shoes and left them on the steps and went in. I saw only one person inside. It was a man sitting as if he was asleep. He didn't speak or notice me. I sat down on a seat near the door and began looking around. The lights were very dim. A second voice said, "If you come to this church you will have to bring such as this if you don't have any money." Looking the way the voice came from, I didn't see anyone, but I saw a lot of canned food. This thought came to me - if I have got to pay to come to church I won't come. I got up and went out. Then I woke up and lay for a long time thinking and wondering about the dream.

My burden got so heavy that I could neither eat or sleep. It just seemed like I was forsaking my God and friends. I felt to be one to myself and had the same feelings I had before going to the hospital. I felt that my family had forsaken me, oh, I was so alone. All I could do was beg God to have mercy on a lost sinner, for that was what I felt to be. One night I had another dream. This time I found myself in a big house by myself and I was the happiest I had ever been. There was a hall in the house and I looked and saw Leland standing in the door. I was overjoyed at seeing him. I met him at the door and he took me in his arms and said it won't be long now. He didn't say what he meant by those words, but I believe I know what they meant. Then we both walked out into the hall and down at the end of this hall was the whitest bed I have ever seen. Dora Ellen, you were out there playing on that bed and you were the prettiest little angel. You were just as white as snow and you would rise and fly and fall on that bed and it was like down and would cover you when you fell on it. I stood there watching you for awhile and I felt so happy for you. Then I missed Leland

and went outside to see if I could find him. I found him working on a new building and he seemed to be happy. He was whistling a hymn. I don't know the name of the hymn but I know it was one. I thought that was the prettiest place I had ever seen. The ground was as white as snow and out a little way from the building that Leland was working on was a great place of water as blue as the sky. Out in the water were places that looked like white stone with the prettiest flowers around the edges of the water. I walked up to the edge of the water and was standing there thinking how pretty it was when I heard someone speak. I turned and looked. It was L.C. He asked me if he could get some of the flowers that were out in the water. I told him he might get wet and he said, "no, I won't." Then I heard someone crying and I looked and it was Celion coming to me. I went to meet him and put my arms around him and he stopped crying. Then I turned to look for L.C. He was way out in the water. The water was up over his knees and he had his arms full of flowers. he came where I was and said, "Mama, I told you I wouldn't get wet." I felt of his clothes and they were dry. Then I woke up and lay there a long time thinking how good it would be if I could be as happy always as I was in my dream. I couldn't believe anyone could be that happy here on this earth.

In another dream, I was going to a brick church. When I went in there was a woman sitting holding a little child. I wondered about that dream and where that church was. I couldn't remember going to a brick church except Lower Black Creek. I couldn't believe that was the church I dreamed about. It had been so long since I had gone to church, if I had heard that they had taken Pittman's School for a church I had forgotten it. However, I felt that the church I had seen in my dreams was somewhere and I would see it.

When Leland came in from work one evening, he said he had thought of a

way I could go to church. I don't think he could have said anything that would have pleased me more. I asked him how I was to go and he said to catch the school bus to Mr. Leroy Jackson's and see if they would take me. I got ready the next morning, which was Friday before the second weekend. I got on the school bus and went to Mr. Jackson's. When I spoke to Sister Jackson about going to church, I thought my trip was for nothing. When the boys came in for dinner she asked them if they would take us. They promised to take us on Sunday.

On Sunday when I got to church there was the brick church I saw in my dream. I don't remember ever seeing Brother Turner before, but I thought he preached the sweetest sermon I had ever heard. When the doors of the church were opened I don't remember getting out of my seat. When I came to realize what I was doing, I was on my way to the stand. I was received into the church. I experienced part of the happiness I saw in my dream. I put off being baptized until the next second Sunday which I regretted for the next month was a miserable one for me. I had never wanted to do anything as badly as I wanted to be baptized. It seemed the time would never come and when Brother Turner brought me up out of the water I felt the same happiness I had felt in my dream. It seemed I had left all my troubles and fears in the water. I wanted to shake everyone's hand. When I got back to the church and went in, there sat the woman with the child in her lap as I saw in my dream. I have had more pleasure since my name has been on the church book than I had ever had in all my life before. It's a different kind of joy and pleasure than I had ever known before and that's why that dream stays with me. I feel like it showed me the joy there was ahead for me. I think the words Leland spoke to me had something to do with the joy I have found, but I can't explain how I feel

about it all.

The dear brothers and sisters have been more than kind to me. They treat me better than I feel to deserve when they took me in among them. I wonder sometimes after going through all I have if I had any right to go before the church and ask for a home. Then I wonder what would have become of me if I had stayed away.

Dora Ellen, I don't know if this is a true experience of a child of grace or not. All I know is it's just a part of what I have felt and seen, but so much of the time I feel the way these hymns go:

"I am a stranger here below,
And what I am tis hard to know.
I am so vile, so prone to sin.
I fear that I'm not born again."
"O for a closer walk with God."

Experience of grace as felt and written
by Mrs. Peirce D. Holland.

Some harbours are fenced with massy chains of iron, reaching from side to side, to obstruct the access of shipping. Similar is the profession of Christ and His cause in persecuting times. But as a ship has often been able to force its way into the port, and burst the chains that oppose its entrance by the aid of a favourable tide and a strong breeze, so persecution is nothing to a believing soul whose sails are filled with the breathings of the Holy Ghost, and the full tide of whose affections is turned by grace to God and Christ and Heaven.

Toplady

A LETTER TO A FRIEND
AFFLICTED BY ILLNESS
By the Late J. M'Kenzie

My dear Friend in the Lord of life, -- A few weeks ago, Mr. M., informed me that you were unwell, and expressed some fears for the issue of your illness.

My friend, our lives at most are like a person walking into a house at one door, and immediately out at the other.

Human life is indeed a vapor, as the passing away of the morning cloud, as the tale told, or a dream of the night. Before we well begin to consider we have a being, our days are ended. We flourish, and in a few days or years we wither and are in the dust. The life of the flesh, which descends to us from the first Adam, is indeed transitory and fading. But, O my friend, to have an interest in the blood and life of the second Adam, the Lord of life and glory, is to live indeed! The first Adam was the federal head of the human race, under the covenant of works; the second Adam was the grace-covenant head of His elect family, under the covenant of promise. Through the fall of the first, life was lost, and death and the curse followed in its stead; through the second, in His blood and righteousness, life and immortality are brought to light.

First. Spiritual life is communicated to the soul of elect sinners in the day of grace, by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit. And where this life is given, there is given to feel the inbeing, the guilt, the loathsomness, and the power of sin, which feeling will cause the soul to feel condemnation, fear, bondage, and distress of mind. And in such a one the mouth will be stopped, hope of heaven by works will give up the ghost, sinking helplessness in self will be felt, and prayers and sighs for manifested mercy will go up to God with many fears of not being heard.

Second. The life, or continued power and exercises of this life, will be kept alive by the Lord of life. Throughout our pilgrimage here below, there are a thousand things to deaden and benumb this life in the soul. The snares of Satan, the cares and anxieties of business and the family, the spirit of the world, the carnal mind within, and other things, all tend to wither and damp the life of God in the heart; but the Lord of life appears again and again, and revives the drooping heart and deadened spirit. He enlightens us, quickens us, softens,

melts, blesses, encourages, and reproves, just as He sees we need; but he does all in lovingkindness and tender mercy. If He bless and soften our hearts, it is in love; if He chasten, it is in love; if He shine, it is in love; if He hide His face, it is in love. All His ways to His people are chalked out in lovingkindness. "The Lord loveth the righteous."

Third. Through Him is life eternal and immortality beyond the grave. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3). The life of the believer is, therefore, secure in God, out of the reach of devils, men, sin, death, and the curses of a broken law; and therefore, because Christ lives, the tried and tempted believer shall live also: not because of his goodness or badness, but because Christ lives. What a sweet mercy is this! And, my dear friend, whether your sickness be for life or death, may the Lord favor you and me with the experimental enjoyment that Christ the Lord of life is our Life and our All in All.

I am, yours sincerely in the truth,
J. M'Kenzie

Liverpool, Dec. 14, 1848

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PROSPECTUS

(The following is an exact reproduction of the original Prospectus of the *Signs of the Times* published in 1832. This is still our doctrinal position and is subscribed to by the entire Editorial Staff and Board of Trustees.)

Proposals for publishing a semimonthly paper, to be called *Signs of the Times*, devoted exclusively to the Baptist cause, maintaining inviolably the following scriptural sentiments:

1. The Existence, Sovereignty, Immutability, Omnipotence and Eternal Perfections of the Great Jehovah - the Revelation which God has given of Himself, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. "These Three are One." (I John 5:8)
2. The Absolute Predestination of all things.
3. Eternal, Unconditional Election.
4. The Total Depravity and just condemnation of fallen man.
5. That the Atonement and Redemption of Jesus Christ are for the Elect only.
6. The Sovereign, Irresistible, and in all cases, Effectual work of the Holy Spirit, in Regenerating and Quickening the Elect of God.
7. The Final Preservation and Eternal Happiness of all the sons of God, by Grace.
8. The Resurrection of the dead, and Eternal Judgment.
9. That the Church of Christ is composed exclusively of Baptized Believers - that to her are given able ministers of the New Testament; that

the Scriptures are the only divinely authorized Rule of Faith and Practice for the saints of God.

10. That there is no connection between Church and State, and as touching the proposition for a marriage between them, the Hon. R. M. Johnson, in his Report on the Sabbath Question, has expressed our faith.

The *Signs of the Times* will be decidedly opposed to Bible, Tract and Missionary Societies, Theological Seminaries, Sabbath Schools, etc., making war with the Mother, Arminianism, and her entire brood of Institutions.

It seems to me that when one is prepared by the Spirit to write or speak upon the precious doctrine of God our Savior, he will not feel like writing ironically or with bitterness toward those whose views he is opposing. It is wearisome to read after one who ridicules those with whom he is engaged in conference or controversy, and applies harsh terms to them. "In meekness instructing them that oppose themselves," is the apostle's direction.

"Fragments" by Silas H. Durand

CHURCH DIRECTORY

The Editors of the *Signs of the Times* feel that it is best to discontinue publishing an annual Church Directory for the following reasons:

1. There is not a sufficient interest among the churches for a directory to make the list anything more than a sampling of the many churches across the land.
2. It has become next to impossible to determine in many cases if a church should be listed or not. We feel unqualified and unauthorized to make such determinations, and have no desire to involve this paper in local differences.

We wish to thank the churches and individuals concerned who have helped us in the past by supplying information regarding their assemblies.

Elder D. V. Spangler, Editor
Elder James F. Poole, Editor

ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION OF ALL THINGS

(LAST EDITORIAL ON THE SUBJECT BY THE LATE ELDER GILBERT BEEBE, IN THE "SIGNS OF THE TIMES," OCTOBER 1, 1880.)

The Old School or Primitive Baptists in former years have been very definitely identified and distinguished from all other religious or ecclesiastical organizations as Predestinarian Baptists, and as such have borne reproach and vituperation from those who hold more limited views of what we regard as the absolute and all-pervading government of God over all beings, all events, and all worlds. With deep solicitude and painful concern we have witnessed in the preaching and writings of some of our brethren a disposition to so yield or modify the doctrine as to limit its application to such things as the carnal mind of man can comprehend or the wisdom of this world can approve. *While some will concede that all things that they regard as pure and holy are ordained or predestinated of God, they deny that the absolute government of God does dictate by absolute decree the wicked works of wicked men and devils, for that, they say, would make God the author of sin.* They therefore set up their judgment, and set bounds for Infinite Wisdom to be restricted to, and beyond which limitation He must not extend His government, without subjecting Himself to their censure as an unjust God and the author of sin. But how lamentable is the infatuation of poor, blind mortals, when

"The vain race of flesh and blood
Contend with their Creator, God:
When mortal man presumes to be
More holy, wise or just than He."

There are undoubtedly many of the dear people of God who feel jealous for the glory of God, and who, without any aspiring ambition to be wise above what is written in the sacred Scriptures, from inability to comprehend the two great parallel mysteries of *godliness* and of

iniquity, have felt a commendable concern lest in our weakness we should impute to God aught that would reflect on His adorable perfections, or withhold from Him that which He has ordained for the manifestation of His glory. It certainly becomes us, as finite beings, to speak of Him and of His government with fear and trembling. He is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, and His name is Holy. His attributes are veiled in that infinity which no finite being can by searching find out. He keepeth back the face of His throne, the place and power of His government, and spreadeth His cloud upon it. As the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts. The standard of infinite purity and holiness is the will of God. There can be no higher law than the will of God, for only to the standard or counsel of His own will and pleasure does He Himself conform. "He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."—Ephesians i. 11. "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."—Isaiah xli. 10. In this connection He says, "I am God, and there is none like me." And in the revelation of the Lamb, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells, "The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat upon the throne, and worship Him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."—Revelation iv. 10, 11. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be

recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."—Romans xi. 33-36.

When God created the Heavens and the earth no other power than His own was employed, no wisdom but His own was consulted, nor was there any other than His own will to dictate what, how, or for what purpose anything should be created. As a potter has power over the clay, it is his right to form his vessels as he please; and if he forms of the same lump vessels to honor and vessels to dishonor, who shall dispute his right to do so? The prophet says God is the potter and we are the clay; then, "What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory."—Romans ix. 21-23. Dare any of us poor, finite worms of the dust dispute the sovereign right of God to do all His pleasure in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of earth? "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" How appropriate and forcible are the words of Job, "Hell is naked before Him (God), and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them. He holdeth back the face of His throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it. He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end. The pillars of Heaven tremble and are astonished at His reproof. He divideth the sea with His power, and by His understanding He smiteth through the proud. By His Spirit He hath garnished the Heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent. Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of Him? but the thunder of His power who can

understand?"—Job xxvi. 6-14.

Can we contemplate the awful majesty, profound wisdom, deep and unsearchable counsel, infinite goodness, unerring workmanship in all that He has condescended to let us know of His great and marvelous works, from the spreading abroad and garnishing of the wide Heavens, down to the formation of the crooked serpent, and still stand in doubt of His predestinating power and unrestricted government over all beings, all worlds, and all events?

Are death and hell and all things naked before Him, and destruction uncovered to His all-seeing eye, and yet unlimited by His power and wisdom? Has He stretched out the north, and balanced the earth upon nothing, without any design, purpose or decree concerning their subsequent destiny? Has God bound up the waters in His thick cloud, and "given to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment" (Proverbs viii. 29), and yet left all to the vagary of change? When He set His throne above the Heavens, was it to be the place of no power in controlling the destiny of all things in Heaven and earth and hell? For about six thousand years the sun, moon and stars have with exactness filled their respective orbits, and without the variation of a second of time from their creation made all their revolutions, in obedience to the decree of the Creator. Is it by chance that "The Heavens (thus) declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork?"

But say some to whose minds the doctrine of the universal government is obscure, We admit that God has predestinated some things, but do not admit that He has predestinated all things which come to pass. Let us see how this partial or limited government would accord with the Divine record. Suppose that in what we have been contemplating of the Heavens we should find

the sun and moon, and all the stars but one, held firmly to their orbits by the irresistible will and decree of God, and that one solitary star, without any fixed orbit, is allowed to range the infinity of space, wandering with more than lightning velocity, guided only by chance; where would be the safety of all the other stars? what would become of the predestination of those heavenly bodies intended to be preserved from hazard by the decree of God?

To us it has been a comforting thought that God has set the bounds of our habitation on the earth, and the number of our months is with Him, and our days are appointed to us as the days of an hireling, who cannot pass His bounds; but what assurance of safety would that afford, if He has left murderers and bloodthirsty men or devils unrestricted by His predestinating decree? To our mind, either everything or nothing must be held in subjection to the will and providence of God. *Even the wickedness of ungodly men is restricted by predestination*, so that "the wrath of man shall praise God, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain."

"Pains and deaths around us fly—
Till He bids we cannot die;
Not a single shaft can hit
Unless the God of Heaven sees fit."

For death and hell can do no more than His hand and counsel have determined shall be done. Does this make God the author of sin? or, in other words, does this make Him a sinner, or charge on Him an imputation of impurity? By no means. Against whom is it possible for God to sin? Is He amenable to any law above Himself? If so, by what law can He be indicted, in what court can He be tried or convicted? How preposterous! It is His eternal right to do all His pleasure, "Nor give to mortals an account, or of His actions or decrees."

It savors of atheism to deny that He is the self-existent, independent God who has created all things for His own sovereign will and pleasure. And if it be

admitted that He had a right to create the world, and all worlds, it must then be also admitted that He had a right to create them according to His own will and pleasure. Worms cannot charge Him with error because He did not assign them a more exalted place in the creation, or for creating them worms instead of men. Men cannot justly charge Him for not creating them angels, nor angels because He did not make them Gods. The world, with its infinite variety of living creatures, from the minutest insect to the most huge monster, as well as man, were all made for the pleasure of their maker, and all must subserve the exact purpose for which they were made. Even the crooked serpent, as well as the harmless dove, all were pronounced good in their respective places; not good in the sense in which God is good, but good because they were precisely what He intended or predestinated them to be. Had the serpent been straight, or the dove crooked, or if the things made had been different from what the Creator intended, there would have been a defect in the workmanship. We cannot, with such exalted views as we entertain, think that God has ever failed to secure the perfect accomplishment of His own design or purpose in anything He has ever done. *The entrance of sin into the world, and death by sin, which by the offense of one man has passed upon all mankind, was no unprovided-for event with Him, to whose eyes sin, death and hell have no covering.* The eternal purpose which God had purposed in Himself before the world began was sufficiently perfect and comprehensive to include all that could or can possibly transpire, or He would not have declared the end of all things from the beginning. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."—Acts xv. 18.

But there are many who admit the foreknowledge of God, and yet deny His determinate counsel, on which the

certainty of all the events of time depends. Men may have a limited foreknowledge of things which God has made certain by His determinate counsel and irrevocable decrees, as it is said, "The living know that they must die;" but God's foreknowledge depends on nothing outside of Himself, for He has challenged the universe to tell with whom He has taken counsel, or who has instructed Him. To us it seems perfectly clear that nothing could be foreknown that was undetermined, and that the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God are inseparable.

It is also generally admitted that in the salvation of His people, "Whom He did foreknow, them He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans viii. 29); but that the well-beloved Son of God was delivered into the wicked hands of men to be crucified by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, is not so readily admitted. The wicked works of those who crucified the Lord of glory were not foreknown by His murderers; but it was foreknown and determined of God, Peter said, to those whom he charged with the wickedness of killing the Prince of life. "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled."—Acts iii. 17, 18. "For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou has anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done."—Acts iv. 27, 28.

The wickedness of men in betraying and crucifying our Lord had been positively predicted from the days of Abel, in what God spake to the fathers by the prophets, and by what was signified by all the offerings which were made under the former dispensation. The pieces of silver for which He was betrayed were

counted and declared hundreds of years before Judas was born; and the dividing of His garments, and the lot cast for His seamless robe, was determined of God and declared by the prophets. The history of Joseph, and the wickedness of his brethren, was in fulfillment of his dreams, and in accordance with the purpose in which Joseph said, God meant it for good.

It has been said by some that these great events which God has overruled for good were ordered of the Lord, but that the smaller matters, and the wickedness of men, were not predestinated. Our Savior has informed us that the determinate counsel of God in His all-prevading providence numbers the hairs of our head, so that not a hair can fall to the ground without Him; even the little sparrows are protected, and the ravens are provided with food by His determinate counsel. And Paul assures us that "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

It seems to us unreasonable, as well as unscriptural, to say that the government of God directs and controls some things, and that other things are left to the control of men or devils. If God's government extends only to the good deeds of men, then is His absolute government totally excluded; for "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."—Rom. iii. 10-12. We would not limit the government of our God, nor, because we cannot comprehend His designs, dare to say He has no designs.

"He in the thickest darkness dwells,
Performs His work, the cause conceals;
But, though His methods are unknown,
Judgment and truth sustain His throne.

"In Heaven, and earth, and air, and seas,
He executes His firm decrees;

And by His saints it stands confess'd
That what He does is always best."

Men act voluntarily when they commit sin; they have no more knowledge of or respect for the purpose of God, than Joseph's brethren or Potiphar's wife had in his case, for there is no fear of God before their eyes. It is even so with the princes of this world; if they had known Jesus, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But it was needful that Joseph should be cast into prison, and it was expedient that Christ should suffer; therefore that knowledge was withheld from the persecutors of Joseph and of Jesus, until they should fill up the cup of their wickedness. And it is thus in the wisdom of God that the world by wisdom shall not know Him. Yet such is the wisdom, power and righteous government of our God that He can and does set the exact bounds by which the wickedness of men and devils is limited, and beyond which they cannot go. Satan is bound a thousand years with a great chain, and after the thousand years he shall be loosed for a short time. With all his rage and malice he is restricted by the supreme power and decree of God, to do no more nor less than what God will overrule for the good of His people and for His own glory. And thus also, "God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," as in the case of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, hardening the heart of Pharaoh until all the plagues and judgments were accomplished, and His own almighty power and glory were then made known in delivering the Hebrews, and in overwhelming Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that

repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"—Romans ix. 17-22.

The Apostle, fully aware of the disposition of the carnal mind to cavil and reply against the sovereignty of God in the execution of His pleasure, did not attempt to apologize for God, or so to modify the doctrine as to render it less objectionable to the carnal mind; but he called attention to the infinite disparity between the infinitely wise, holy and omnipotent God, who holds our everlasting destiny, and by whose long-suffering we are permitted to live, and poor, finite, depraved, short-sighted man, and the daring presumption and extreme folly of questioning the justice or wisdom of God in working all things after the counsel of His own will. We regard it as a very serious matter to charge that God cannot govern the world, by His own determinate counsel, wisdom and power, according to the eternal and immutable design or purpose purposed in Himself before the world began, without subjecting Himself to the charge of being the author of sin. Sin is the transgression of a law under which the transgressor was justly held amenable, and to the penalty of which he is subject. But we have endeavored to show that God is under no law but that of His own will and pleasure, and therefore He doeth His pleasure in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of earth. He could by no law be held under obligation to leave the affairs of this world or any part of them to be governed by chance, or by the will of men. As He is in one mind, and none can turn Him, His purposes are eternal, like Himself. His decrees being perfect from everlasting, admit of no improvement or change. If He had not the right to predestinate all things pertaining to the events of time before He created the world, we ask what right has He acquired

subsequently to execute the orders of His throne? If it had been His pleasure to have prevented sin from entering into the world, can we doubt His power or wisdom or ability to have done so? If sin has entered this world in opposition to His will, or because He had not the wisdom and power to prevent its entrance, what assurance have we that it will not also enter the world to come? But it is to our mind far more consistent with what God has graciously made known to us of His being and attributes to believe that God had a purpose worthy of Himself, however inscrutable to us, in regard to the entrance of sin, as well as in regard to all things else. He bids us "Be still, and know that He is God." To our feeble mind the conclusion is unavoidable, that the predestination of God either controls all things or nothing.

We look at a vast complicated machine, with its ten thousand wheels. We cannot comprehend or understand its workings, but we are told that the machinist has a perfect knowledge of all its parts save one; there is a definite use for every wheel and spring, but one is held in the machine which has no certain motion or definite use. How long could that machine run in safety, with the unruly part liable at any moment to throw the whole into confusion? We cannot see how any part of the government of God can be absolute and secure, if God has not the undivided government of the whole in all its parts; and if He has today the full control, had He not the same control yesterday and forever? If He has not the full control today, is there any certainty that He will have tomorrow or at any future period? If we admit that God absolutely governs all things according to the counsel of His own will, and that He is immutable, then we must admit that He has determined what shall and what shall not transpire in time or in eternity. But to deny His universal control of all things, including all prin-

cialities and powers, thrones and dominions, things present or to come, whether they be visible or invisible, is to deny that He is the God of the whole earth, and virtually deny His eternal power and Godhead. If He has not the power and wisdom to determine all events, how can He cause all things to work together for good to them that love Him?

But while we hold that He is supreme in power, and that He works all things after the counsel of His own will, we are certain that He reigns in righteousness, and that there is no unrighteousness with Him. To admit the universal government of God, is to admit the predestination of all things, from the falling of a sparrow to the dissolution of a world. In the absence of predestination, with what certainty could the Holy Ghost inspire the holy prophets and Apostles to foretell all that should ever come to pass? If it were undetermined in the purpose of God, how could the Apostles tell us of perilous times that should come in the last days, of apostasy from the faith, and spiritual wickedness in high places?

But we will submit these remarks to the consideration of our readers, and desire that what we have written may be carefully tested by the infallible standard, the Scriptures, and received only so far as they are sustained by the word and Spirit of our God.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

A true believer lives upon free grace as his necessary food. And, indeed, he who has really tasted the sweetness of grace, can live upon nothing else.

Toplady

The greatest judgment which God Himself can, in the present life, inflict upon a man is, to leave him in the hand of his own boasted free-will.

Toplady

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

ATONEMENT

"Did Christ atone for all our sins?"

If so, why do we pray to him to forgive our sins?

And why is all our suffering here on account of our sins, if he has atoned for them all?

Why is Christ interceding for us, if a full atonement has been made for us?

Are we mistaken when at the first in our experience we feel that we are condemned sinners?

Did Christ atone for all our sins, or only for those committed before we were regenerated, and after this we atone for them ourselves?

What is meant by the forgiveness of sins?

And what is meant by the intercession of Christ?"

REPLY

The above questions were presented to us by letter some time ago, with the request that we would reply to them at our earliest convenience. They call attention to most solemn and weighty matters pertaining to the religion of Christ, and the hope of the believer. We do not feel at all able to write in reply as the subject demands, but yet this is the theme of all gospel ministry, and if one is called to preach at all, this theme must engage his attention, and still more, if one has been called to a good hope through grace, these questions and their answers have become most important to him, and must be the subject of his most earnest thought. Still further, upon the right conception of these matters must the hope and faith of all such ones rest. These considerations have induced us to present some thoughts upon this matter in this public way, rather than by private letter.

"Did Christ atone for all our sins?"

There can be but one answer to this question; the Bible is clear upon this one thing, if upon anything: "Who gave

himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." "Himself bare our sins in his own body." This text suggests no limit to the number of them. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." "The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." "And he bare the sin of many." "He was put to death for our sins, and raised again for our justification." In the great type of atonement under the ceremonial law once a year, the sins, every sin of all the people of Israel, were confessed upon the scapegoat which was slain, and the one that was sent away into the wilderness, and not one sin remained upon all the people when this was done. So also when the red heifer was slain, every sin was covered in all Israel. From all these Scriptures it is clear that Christ did atone for all the sins of all the true Israel of God. None of the above Scriptures suggest any partial atonement, either as regards the number of sins covered, or the completeness of the covering, and there is no Scriptures that speak of the atonement at all that could be twisted by any argument into the idea presented in the question above. An atonement that did not cover each and all our sins, would be as good as no atonement, seeing that one sin unatoned for would condemn any one of us to everlasting punishment. One transgression of our first parents plunged not only themselves but all their unborn race in condemnation, guilt and unending woe. If sin then was such an exceeding sinful thing, it is no less so now. So that one sin left unatoned for would plunge the guilty into irrevocable destruction from presence of the Lord. We cannot be too careful or too earnest in insisting upon this; the whole scheme of the gospel hangs upon it; the good hope of the believer, which is through grace, hangs

upon it; the very doctrine of salvation by grace hangs upon it. If not saved by grace, through the atonement which is in Christ Jesus, from all sin, then there is no salvation at all except through works of the creature. If by grace, it must be by grace all along the line, and the atonement must cover every sin. If our work, our repentance or our faith must be considered as the ransom price for any sin at all, then these things must be the ransom for all sin. If by grace, it is no more of work, and if by work, then it is no more by grace. The testimony is clear upon this in the word. But the apostle leaves no room for cavil, for he says it is by grace. Therefore the atonement of Christ must cover all sin, if it covers any at all.

The atonement lies at the foundation of all the gospel, yea, it is the very substance of the gospel. If we are right in the view we have of the atonement, we cannot be far wrong in any other principle of the doctrine of grace. If we are wrong in the view which we have of the atonement, we cannot be right in anything that pertains to the gospel. It is therefore all important that we have right views of the atonement; the glory of God is involved in it; the exaltation of the crucified and risen Redeemer is involved in it; the comfort, peace, happiness and security of the believer is involved in it. Except Christ did indeed atone for all our sins, his death was utterly in vain, the wisdom of God was at fault, and there is no certain salvation for any one; nay, it is then certain that no one can be saved. Surely every believing humble heart must shrink from the contemplation of such awful consequences as the above.

"If so, why do we pray to him to forgive our sins?"

It seems to us only necessary to say that if we pray for the forgiveness of sins, it can be only upon the ground of the atonement. It was upon the ground of the atonement under the ceremonial

law that the high priest made intercession within the veil for the sins of the people. When he came within the veil, provision was made that he should come there with the blood, as full evidence that the required atonement had been made. It was the same with every prayer made by the priests for the transgressor: all was founded upon the blood of atonement. So when now we come before God as priests unto him, our intercession for not only forgiveness, but for every needed blessing, must be upon the ground of the full atonement of Christ, and all our prayers must be in his name, God will not hear them otherwise. And Jesus, our true High Priest in the heavenly places, pleads before the throne for all whose sins he bore, upon the one ground that he has himself died for them, and put away all their sins by the sacrifice of himself. There would be no use to ask for any forgiveness or any other gift had not Jesus died. The law knows no forgiveness. Forgiveness is one of the precious gifts received for the rebellious when Jesus ascended on high and received gifts for men. Were it a fact that we ourselves must make satisfaction for sin, and could we make such satisfaction, then indeed there would be no room for forgiveness, seeing that we had paid all our debt against the law of God, but as we do not and cannot pay this debt, but Jesus does pay it, to us forgiveness comes upon the ground that he has died and risen again, and only upon that ground.

"Why is all our suffering here on account of sin if he has atoned for them all?"

Our sufferings here are not for atonement, seeing that a whole eternity of suffering could not atone for one sin. In no sense is suffering on account of sin here an atonement for it; then indeed would the atonement of Christ be nullified, and all his work would be shown to be useless. But suffering is often for a trial of faith, and often as

chastisement, to correct. David said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." And again he said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." The sons of an earthly father are chastised, but not to atone for their transgressions. The stripes inflicted upon a child are not payment for wrong which he has done, but for discipline, that he may learn not to transgress, and this is for his salvation and good, not to satisfy any demand of obedience from his father. The father having chastised his child, does not therefore remit the duty of obedience, as though the strips inflicted were in place of the obedience. So God chastises his children, not to atone for their sins, but to correct and to lead them in the way of peace and blessing.

"Why is Christ interceding for us, if a full atonement has been made for us?"

This we have in substance answered in our reply to the second question, concerning prayer for forgiveness. It is only needful that we repeat that the very ground of the intercession of Christ is his own atonement. He pleads his own work in behalf of his chosen ones. He says in substance, "Father, I have died for them." He does not, as the advocate, seek to extenuate their sins, or to make excuses for them. He at once confesses before God all their vileness and foul transgressions, and that they are without excuse. There is not one charge against them that he does not at once confess as being true. He does not plead for mercy upon the ground of the smallness of their guilt, or of extenuating circumstances. He pleads not for small sinners, but for great sinners. One said in former days, "O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." He pleads for his own because their sins are many and great, and therefore he pleads his own wonderful work upon Calvary. His plea for them is all summed up in the words, "I have died," and so his intercession avails always for them. Had he not died, he

could not be our intercessor. The atonement is the sole ground of intercession. Instead of the atonement doing away with the need of intercession, it is the only ground upon which any intercession can be made, and such intercession is effectual always.

"Are we mistaken when at the first in our experience we feel that we are condemned sinners?"

We answer positively, No. At the first in experience the law of God is doing its work, the commandment has come to us, as it did to Paul, and sin revives and we die. The law is to us then as a school-master unto Christ. We are then hearing the voice of God in the law, and the law of God, holy, just and good, can but condemn us. When applied to the conscience by the Spirit, at once sin becomes exceeding sinful. The glorious gospel has not yet come in, and the sinner hearing only the law, feels its condemnation. He is not mistaken under the work and sentence of the law; he is condemned and he dies. It is needful that we travel as did Israel, first of all by Sinai, and hear its thunderings filling our souls with fear. This is a needful experience, otherwise we could not understand the gospel of salvation, or rejoice in it. God has thoughts of peace to us in all this experience, but we are not yet prepared to receive the knowledge of this, or to understand in its fullness just what the atonement of Christ means, nor just what infinite mercy, which provides the atonement, means. To gain some conception of these things there must be first a knowledge of our condemnation and need. To appreciate bread we must be hungry. To understand what redemption in Christ means, we must feel the burden of sin and condemnation, and in mercy God leads us into the knowledge of the condemnation, that we may come to rejoice in the salvation afterwards, he leads us one step at a time, he shows us one thing at a time.

"Did Christ atone for all our sins, or

only for those committed before we were regenerated, and after this we atone for our own sins?"

We do not need to repeat what we have already said in reply to this question: Christ atoned for all sin; all our sins, past, present and to come, were laid upon him; he bore them all away forever, and before God and his judgment bar not one of them shall ever arise to condemn the elect. We do not atone for sin after we believe, any more than for those committed before. If we sin, it is still true that we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus, who is the propitiation for our sins, these present sins which we commit now, as the text just referred to clearly shows. Beside, as said before, if one of the least of our transgressions be not embraced in the atonement of the Lord, we are forever without hope. But as all was embraced in his atonement, when we sin we are privileged to come, asking to be forgiven, and pleading as the justification of our plea, that Jesus has died, and that he has cleansed us from all sin by his one sacrifice.

"What is meant by the forgiveness of sins?"

As the atonement blots out all sin in the sight of God, so forgiveness blots out all sin from the conscience. The atonement regards sin as it is in the sight of God. Forgiveness regards sin as it rests upon our own heart and conscience. There can be no redemption without the atonement from the curse of the law, which says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." So there can be no peace of conscience until there is an assurance of forgiveness applied to the sin-burdened heart and conscience, and this assurance, as said before, comes only through the one fact that Jesus has died, and that full atonement has been made. Forgiveness brings us home to God in our own experience, reconciled, penitent and humbled. First there is conviction of sin, then God gives to the burdened soul the assurance, "Thy sins,

which are many, are all forgiven thee." Literally the word "forgive" in the original Hebrew and Greek means, "to put away," "to let go," and sometimes "to cover". The word "pardon" is from the same Hebrew and Greek words, and means the same things as forgiveness. The thought seems to be this, when assurance of forgiveness comes to a soul, it means that he is shown that his sin is taken away from him, as the scapegoat carried to a land of forgetfulness the sins of Israel, or that it is covered, as a robe covers all the body with all its deformity and uncleanness. Thus the very meaning of the word "forgive" involves the taking away of sin, or the covering it out of sight, and this is the work of the atonement alone.

"What is meant by the intercession of Christ?"

This is also already answered in substance, but we will add that an intercessor, as the word is used in the Scriptures, signifies one who stands between two others, bringing them together. Jesus stands between God and the humble sinner, and in him they are one. Redeemed unto God is an expression in the word that presents the full consummation of all the work of Christ, and through him we look to God and come to him, and through Christ God bestows all answers of prayer, and all spiritual blessings, and final glory upon all the redeemed. Jesus by the Spirit presents to us the love of God, and his glorious salvation provided for us, and he presents before God his loved ones in his own righteousness, and with the single plea for them, "I have died."

July 1st 1903

Elder F. A. Chick

A man's free-will cannot cure him even of the toothache, or of a sore finger; and yet he madly thinks it is in his power to cure his soul.

Toplady

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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TRUST IN GOD

In all our lives some
Shadow must fall
Death, sickness, and sorrow,
Must come to us all.

But God in His wisdom,
Each life doth control.
Tho deep in affliction,
His love He unfolds.

He can make the sick bed,
A pillow of down,
When in His dear presence
Sweet peace we have found.

No mortal hand the
Comfort can bring
As our dear Savior,
Our Jesus, our King.

Written by Alice Graham

CONSOLATIONS

O gracious, dear Lord, how can it be
That Thou hast given Thine own life for me;
That Thou should'st so live, and so humbly
die
To save one so wretched and sinful as I?

And can it be such a faithful, true Friend
Shall never desert me; not e'en to the end'
When this life on earth shall be with me no
more,
And all of this world's pains and sorrows be
o'er?

Did'st Thou, gracious Lord, indeed, cast up
for me
A Sacred, great Highway to blest eternity,
Where I shall always see Him, and that face
to face,
And praise gladly, forever, Thy mercy and
grace?

These things, O Great King, my soul now
 inquires,
 And greatly, indeed, Thou my sad heart
 inspires,
 For, when I did pray Thee my faint soul to
 fill,
 Thou softly did answer, "In My good time
 I will".

O most precious words, and O, most sacred
 hour,
 When I tasted, then, first His sweet love and
 great power!
 I encouraged my weak soul to trust in the
 Lord,
 Knowing, indeed, that He can't break His
 word.

But as time, for a year or so, rolled on apace,
 My being groaned sadly to see again His
 kind Face,
 I felt lost, quite bewildered, yea, forsaken by
 Him,
 And all of earth's sunshine had now grown
 quite dim.

My pained soul cried out in the wildest
 dismay,
 "Why did my tearful eyes e're see light of
 day?"
 If now and eternally I must ever thus
 mourn".
 I asked, "Why was I to this fearful end
 born?"

Fleeter than the arrow could strike its sure
 mark,
 Swifter than the lightning could light the
 great dark,
 Most wonderfully and powerfully His word
 came unto me,
 And calmed in my soul a most tempestuous
 sea!

"Thou dost suffer," He said, "that in thy
 heart" (O, sweet story),
 "Jesus might be revealed as thy Hope of
 Glory"!
 He must have, indeed, known my wretched,
 lost estate.
 That He such fair words to my poor soul did
 relate.

So, this is my Hope; He's my joy and my
 song,

He has so greatly blessed me in Him to be
 strong;
 He has since often favoured me by His
 presence and word,
 So my soul is enthralled by her Saviour and
 Lord.

Then, then my blest soul, it is true, Oh,
 indeed,
 That, if Jesus so loved thee, for thy sins He
 did bleed.
 Yea, He died, but He lives, and brings
 Heaven to thee,
 And shall bless thee to praise Him through
 Eternity.

Edna McColl (Carey) Turner

(Written, originally, after hearing Elder
 George Ruston preach in Dutton, Ontario,
 about 1929, from the text: (Isaiah 35, verses
 8, 9, 10.)

Dear Elder Poole,

I trust you and your dear family are
 well and enjoying the tender mercies of
 the dear Lord. I think of you often and
 enjoy reading your writings in the
Signs of the Times.

I well remember the few times I have
 heard you preach and I sincerely
 enjoyed you and your family coming by
 Monticello and stopping at my home to
 visit before you went on to Warren for
 services.

Brother Poole, I am sending you a
 letter I wrote back in 1975 on the first
 five verses of the 23rd chapter of Second
 Samuel. The brother to whom I wrote
 the letter typed it up and sent it back to
 me asking me to send it to the *Signs of
 the Times* for publication. I put the
 letter up but never sent it. A few days
 ago I was going through my letters
 received from the dear brothers and
 sisters down through the years. I kept
 them all and read them over again and
 again. I came across this one, and
 thought I would send it to you and let you
 read it, and if you think it worthy, you
 can publish it in the *Signs*. Some dear
 reader might get a crumb from it. If you

don't think it worthy, just lay it aside and my love for you will be the same as it has been since I first met you. May the dear Lord continue to bless you and your loved ones is my prayer.

Your unworthy Brother in the
dear Lord, I hope,
Jesse J. Lawson
Monticello, Arkansas

Dear Brother,

Oh may we ever be made to thank and praise the dear Lord for His loving kindness and tender mercy to the children of men. How wonderful He is. Yes, wonderful is His name; His first name according to Isaiah, the prophet, when he said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; And the government shall be upon His shoulder: 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." (Isa. 9:6, 7) Yes, my dear Brother, He is Wonderful to all of His dear children; so wonderful that they want to give Him all the honor, all the praise, and all the glory, for all things given to them. Blessed be His Holy Name for ever and ever. Amen.

Brother, for a long time I have wanted to write you my views on the first five verses of the 23rd chapter of Second Samuel, and now more so, since I have heard some of the Elders preach on it. Most of these I enjoyed very much. However, there seems to be a few words used by some which I do not understand. The scripture reads, "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he

make it not to grow. (II Samuel 23:5)

Dear Brother, this is very comforting to me. I have searched the scripture, and still search it, and it seems to me that it is the New Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, which "He maketh it not to grow". I have found in both the prophets of the Old and the New Testament that the church of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, does grow, and will continue to grow until the last heir of salvation has been called out of nature's darkness into His marvelous light and liberty of the Gospel; each one being born of the Holy Spirit of God, and brought into the Kingdom, which is the church.

Now, my dear Brother, the dear Lord willing, I would love to write some of what I trust the dear Lord has shown me by His divine Spirit of this so great and glorious text. I know that without His Holy Spirit what I would write would be nothing and less than nothing, but vanity in His sight.

We read in the 23rd chapter of Second Samuel these words, "Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." (II Sam. 23:1-5)

Now, in the first verse I see an introduction of David, telling us first that these be the last words of David; also, who he was - the son of Jesse, and

he was anointed of the God of Jacob, and he was the sweet psalmist of Israel. The sweet Psalms which he wrote, singing praise to the great Almighty God, thanking Him for His kindness and tender mercies, praising Him for His love that He shed upon him, and testifying of Him proved that he was indeed the sweet Psalmist.

The second verse tells who is speaking, and how He speaks -- it was the Lord God speaking by David, and His words were on his tongue. The third verse tells what the Lord said, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God". Now my dear Brother, I don't see David any more from the last half of verse three through verse four. But with my mind's eye, which I humbly hope is the eye of faith, I see the blessed Son of God from the time He was born in that lowly stall of the beast and wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger; and until He hung on the cruel cross of Calvary, and poured out His life's blood for all the dear ones who were given Him before time began. In Verse five, David, that great king who ruled over Judah and Israel for forty years, and was blessed by the Almighty God all through that time, knew that God was not speaking of him in the preceding verses, and he confessed, saying, "Although my house be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my salvation, and all my desire; Although He make it not to grow". Oh, my dear Brother, how this fills my heart with joy and gladness, for I believe that when David said, "Although He make it not to grow," that he was telling us that it was all the salvation of all the redeemed of God, for every one whose name was written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world; and that everlasting covenant of salvation, ordered in all things and sure, does embrace the fulness of the Godhead. Isaiah, the prophet, clarifies this when he said,

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be on His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6) In Verse 7 it speaks of His government and peace that shall have 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 forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Oh, how beautiful are these words to a poor hungry and thirsty sin-sick soul. They are manna from heaven, and water from the River of Life.

Now, this everlasting covenant that God made with David was His word to David, that He would raise up one after (of) his seed to sit upon his throne, and rule it for ever. And in the book of John we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1:1-5) In verse fourteen we read, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth". Now, since it has been established that the everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure is the Word of God, and the Word was made flesh, let us go back to Luke 1:26-32, "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast

in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:”. So after the birth of the blessed Saviour, we read in the second chapter of Luke about a devout man by the name of Simeon, and the Holy Ghost was upon him, “And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” Yes, my dear brother, this is the child that was born unto us, this is the Son that was given to us; this is the precious Lamb of God that the Lord was speaking of in our text. When He told David that, “He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain”, He was speaking of this same Son.

Dear Brother, I know you have seen many times in your life in the spring of the year after the ground is warmed and it comes a warm shower of rain, the tender grass springs up in perfect form without a blemish, so pretty and green. So in like manner was the life of the blessed Lamb of God, but in a more glorious way. There was nothing that He ever did, said, or thought, that would cause a blemish in Him; no, not one. He was just, holy, and righteous in all His ways. He was meek and lowly, and with an humble heart. He took upon Himself

the form of a servant, and went about His Father’s business of healing all manner of sickness, causing the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to talk, raising the dead forgiving sin, casting out devils, and all the good things that He did. Besides all this He bore the sins of all His children which the Father gave Him before the foundation of the world. He bore their sins on the cross, and there He poured out His life’s blood to redeem His people from all their sins. And before He died, He said, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Yes, He was loving, and forgiving, even to the end. And now He has risen and ascended into heaven, and is King over His kingdom. He has set up His kingdom, which is His church here on earth, and He rules over it in love and tender mercy and feeds it with the Bread of life, which is His word, and He waters it from the fountain of living water. And my dear Brother, I believe that this living bread and this living water is so nourishing that the church will grow. The prophet, Malachi said, “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.” (Mal. 4:2) So likewise, the church of the living God, when His servants or ministers preach to the church the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, then it will certainly grow. The apostle Peter said, “Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”. He also said in II Peter 3:18, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” Also Paul in the book of Ephesians gave some sweet and blessed doctrine, “In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” (Eph. 2:21) And to this I say, Amen.

Now my dear Brother, I will close trusting that I haven't written anything that offends you. If I have, I trust the dear Lord will grant you mercy enough to forgive me. I know that I have been scattering, and I don't have time to write all the things which I see in this great text.

Please spread the mantle of love over my imperfection and when you are down on your knees at the Throne of God's grace, I beg an interest in your prayers. Pray that the dear Lord will ever keep me humble at the footstool of mercy, and at the feet of all the dear saints, for that is where I want to be. When I can look up to my dear brethren, then I can see the perfect work wrought upon them by His Divine Spirit, and long to be like them.

Yours in a sweet hope,
Jesse J. Lawson

708 N. Casa Grande Circle
Duncanville, Texas 75116

CHRIST, THE KING-BRANCH

There are at least seven Bible verses which refer to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Branch. Psalm 80:15 is the first and most general in its extent and application. With its context it covers the entire scope of the gospel; the other six verses present Jesus Christ the Branch in the scope of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John: Matthew sets Him forth as King; Mark displays Him as the Servant of God; Luke emphasizes His being the Son of Man; and John wrote of Him as the Son of God.

Admittedly, this is a simplified way of summarizing these inspired writers, as all four of them touch in some way upon those four aspects of His being. Nevertheless, there is more than an element of truth in this approach, and as a general rule this is not an improper way of thinking of these gospel accounts. This view answers in good measure to the four faces Ezekiel saw on each of the four living creatures, as he recorded in

Ezekiel 1:5-10: each living creature had the face of a man (Jesus as the Son of Man), a lion (Jesus as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Rev. 5:5, the King of the Jews), an ox (Jesus as the laboring Servant of Jehovah), and an eagle (King of the heavens, Jesus the Son of God). The apostle John saw a similar vision on the Isle of Patmos (Rev. 4:6f). There he saw four living creatures (Rev. 4:6, margin) of which he says, "And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle." Here the lion, the man and the eagle are the same as in Ezekiel. The only change is that the ox is replaced by a calf.

Briefly, then, with the symbolic language of Ezekiel and John in mind, let us look at a few of those scriptures which present Jesus as the Branch which is King.

Jeremiah, writing of the coming of Jesus Christ, said: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jer. 23:5f)." Then, ten chapters later he wrote in similar language, but with important changes, "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness (Jer. 33:15f)."

By comparing these two texts in Jeremiah it is evident that: (1) this Branch will be a King descended from David, and the legitimate heir to his throne: (2) this King shall be both successful and prosperous: (3) this King

shall effectually administer judgment, justice, righteousness and salvation; therefore, the salvation provided by Him will be in full harmony with righteousness and justice; (4) Israel shall again be identified with Jerusalem, for it is said of both Israel and Jerusalem that they "shall dwell safely." It must be said that Israel and Jerusalem shall "again" be identified with each other. When Jeremiah wrote, Israel and Judah were separate kingdoms and had been for over 350 years. The ten tribes known as Israel had nothing to do with Jerusalem since Israel, led by Jeroboam, had revolted against Solomon's son Rehoboam (I Kings 12). Jeremiah, however, saw the time coming when Israel will be identified with Jerusalem again, dwelling safely under the rulership of their prospering, saving King, the Branch.

The ultimate fulfillment of these two prophecies is that God's spiritual Israel--His elect from every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue--is identical to the inhabitants of His spiritual Jerusalem, the holy city, New Jerusalem which John saw coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. That spiritual Israel is composed of people of every nation, including every Gentile nation, appears from Paul's writings to the Galatians who were Gentiles by birth and nature: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:29)"; "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all (4:26)"; "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise (4:28)"; and, "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God (6:16)." This last phrase, the "Israel of God," and indeed all of the above-quoted texts, would have certainly sounded foreign and meaningless to the Galatians had they not understood

themselves to be included in that term; and, (5) Not only will spiritual Israel be one and the same as the New Jerusalem, but she, New Jerusalem, will be totally identified with her husband and King, for she shall wear His name--THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. It is "His" name in Jeremiah 23:6, but it is "her" name in Jeremiah 33:16!

In the fulness of time, God sent the King-Branch to be born of a virgin in Bethlehem. From the beginning of His earthly sojourn to its end He was recognized as the King.

Although the other gospel writers--Mark, Luke and John--certainly touch upon His kingship and His kingdom, none does so quite as thoroughly and systematically as does Matthew. From the opening verse of the New Testament, Matthew establishes his message: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David..." (rightful heir of David's throne) "...the son of Abraham," the father of national Israel (over which Jesus Christ has every earthly and heavenly right to rule!).

Matthew then, after his opening verse, conclusively documents the forty-two generations from Abraham to Christ, not merely alleging, but proving his position that this Jesus is of the royal blood of the seed of Israel. No one proves his case more fully than Matthew, who quotes directly from the Old Testament scriptures over sixty times in his short book, and is only exceeded in this respect by the apostle Paul!

After recording the angel's visit to Joseph, Matthew gives the account of this King's birth and the events surrounding it: an august caravan of oriental dignitaries arrived one day in Jerusalem. These rulers of eastern kingdoms were quite civil and certainly polite toward the local ruler, king Herod, but they were not impressed by him. What was their real quest? They stated it plainly. "Where is He that is BORN KING OF THE JEWS? For we have

seen His star in the east..." And, what was their intent? "...and are come to worship Him."

We have here not three vagabonds, quietly stealing into Jerusalem by night and hastily leaving before sunrise, as has been depicted by worldly traditions. This was an awesome delegation from the eastern kingdoms, a caravan loaded with treasures, lead by men of astounding wisdom, attended by servants and armed guards, and all with the intent of worshipping a child of which the embossed political and religious systems of Judea knew nothing. The result? When Herod the king had heard, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him (Matt. 2:3)! This was news; news such as had never been heard since the foundation of the world. A peasant-babe had invaded not only the province of Herod, but the Roman Empire as well!

Matthew records much about this King and His teaching about His Kingdom which must be passed by at present. Thirty-odd years after his birth, however, the Branch of David unpretentiously entered Jerusalem riding a colt, after having been known for years as the carpenter's son, the prophet from Nazareth, and the prophet of Galilee. Matthew recognizes this humble entry into Jerusalem as the fulfillment of another prophecy, one of Zechariah's: the inspired Matthew says, "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."

Again as it was at His birth, all the city of Jerusalem was moved, this time to say, "Who is this?" The crowd cried out, "...blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord..." (Mark 11:10) "...blessed be the KING that cometh in the name of the Lord..." (Luke 19:38). Again, the religious and political systems of the day were shocked.

Within a matter of days the King

Branch was nailed to the Roman tree, bearing the sins of His people, for which purpose He was ordained before the foundation of the world. The Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, wrote a title and put it on the cross. The writing was, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Literally, then, "from the cradle to the grave," He was proclaimed to be the King, from His first worshippers who sought Him in Bethlehem to this Roman governor Pilate, who finally delivered Him to the mob and added this last postscript in Greek, Latin and Hebrew.

Thus the King came and went, unrecognized by the governments of His time and unbelieved by the religious leaders who plotted to destroy Him in the very name of religion. Born of a poor family, raised in a city of bad reputation, having no place of His own to lay His head; the song of drunkards, called a devil possessed Samaritan by the Pharisees, dying the death of a criminal—how could this Righteous Branch fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy of a successful and prospering King effectually administering judgment, justice, righteousness and salvation?

This very question is what was the stumblingblock to the Jews.

The answer to that question is, that Jesus the Lord and King, as God the Son, never has stopped ruling as King of Kings. He did not relinquish His sovereignty even as a babe in arms, even as He never ceased to be the Creator, God the Son. The fact was, He was perpetually ruling and constantly reigning in the very presence of His enemies, although they did not know it. "For the Jews require a sign (I Cor. 1:22)," and the sign they required was one of dazzling military power; they wanted a king that looked and acted like a "real" king, in splendor and might throwing off the Roman occupation troops and reestablishing Solomon's domain; someone worthy of the palace of David, and not some Galilean carpenter who camped

out at night with a dozen fishermen and other itinerants.

How then, in the days of His humiliation, how was it that even then He was fulfilling Jeremiah--". . . a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. . . and righteousness in the land"? May the Lord give us the eyes to see and the heart to understand.

Considering His life and ministry very briefly, the following can and must be noted and commented upon as at least part of the answer: there never was a man who established such righteous foundations of judgment and justice as Jesus Christ did from the very beginning of His ministry. Who, as He, had ever so plainly taken ethics and morality, for instance, away from the level of mere outward conformity to long lists of do's and don'ts, and linked them (ethics and morals) with the basic inner attitudes of a person's heart? It is there, in that unseen domain of the heart, mind, soul and spirit where Jesus the King-Branch reigns, fully as well and as completely as He does in His governing of the universe! He preached that it is there, in a person's heart, that one finds true righteousness or true corruption. He left it plain that a man in his outside deportment could be as beautiful as a freshly whitewashed tomb, and like that tomb, be full of death and decay on the inside. Spiritual and moral rot is every bit as nauseating as physical rot, and more so: the repentant thief on the cross was purer in heart than was the corrupt high priest Caiaphas who would kill an innocent man because it was expedient to do so (Jn. 11:49f).

When the Righteous Branch Jesus Christ sat teaching His disciples on the slopes of Hattin, in the first minute of His speaking He established these two righteous principles which no mere human being will ever be able to administer: (a) Blessed are the poor in SPIRIT, for theirs is the kingdom of

heaven; and (b) Blessed are the pure in HEART, for they shall see God!

No priesthood, no judge and jury, no governor or power among men can effectually legislate and enforce ethics, morals, or the true worship of God in these two areas of the spirit and the heart. Yet, here is exactly where Jesus Christ the King rules constantly in both the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction and the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will (Prov. 21:1)." God here makes no distinction whether the king's heart be Herod's or David's, Caesar's or Solomon's, Pharaoh's or Melchisedec's. Any king's heart is included here; and who dares exclude the hearts of all the people at large from this sovereign rulership? "A man's heart deviseth his way but the Lord directeth his steps (Prov. 16:9)." "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand (Prov. 19:21)." "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way? (Prov. 20:24)" "The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord (Prov. 16:1)." "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: to judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress (Psa. 10:17f)."

As He continued what has been called "The Sermon on the Mount," the Christ traced the sins of murder and adultery to their roots of anger and lust in the heart. He established love of one's enemies as a basic element of being God-like; for God is good and kind even to the unthankful and the evil.

He then devastated mere outward, external show in religion--long, loud public prayers; fasting with a pained expression on one's face so that people would say, "Look! Good old So-and-so is fasting again;" and false prophets who

outwardly come in sheep's clothing but inwardly (in heart and spirit) they are ravaging wolves. His disciples were bidden to lay up treasures in heaven "for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." It was on the basis of the heart-and-spirit condition that He here bid His disciples, "Judge not, that ye be not judged," for no man has the ability to understand the heart and spirit's motives of another, or for that matter, even those of one's own self--"how can a man then understand his own way?" Paul said, "I judge not mine own self. . . judge nothing before the time until the Lord comes, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts;" Can such an attitude be improved upon?

When it came to Jesus Christ's executing His judgment and justice, time and space here again fail us; we would cite His stern rebuke of the Pharisees who would have killed Him because He healed on the sabbath day: "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment (Jn. 7:24)." Then, when a fringe-area follower asked Him to "Speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," Jesus answered him with, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" and immediately used the occasion as an object-lesson against covetousness—a heart condition.

Examples could be multiplied, but they would all center in this fact: Jesus the King Branch of Jeremiah does execute true judgment and justice in the hearts of His people; He always has, He did in the days of His earthly ministry, He does now.

In the experience of His people, this is exactly why they in many cases feel bitterly condemned in their heart, soul and conscience, even after outwardly seeming to conform to all that is required of them; it is because the King is executing judgment and justice in the midst of the earth, in the midst of their

heart. They feel the condemnation because they know they have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The depravity of their own heart is such that no amount of consolation, comfort, or cheering up by friends and relatives can help at a time like this, for, "All the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart...(Zech. 12:12) "It is because the King killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up (I Sam. 2:6-9)."

"Whom Jesus wounds he wounds to heal—
Oh! 'tis a mercy thus to feel:

There's none can mourn while dead in sin,
Thine are the marks of life within."

The fact that Jesus Christ is both Lord and King over both the external universe and the internal affairs of the heart, soul and spirit as well needs no proof to those who have experienced His movings; and no proof is possible for those who have never known His presence. For, how could the existence and rulership of Christ be proved to one who can neither see, feel, or comprehend Him in whom we live, move, and have our being?

May He be pleased to make His reign of sovereign grace increasingly manifest in our lives.

In that blessed hope,
(Elder) C. C. Morris

Kenly, N.C.

October 25, 1978

Dear Brethren,

There is a great desire in me to express my thanks to God for our 102nd session of the Black Creek Association and for the wonderful brethren that came to be with us. It seems that God poured out His spirit on both the speakers and those who heard. I have already spent many hours in deep thought and sweet remembrance of those three days. I hope that it is God's will to bless us to have many more meetings of such joy and to see brethren make such effort to

be with each other and share the wonderful gift given to us of God.

I hope you will see fit to print this in the *Signs*. I would like all that are in Christ to know our love for them. I have often wanted to write something to be printed but I am my own worst critic. I begin to feel unworthy and unfit so I leave it to others. I can't help but feel there are many that have beautiful thoughts that would comfort the Lord's people, yet out of fear and shame we keep them to ourselves.

God bless you to continue your good work.

By faith,
(Elder) Harvey C. Holland

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I have known several wealthy persons who, contrary to all sense and reason, have teased and harassed themselves with a fear that they should at last come to want. Equally, nay, infinitely more absurd and groundless, are the doubts of those who have fled to the righteousness and blood of Christ for salvation. Such must be in state of grace; they must and infallibly are accepted of God; and they certainly shall persevere to the end. They who think themselves the poorest in spiritual things, are immensely rich, without knowing it. But such is the state of man below, that if God does not lay crosses upon us we are sure to create crosses for ourselves.

Toplady

ORDINATION OF DEACON

As per precepts and examples as set forth in the written Word of God, Moons Creek Church looked out among themselves and recognized a certain gift. They, therefore, called for a presbytery to be formed on Sunday, October 15, 1978, at Moons Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Providence, N.C., for the purpose of examination of this gift, Brother Willie Neal, and if qualified, be ordained to the full work and service of Deacon.

All Elders of our faith and order present were invited to sit in the presbytery and all deacons were asked to sit together. The meeting was opened by prayer by Elder D. V. Spangler. Elder Kenneth Key was elected as Moderator and Elder Wallis Smith to serve as Clerk. Brother Sartin, acting as spokesman for the Church, delivered Brother Neal to the presbytery.

The qualifications for deacon were read by Elder Leonard Key from I Timothy, 3rd Chapter. Examinations followed by Elder R. S. Payne and Elder Julian Williams. The presbytery being satisfied as to the qualifi-

cations of the candidate proceeded with the laying on of hands and prayer was offered by Elder Wallis Smith. The charge was delivered to Brother Neal by Elder D. V. Spangler using Acts 6th Chapter. During the charge Elder Spangler also told Brother Willie Neal that he had attended many meetings with his Mother and Sister Williams, and that he felt that Willie's Mother had rather this be done than for him to become the president of the United States. Brother Neal said that today was her birthday. Brother Neal was then delivered back to the church as an ordained Deacon.

The Minutes of the work of the presbytery were read and adopted. The presbytery was dismissed by prayer by Elder Julian Williams.

Elder Kenneth Key, Moderator
Elder Wallis Smith, Clerk

Mr. Irons says that Romans 5:1 is incorrectly punctuated, that the coma should follow the word justified; that the apostle did not mean to say that we are justified by faith, but that we have peace with God by faith. It seems Mr. Irons must have forgotten other declarations of the same apostle to the same effect as this, as we have it punctuated. Three times in the epistle to the Galatians he says distinctly that we are justified by faith. (Gal. 2:16, 3:8, 24.) Faith seems to be the active power by which we receive the justification which was affected by the death and resurrection of Christ, and when we thus experience that justification then we have peace with God.

"Fragments" by Silas H. Durand

A dear brother was lamenting his inability to remember the good things he heard in preaching; he feared they were not for him because he could not keep them in mind. "Last Sunday," he said, "I heard such a good sermon, and felt comforted while listening to it, but I had hardly left the house before I had forgotten it." I told him I saw a beautiful and vigorous stalk of wheat the other

day, and it was crying. "What are you crying about?" I asked. "Why," it replied, "a sweet, refreshing shower fell on me yesterday, and now not a drop of it remains in sight." "You silly thing," I said, "the shower is inside of you." The good things that are ministered to the Lord's dear children by His gifts to the church go into the heart, into the life. The memory, however good it may be, can only retain the words, it cannot keep the spirit and life that was in them when Jesus spoke them to our souls. Never mind if you cannot remember the words of a sermon; if you heard it with comfort it was because the doctrine dropped upon your soul as the rain, and its speech distilled as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass, and it has gone into your life and caused spiritual growth.

"Fragments" by Silas H. Durand

September 29, 1978

Dear Editors, Brothers and Sisters and Friends:

I hope I love you for Christ's sake. I thank the dear Lord for you all. You are so good to send me the *Signs of the Times*.

Dear Elder Spangler, it is with a sad heart, if the good Lord will, I want to write a little about my son's death. He was my first-born son. We called him Robert Odell Page. He was known in Burlington, where he lived and worked. He was born in October, 1926, and passed away April 23, 1978. He was found dead in his bed, from a serious heart attack. He suffered for a number of years with a serious heart condition.

Odell was 18 when his father died. My youngest son was only 3 years old at the time. He always thought of Odell as though he was his father.

Odell farmed the first year, then he was employed by the Western Electric Company in Burlington, until he became unable to work. He was then

called into the army, and served in the Korean war. He was married to Sue Stanfield. I have often thanked my Lord for her. They had four sons. He was a kind, devoted husband and father, and a faithful and kind son to me.

He helped to provide for me and the younger children, sending money from Korea. This helped me to put them through school. Five years ago he had a serious heart attack. We thought then that he would leave us. Everything was used to stimulate his heart that the doctor knew. At one time a Doctor said, "He's gone!" He told us that he knew everything that was happening, and of the attempts to help him. He knew it was not his time to go. He said that in his mind's eye he could see a light which grew dimmer and dimmer, and then it began to grow brighter and brighter. He felt that his soul left his body, and went through a dark tunnel. Then he came out into a beautiful green garden from which he could see the golden gates.

He wanted Corinthians 13 read at his funeral. I believe he is with his blessed Jesus, and was chosen by God before the foundation of the world.

We loved him, but his Lord loved him more. The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away; blessed be His holy name. He loved life, but he was not afraid to die. Oh, dear Jesus help me to say, "Thy will be done."

He had read the Bible, and borrowed and bought books to prove there is no God. But he said, (Placing his hand over his heart), "You will never know God until He puts it right here!" I know this to be true. We cannot believe in the Lord without the Holy Ghost teaching us.

He was a wonderful person, and now we all miss him so much! But I have precious memories, and I feel sure that he is with his blessed Jesus.

Thank you, Brother Spangler. I love you and Sister Spangler, I hope, for Jesus' sake.

Humbly,
Mrs. Rosa Page

EDITORIAL

THE LAMB

(A taped message to Bro. Wylie Fulton)
(By Elder D. V. Spangler, Winter, 1978)

It seems a long time since we have visited with you, and we have thought of you many times (also, Brother Aaron). I have been confined to the home for over a month with what is called heart failure, and I feel like I want to send you a message.

I want to speak to you about the lamb that we find in God's word. So many things are set forth whereby it is a picture of our blessed Lord. In the first part of the Bible, we find that God took coats or skins and clothed Adam and Eve. And here is the picture that all the salvation there would be for sinners is the Lamb, no doubt.

The first offering of men unto God as a sacrifice that we find is Abel bringing a lamb. At the same time we find his brother bringing the work of his own hands. God accepted Abel before He accepted the lamb. So we must be accepted in our Lord Jesus before any offering we make to God is acceptable. God rejected Cain and his offering. When Cain slew his brother, we are told that his brother's blood cried to God from the ground, and so the first cry we find in the Bible that goes to God from man was the cry of blood. Abel made by faith a more excellent offering than Cain. And so, throughout the ages, all the offerings that God has accepted are offerings He, Himself, has prepared and wrought with faith in those who brought the offering to view by faith of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Throughout the Old Testament the picture of the lamb is a picture of humiliation, as the lamb, as an animal, is pictured as one who openeth not his mouth when led to the slaughter. I cannot but believe that God, in creating the lamb, created an animal that would

have characteristics typifying Jesus, our Lord. It was not by accident the lamb was to provide both food and clothing, either.

A picture of the Lamb is most wonderfully presented in the twelfth chapter of the book of Exodus where the picture of our sacrificial lamb was presented. God instructed Moses to prepare this sacrifice and told him that this was to be the beginning of months with him. "Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." (Exodus 12:3-6) To me, here is a picture of the lamb that was to be the sacrifice and whose blood was to be put upon the lintel of the doors of the Gentiles, being partakers of the efficacy of the blood of Jesus.

There is something here that is hard to describe, that a single lamb could be presented and yet a whole congregation should slay the lamb, showing that all of God's people took part in the dying of the lamb as their sins were laid upon Jesus. And in the evening the lamb was to be offered. Christ was offered in the evening of the Law. Paul speaks of this when he said he was offered once in the end of the world for sin, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. "And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it." (Exodus 12:7) Here the lamb is connected with the door. Jesus said, "I

am the door: by me if any enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (John 10:9)

"And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it." (Exodus 12:8) They were commanded not to eat of it raw or sodden with water, because our Lamb, the Lamb of God, could not be contaminated in any way. The lamb was to be roasted whole. Jesus is a whole saviour to a whole sinner.

Three elements were involved in this passover service - unleavened bread, the blood of the lamb, and bitter herbs. We are told that they were not to waste any of the lamb, and that what was left over was to be burnt with fire, thus showing that none of the precious blood of Christ would be wasted. The death angel from God passed over that night and in every home where the blood of the lamb was not found, their firstborn died, even of the cattle. But where the blood of the lamb was upon the lintel of the door, the death angel passed over that home. Truly, truly, Jesus is our spiritual Passover.

In Genesis 22 we see the lamb in a figure when Abraham was told to take his son, his only son, Isaac, and offer him at the place that God would show him. What a faith it was that God had given Abraham. He didn't delay. He, together with Isaac and two others, immediately starts to the place that God had told him to offer his son. As they journeyed, Isaac carried the wood, and Abraham carried the fire; and the Bible says, "They went both together." Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. Here is a picture of God the Father, and God the Son in a journey of salvation; and They went both together. How beautiful in all the scriptures is the Lamb presented connected with the Father--with our God. Isaac raised the question as they approached the mount. He said, "Behold the fire and wood: but where is

the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering:" (Genesis 22:7-8)

We leave this picture and we move on to the lamb as a sacrifice on the Jewish alters. In the 118th Psalm we find this scripture, ".....bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." (V. 27) The altars whereby the sacrifices were offered had four corners, four horns, and to these horns the sacrifice was bound with cords. We see in this a picture of Christ being bound in an eternal covenant to die, but we also see a picture of a lamb who is willing to die. The great picture of salvation through the blood of the Lamb would not be complete if we did not see the Lamb opening not His mouth when being led to the slaughter, showing His willingness to die for us. We also see Him bound in a covenant with His Father to die, as the lamb was bound on the Jewish altar. In the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, (one of the most wonderful chapters of the Bible) Christ is pictured as a Lamb brought. ".....he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." (Isa. 53:7) Could God have shown in any greater way His love for sinners than by the Lamb being bound and the Lamb being led as a lamb and not opening his mouth? The Old Scriptures abound with the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow, especially the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. In the New Testament, the lamb is mentioned three times. In John 1:29 the Apostle said, ".....Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." If the world under consideration is all of mankind then universalism is true. If the world he refers to is both the Jew and Gentile of the election of grace, then election is true. Jesus commanded His disciples not to go into any city of the Samaritans or to the Gentiles, but "go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." When He rose from the

dead, He commanded them to go into all the world, which refers to Jew and Gentile, and preach the gospel. John said, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." This is believers, both Jew and Gentile.

Peter speaks of Jesus as being led as a lamb to the slaughter. Then we find the expression in Acts 8:33, "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation?....."

There was a hour and a moment when God forsook His Son, when the Lamb could not refer to God as the Father, when He was made a perfect sacrifice for His people. His judgment was taken away. The only way He could be a perfect, satisfactory sacrifice was for God to leave Him momentarily alone. Then He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Finally, as He leaves the world, He could say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit", thus addressing Him as Father, again.

In I Peter 1:18, 19, we read, "Forasmuch as ye know that we 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:"

It is a wonderful thing to note that in the book of Revelation the Lamb is mentioned 25 times - more than in any other book of the Bible. In the fifth chapter of Revelation we find the Lamb whom God has highly exalted at His own right hand. "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book,

neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." (Rev. 5:1-6) It is noticable that the Lamb now was in the midst of the throne and in the midst of the elders. He is first called the Lion of the tribe of Judah to show His strength and His power, and then He is the Lamb as it had been slain, and we notice in the thirteenth verse of the fifth chapter, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Notice, my dear brother, it was to him that sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb equally, that power and glory were given.

The sixth chapter shows that the Lamb has the power to loose the seals mentioned in the fifth chapter, and as we follow through and follow this Lamb throughout the book of Revelation, we find in the sixteenth verse of the sixth chapter that there will be a time when the enemies of Christ will say to the mountains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Notice here, "he that sitteth on the throne, and from the Lamb". In the twelfth chapter and the eleventh verse, we behold a people with a power given to them by the Lamb, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

In the fifteenth chapter we find the song that they were singing, "And they

sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." (Verse 3) We often sing the words, "Awake and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb". In this we honor Moses the same as the Lamb, but in the Bible the distinction is made. They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. There are two songs. In the seventeenth chapter we find that the enemy will make war with the Lamb. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen and faithful." (Verse 14)

In the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, the eighth verse, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." They will worship the beast. Observe the expression, "The Lamb's book of life". And here we find it "the book of life of the Lamb", showing that throughout all the scriptures Jesus is the book of life of the Lamb, and the Lamb's book of life, and this book is presented to us in the 139th Psalm when David said, ".....and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." (Verse 16)

In the nineteenth chapter of Revelation it says, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb....." (Verses 7-9)

In the twenty-first chapter, there is more said about the Lamb, probably, than in any chapter of Revelation. What

a wonderful thing is presented in this chapter. It is the closing of the Bible. "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." (Verse 22) This is the city that has the streets of pure gold. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." (Verse 23) "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Verse 27)

(Conclusion of taped remarks)

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God! Rest for the weary!
Weary, restless now I come;
Yea, would quit a world so dreary,
To enjoy thy peaceful home;
Quit this world to dwell with Thee
Quit this dark mortality!

Lamb of God! Is not thy presence
Heaven, ecstatic, fullest joy?
Constitutes it not the essence
Of delight without alloy,
Ceaseless bliss, felicity,
Such as can but flow from thee?

Lamb of God! I come dejected,
Fearing, hoping, and dismayed;
Foes of strength, oft unsuspected,
Lurk in sunshine and in shade.
Lamb of God, what arm but thine
Can repel such foes as mine?

Lamb of God! As chief of sinners,
Well deserving wrath, I come;
Wilt thou rank me with beginners
In the race to heaven, to home?
Though I halt along the road,
Holy Lamb, lead me to God.

On Thy bosom lay me Saviour,
Bear the outcast in thy arms'
Let the world, in it's endeavor,
Though it tempts, allures, alarms,
Know each arrow hurl'd at me,
When it pierces, reacheth Thee.

Lamb of God! No shade of evil
Can infest that glorious place;
Scorning world nor tempting devil
Enter that bright realm of space;
Only spotless purity
Finds access to heaven and Thee.

Lamb of God! Whilst here a stranger
Be my faithful, constant guide;
Shield from evil, defend in danger,
Comfort, strengthen, and provide,
Till I quit the world of woe,
And what grieves me - leave below.

Ann Hennah

What can be more feeble than the ivy,
the jessamine, or the vine? Yet these, by
the assistance of the tendrils, or
claspers, rise and are supported until
they sometimes mount as high as the
tree or the wall that sustains them. So
the weak believer, laying hold on Jesus
by the tendril of faith, rises into the
fulness of God, defies the invading
storm, and becomes as a fruitful vine
upon the wall of an house.

Toplady

The great secret in religion - that
secret which is only with those who fear
the Lord, (Psa. 25:14) and to whom He
shows His covenant - is first to get a
sensible union with the Lord, and then
to maintain it. But this union cannot be
got except by some manifestation of His
Person and work to our heart, joining us
to Him as by one Spirit. This is the
espousal of the soul, whereby it is
espoused to one husband as a chaste
virgin to Christ. (II Cor. 11:2) From this
espousal comes fellowship or
communion with Christ; and from this
communion flows all fruitfulness, for it
is not a barren marriage. But this union
and communion cannot be maintained
except by abiding in Christ; and this can
only be by His abiding in us. "Abide in
Me, and I in you."

J. C. Philpot

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

URIM AND THUMMIM

On the west side of a hill, not far from the top, about four miles from Palmyra, in the country of Ontario, and near what used to be the mail road which led from Palmyra to the town of Manchester, in the state of New York, a young man of eighteen in the year 1823 claimed that an angel of God showed him a set of engraved plates bound together with rings, plates containing strange hieroglyphics purporting to be the record of the dealings of God with a band of Israelites who had in some strange, unaccountable way wandered from Jerusalem clear across Asia and the Pacific Ocean and settled in what is now the American continent in what is now New York State, long before the birth of Christ. Why these people left Jerusalem, how they managed to cross Asia when there were no means at hand for long distance travel, how they made out to cross the wide expanse of the Pacific when there were none but the very crudest boats, why they stopped not on the Pacific coast, but pushed their way across this beforested continent to what is now New York, all the explanations are not so much as referred to in the record claimed to be found by a young man on a lonely New York hillside. Inasmuch as all the inscriptions were in a strange language, the young man could not read them; but along with these records were two transparent stones set in the rim on a bow fastened to a breastplate. These, when looked through like a pair of spectacles, enabled the young man to translate the records into the English language. These queer spectacles, the young man said, were the "Urim and Thummim" mentioned in the Old Testament.

We give the above, not because we

believe a word of it, but simply to show what the young man claimed for himself and for his discovery. He said the "Urim and Thummim" were two transparent stones attached to the breastplate worn by the Jewish high priest, by Aaron and his successors up to the Babylonian captivity; that the "Urim and Thummim" were lost at the time when Israel was carried away captive to Babylon, and that they were not worn by the high priests after the restoration to Jerusalem, which took place during the reign of Cyrus, king of the Persians. He said that this lost "Urim and Thummim" was brought by the Jews, who escaped from Jerusalem to America, and finally buried on the hillside where the angel revealed it to him in 1823. All this sounds like a fairy tale devised by an imaginative brain, and we believe it is just that, no more, no less. However, the story has aroused our interest in the "Urim and Thummim," and made us search the Scriptures to see what they say about it.

Every man who claims to be a channel of divine inspiration must have his claims tested by the word of God. If he speaks not according to the law and to the testimony, it is because there is no light in him. The young man mentioned above was able to beguile many people with his strange story, and got to himself many followers, so that he founded a sect which now flourishes, even after the death of its founder, in the western part of the United States, dominating the policy, civil and religious, of an entire state. With all this we have nothing to do, further than to turn our attention to the Scriptures with the hope of unraveling the mystery of the "Urim and Thummim."

Turning now to the twenty-eight chapter of Exodus, we find there enumerated the garments which the high priest was to wear. They consisted of a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a brodered coat, a mitre and a girdle. The breastplate was made foursquare and

doubled, of gold, blue, purple, scarlet and fine twined linen, span long and a span wide. This was the breastplate, and was called the breastplate of judgment. Further, in this breastplate were to be set twelve stones in settings or "inclosings" of gold. These stones were to be arranged in four rows of three stones each: the top row was a sardius, topaz and carbuncle; the second row was an emerald, sapphire and diamond; the third row was a ligure, agate and amethyst; and the last row was a beryl, an onyx and a jasper. On each of these stones was the name of one of the tribes of Israel, so that the twelve stones complete in their settings of gold stood for the twelve tribes of Israel. This handsome set of stones all inclosed in gold was set in the breastplate, but could be removed therefrom when the breastplate was not in use.

Now, reading the thirtieth verse of the twenty-eighth chapter of Exodus, we have this: "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually." The Urim and Thummim, therefore, we believe were the twelve stones in their gold settings, which together made a solid piece of jewelry to be set in the breastplate. The breastplate could not be worn without it when the high priest went in before the Lord to make intercession for the sins of his people. The Urim and Thummim were not two transparent stones to be used like spectacles to read through, but twelve stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes, to be worn by the high priest in his intercessory work.

Turning now to the eighth chapter of Leviticus, where we are told how Moses carried out the directions given him in Exodus, we find Moses duly consecrated Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, as he was divinely ordered to do. In the

eighth verse it says: "He put the breastplate upon him; also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim." Here we see Moses not only put the breastplate on Aaron, but set in the breastplate the twelve stones in their settings of gold, which constituted the Urim and Thummim.

Now, turning to the twenty-seventh chapter of Numbers, Aaron having died in Mount Hor, we find his son Eleazar priest in his stead. Joshua, the new leader of Israel, is brought before Eleazar, that Eleazar may ask counsel or advice for him according to the Urim. This is the first place in the record where the Urim is spoken of as being a counsellor. In some way, we do not know how, the Urim had the power to communicate the will of God unto the high priest, that he might communicate this will to the people. In I Samuel 28:6, we have it that Saul inquired of the Lord, but that the Lord would not answer him in any way whatever, "neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." It seems, therefore, that the Urim and Thummim, the twelve stones worn in the breastplate of the high priest, not only represented the people for whom the high priest stood, but also that through them was reflected the answer or counsel of God to the high priest, that he might make it known to the people.

In the prophecies of Ezra and Nehemiah we have the history given us of the return of the Israelites from captivity in Babylon. In the returning remnant there were some who claimed to be priests, but whose pedigree was lost, so that they could not prove their right to be among the priests. These the Tirshatha (which is a Persian name for governor) prohibited from exercising their priestly office until there should appear a priest having the Urim and Thummim. Thus some Bible students have concluded the Urim and Thummim to have been lost, so that the priests after the captivity were unable to wear it. This evidently Joseph Smith

believed, for he claims to have found these lost stones on a lonely hillside in New York. However, it taxes our credulity to believe that a set of jewels lost in Judea somewhere around 600 B.C. should turn up in 1823 A.D. in New York State. We believe that the record in Ezra and in Nehemiah means not so much that the Urim and Thummim were lost, as that the governor compelled the upstart priests to produce those stones as a proof of their right to the priesthood, inasmuch as their names could not be found among the pedigrees of the priests. As much as to say, I cannot find your names in the record as having been priests when we went into captivity, but if you can produce a priest having the Urim, I shall accept that as proof of your priestly right, otherwise you shall not eat of the most holy things nor enjoy any of the privileges of those who are rightfully priests. This means, then, not that the Urim was lost, but that their pedigrees, if they ever had any, were lost.

Thus far we have referred to every text where the Urim and Thummim are mentioned, except one. Let us now turn to that, Deut. 38:8. Here we have the prayer of Moses unto the Lord, just before his death, in which he seeks the blessing of God upon each of the twelve tribes. For the tribe of Levi, which tribe contained the priesthood of Israel, he asks: "Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah." This would mean that Moses pleads with the Lord not to take away from the tribe of Levi the priesthood, that is, the right to wear Urim and Thummim, notwithstanding the fact that the Lord proved Aaron at Massah and found him to fall short in the trial which befell at the waters of Meribah. Moses did not want the Levites to forfeit their priestly rights on account of Aaron's lapse at the waters of Meribah.

It would seem that it was the purpose of the Lord to answer Moses' prayer, for the Levites continued in the priesthood throughout Israel's existence as a nation. But there is a spiritual import in this prayer of Moses that is of more account than its literal application to Aaron and the Levites. This reference is to Jesus. Jesus is God's Holy One, the great High Priest of our profession. The Urim and the Thummim surely never depart from him. He wears the names of all his saints on his breast continually. The breastplate of judgment is his garment, and his people are his jewels in that judgment. The day of vengeance was in his, Jesus', heart. Instead of the law of divine justice wreaking its vengeance upon the guilty sinner, his sins were imputed unto the blameless Savior, so that he was made sin for his people and paid himself the full penalty of all the guilt of his people. Thus the day of vengeance was his portion when the year to redeem his people had come. He wore then, as the great High Priest of his people, their judgment when he went to offer himself as a sacrifice for their sins, without spot unto God. The judgment which should have in strict justice been theirs, in mercy to them fell upon his innocent head.

When Jesus offered unto God this sacrifice of himself, his people like jewels were in the breast of his love impressed; he wore the Urim and Thummim when he went beyond the veil of his flesh to appear in the presence of God for us. O holy thought, with what heavenly comfort fraught! The word "Urim" is the plural form of the Hebrew word "ur", meaning light; the word "Thummim" is the plural form of the Hebrew word "tam", meaning perfection. Thus the "Urim and Thummim" means lights and perfections.

Spurious gems, made of paste or something else, have not the quality of glistening and sparkling like real gems.

Real gems look as though a miniature sun were hid within them. So God is hidden in his people and shines out of them. This causes them to be lights in an otherwise dark and sin-cursed world. "Ye are the light of the world," Jesus says. Why is the church the light of the world? Because, "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." Arise and shine, thy light is come, says Isaiah to the people of God. The glory of God is risen upon us from the empty tomb which the Savior occupied. The Spirit and power of his resurrection dwell in his people, making them to shine as stars in the kingdom of the Father. James says God is the Father of these lights. Not only the light of God is shining in his saints, but the perfections of Jehovah are reflected there also.

The name "Urim and Thummim," then, fits in very well for a term by which to signify the jewels of election embraced in the covenant which God made in his Son before time began. When Jesus died, these lights and perfections were secure in him to shine with renewed and undimmed lustre when he should rise from the dead.

As we have already mentioned, it was a function of the Urim to give the counsel of God to the people, of course through the high priest. Individual members of the church seek the mind of God as it is reflected in and through the church. That is, if a man thinks he is called to preach, the church collectively is his judge in that matter. If they say he has no gift to preach, he must accept that counsel as truth in the matter, for no man is judge of his own gift. If one has a desire to be baptized, he judges not his own case, but the church as a body judges him worthy or not worthy of that holy ordinance. The counsel of God is revealed through the Urim or through his people, who are his jewels composing the diadem in the hand of our God.

Too much stress cannot be placed upon this capacity of the church to be

the counsellor of its individual members. We would do better than we do if we more frequently sought the advice and counsel of our mother, the church. Preachers too often try to impose their own judgment on their churches, instead of seeking to know the mind and will of the churches. Not only preachers do this, but often a member of the church seeks to have his own way about matters without knowing or trying to discover what is the will of the brethren in those things. We are really servants one of another, and we do well to remember this and to act accordingly. Let us seek the counsel of God at the Urim, and not at the shrine of self-love and ambition.

Today is cold and snowy, the roads are blocked with snow, so that we are not able to fill, this morning, our regular appointment with the New Valley Church. Since we cannot talk with the little flock at New Valley, it seems good to sit down and talk by means of the pen with the dear children of God scattered all over this broad land of ours. May this new year just dawning be filled with the blessings of God to all our dear readers, and whether or not it be God's will to bring about peace among the nations of the earth now warring, may he grant you that spiritual peace in Christ Jesus that passeth all understanding.

Jan. 1918

H. H. Lefferts

Believers should not have a slavish dread of death. Where is the infant that is afraid to go to sleep in its nurse's arms?

Toplady

A Christian too conversant with people of the world, resembles a bright piece of plate too much exposed to the air: which though in reality it continues plate still, yet grows tarnished and loses its fine burnish, and needs a fresh cleansing and rubbing up.

Toplady

As I would not throw away my watch for varying a few minutes from the exact point of time; so neither would I disclaim a regenerate person for his not in every thing exactly thinking with me. Christians are no more infallible than watches.

Toplady

OBITUARIES

VIOLA HULDAH FLORANCE WALKER

I feel it a joy yet a great humbleness in attempting to write about one who was so highly favored among us. Sister Viola Huldah Florance Walker was born July 1, 1889 being the daughter of the late William Alvis and Florilla Warren Walker. She was married on May 3, 1916 to Samuel Eli Walker who preceded her in death on September 17, 1940.

There was a great bond of love between she and I because she was a sister in the church and also a kinsman (a great aunt). I enjoyed visiting with her so much because she told that which I wanted to hear and could relate to me much of the past. I am reminded of the scripture in Jeremiah, Chapter 6, Verse 16, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls". She expressed a great love for her church and a great love for her relatives. Her father, (my great grandfather) was a deacon of Bush Arbor Church and they entertained many visitors. She related to me once how much she enjoyed the conversation of those who visited her parents when she was a child and how she sat on the floor at their feet around the fireplace as they talked of the heavenly things. On June 14, 1942 at the baptizing pool at Bush Arbor church she expressed her desires to become a member of the church. She was received into the church and baptized by the late Elder W. Curry King.

She related to me once as she sat upon her stool in her kitchen, she suddenly fell and later came to herself, and she said to me with tears in her eyes, I wish I could have gone on, for I saw that death can be sweet.

On July 19, 1978 she arose, dressed and began her daily chores but after 89 years and 18 days the Lord saw fit to grant her wish

and in her home with those that she dearly loved the Lord made death sweet.

She was blessed with a lovely family; one daughter, Mrs. Florance W. Kirkpatrick, two sons, C. Calvin and Billie L. Walker, one granddaughter, one grandson, one great grandson and many relatives and friends.

The membership at Bush Arbor Primitive Baptist Church shall miss her sweet kindness, love and concern for those whom she held dear. I pray if the Lord could see fit that he might bring others into the fold with like precious character and with such faith. As the children passed over Jordan and there they placed twelve stones in the midst of Jordan where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood, for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever. May we be mindful of the stones which have been placed over the years by those who have passed from our midst. As she so frequently would tell us, "The Lord has been good to me". I think we can also say, "That the Lord has been good to us".

As we visited in Canada in September, upon leaving on Sunday as we spent the night in a motel, I awoke from a dream. I could hear Elders Alex and Stewart McColl repeating these words, "The Church is a great people". The remainder of the night and the next day these words continued in my thoughts, so I turned to the Bible in First Kings, Chapter 3, Verse 5 thru 8, where Solomon had a dream from the Lord. In Verse 8, it is written, "and thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude."

Her funeral was conducted at McClure Chapel by her pastor, Elder Wallis A. Smith. She was laid to rest beside her husband in Pine Hill Cemetery in Burlington, N.C. to await that beautiful morning without clouds when the Church, a great people, will be reunited to inherit and be a joint heir to the kingdom of Heaven.

Written by,
Ella Marie Massey Smith

Written and approved by Bush Arbor Church in their conference meeting. May it be resolved that this be recorded on the church records, a copy sent to the *Signs of the Times*, and a copy sent to the family.

Elder Wallis Smith, Moderator
Earl S. Rudd, Clerk

MARTHA ONA ADELINE VIA MARTIN

At the request of Old Mt. Church, we will try to write a few lines in memory of sister Martin, one that we all loved and esteemed so highly.

Sister Martin was born June 30th, 1880, in Ferrum, Virginia. She later moved to Danville, Virginia. She was married to the late George W. Martin. They had one son, James Albert Martin, "deceased."

She is survived by six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Sister Martin joined Old Mt. Church February 18, 1968, and was a faithful and devoted member, attending the church she loved so much until she was 97. Then she became disabled, and was put in a nursing home in Martinsville, Virginia, where she left the sorrows of this world behind when called home to be with her Lord, February 1, 1978, at the age of 98.

The funeral was held Saturday, February 4, at 2:00 at Lynch Funeral Home Chapel in Rocky Mount, Virginia, by Elder Amos Hash.

She was laid to rest in the family cemetery at Ferrum, Virginia, there to wait the day when the saints of God will arise in the likeness of their Savior. Resolved, that a copy be placed on the church record, a copy be sent to the *Signs of the Times*, and a copy be sent to the family. Done by order of Old Mt. Church, September 16, 1978, written by Ballard and Sarah Barker.

Elder H. W. Wray, Moderator
Sarah Barker, Clerk

and was known far and wide for her hospitality and careful entertaining of the saints. She once expressed to me that it was a pleasure for her to administer to them and it didn't seem like work at all.

She had a malady that lasted two years and wore her natural body away a little by degrees, but thanks be to God, it never altered that Spirit and great faith she had that whatever her heavenly Father had in store for her, she would face (with His strength) without complaint -- and that she did. She was blessed to enter death with the same faith in which she had lived.

In the year 1972, she was baptized by her husband, Elder R. H. Hale, and was received into the fellowship of the Mountain Fork Assembly.

So many, many more things I could extol about this dearly beloved sister and her loveliness of grace, but time and paper would never permit. The Lord made us willing at the end, and when he received back the spirit which He had given we could only cry, Thank you God.

Elder Stanley Phillips, Elder Otis Freeman, Elder Donald Johnson, and Elder David Mattingly spoke comforting words to the family and a large gathering of friends at Spry's Funeral Home in Huntsville, Alabama, after which she was laid to rest in the Miller Cemetery where her body awaits that great day -- the day of the trumpet and the summons to come forth and be forever with the Lord.

We loved her, we miss her, but we feel that our loss is her eternal gain.

By: Lavonia W. Lee

ALICE ELIZABETH HALE

With a portion of my heart empty forever because God has called my dearest friend home, I shall try to write her obituary. She was our much beloved sister, Alice Elizabeth Hale. She was born July 4, 1937 and died July 20, 1978 at the age of forty-one years and sixteen days.

She is survived by her husband, Elder R. H. Hale; three sons, Max, Dexter, and Darryl Hale; one grandchild, Jennifer Elizabeth Hale; her parents, Elder and Mrs. R. O. Simmons; two brothers, Loyd and Eugene Simmons; and other relatives, plus a host of friends.

Sister Elizabeth loved the Old Baptists

DORSEY W. COCHRAN

It is with a sad heart and tear filled eyes that I attempt to write a few lines in memory of my husband who died December 20, 1977.

God, at His appointed time, called from our midst Dorsey W. Cochran, who was 73 years old. He joined the church at Little Hope in Montgomery County in 1948. He was a Deacon and faithful member until his death. He spent most of the last three months of his life in the hospital where all that skilled hands and family could do for him. He never complained any through all his illness. He knew he could not get well. I overheard him tell our Pastor, Elder Lane Carter, that he

felt like he was such a burden on his family, and that he had been praying to die. He told me lots of times he was not afraid to die.

Besides his wife, he leaves a son, Jack W. Cochran; daughter-in-law, Barbara; two grandchildren, Jackie Jr., and Anne Cochran; five sisters, Mrs. Hattie Hibbitts, Mrs. Pearl McDaniel, Mrs. Delphia McDaniel, Mrs. Mary Gardner, and Mrs. Martha Butt; along with lots of friends and relatives.

His funeral was conducted from John M. Oakey's Funeral Home in Salem, Va., by Elder Lane Carter and Elder Roy Agee. His body was laid to rest in Little Hope Cemetery, beneath a beautiful mound of flowers.

Written by his wife,
Pauline Cochran

SISTER MILLIE JANE ROEBUCK

It is with a deep sense of unworthiness that we try to comply with the request of the church at Flat Swamp to write a memorial of our beloved sister in Christ, Millie Jane Roebuck. The daughter of the late James Alexander and Millie Frances Roebuck, she was born September 5, 1890, in Martin County, and passed away August 1, 1978, in Pittman Nursing Home in Chocowinity.

A graduate of East Carolina University of Greenville, she taught in the Martin County schools until she retired in 1965.

Sister Millie united with the Primitive Baptist Church in 1960 and was baptized by Elder A. B. Ayers. She remained a steadfast loving member until her death, always filling her seat as long as she was able to attend.

Surviving is one brother, Raleigh Roebuck, of Marianna, Arkansas, several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were conducted in the Flat Swamp Primitive Baptist Church, August 3, 1978, at 11:00 by the Elder Joseph Leggett and Elder M. E. Garner. Her body was laid to rest in the Robersonville Cemetery beneath a mound of beautiful flowers, there to await the coming of her blessed Savior.

The Flat Swamp Church extends her deepest sympathy to Sister Millie's family. We feel this loss deeply, yet all must submit to the will of God, believing that our loss is her eternal gain.

Done by order of Conference on Saturday before the first Sunday in August 1978.

Elder N. L. Ambrose, Moderator
Hassel Allen, Clerk
Selma Roebuck
Mary J. Jenkins, Committee

SISTER SALLIE BETT ROBERTSON

In memory of my lovely Aunt and Sister, Sallie Bett Robertson.

Sister Robertson passed away Sunday, August 20, 1978, in Memorial Hospital of Alamance, making her stay on earth 81 years, 4 months, and 16 days.

She was born April 4, 1897, to the late George P. and Elizabeth B. Oakley McKinney. She was the wife of the late Marcellus P. Robertson, an Alamance County Sheriff, who was killed in the line of duty of December 7, 1938.

Surviving is one brother, Dewel McKinney, along with a brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Collie Robertson, who made their home with her after the passing of her husband. As we heard so beautifully set forth at her funeral, they took her under their wing and gave her the best of care all these years. May God's richest blessings rest with them.

Her funeral was conducted, as she requested, at Bush Arbor Primitive Baptist Church, by her pastor, Elder Wallis A. Smith assisted by Elder Donald E. Smith. Her body was laid to rest in Pine Hill Cemetery in Burlington.

She united with Bush Arbor Church in June, 1942. She was devoted to her church. When physically able, she attended her church services and manifested a great love for her Saviour and Brethren.

Though she will be greatly missed by relatives and friends, we feel our loss is her gain.

As she has said on many occasions, "If God is mine, I'm all right". I feel I was made reconciled to her passing the day of her funeral. When I entered the church door to view her body for the last time, it seemed her voice said, "Betty, I'm alright", and I do feel that she is.

Written by one who loved her dearly, her niece, Betty Foster.

Elder Wallis Smith, Moderator
Earl S. Rudd, Clerk

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MEDITATIONS ON ISAIAH 53:10

Gethsemane hides Jesus on
That awful night of old.
Was suffering e'er on mortal face
As one can there behold?
He agonizes, sweats as blood,
As God His death demands;
And yet the pleasure of the Lord
Shall prosper in His hand.

Here knelt the Christ, the living God
Made like unto His men;
Tempted as we are, yet without
The taint or spot of sin.
Imputed sin where no sin lay
Was placed upon this Man,
And yet the pleasure of the Lord
Shall prosper in His hand.

His bride composed of sinners from
Each nation, tribe and tongue;
All dead in sin, both bond and free,
The aged and the young.
How can He bear the awful curse
Jehovah's law demands?
And yet the pleasure of the Lord
Shall prosper in His hand.

His bride she was ere time began;
His bride she will e'er be,
And this shall be her only song
In all eternity:

“All we like sheep had gone astray,
What a disloyal band!
And yet the pleasure of the Lord
Shall prosper in His hand.

“Wounded for our transgressions, bruised
For our iniquities;
Though He in life and death had done
All that the Father pleased.

Predestinated was our lot
To reach the promised land;
So shall the pleasure of the Lord
Still prosper in His hand."

And not a thing had she to do
With God's determined plan!
Her number sealed, her fate beyond
The reach of any man!
Her sins arose and like a storm
The flames of Hell they fanned;
And yet the Sovereign grace of God
Shall prosper in His hand!

It pleased the Lord to bruise Him well
And put His soul to grief;
And for His bride He bore her Hell
As if a common thief.
He was oppressed because her sins
Were numbered as the sand;
And yet the pleasure of the Lord
Shall prosper in His hand.

It was His pleasure that He bear
Her sins as far away
From her as east is from the west,
As far as night from day.
Imputed righteousness now clothes
This blood-bought, thankful band--
Thankful the pleasure of the Lord
Has prospered in His hand.

The Father rolls His ages on,
Their song continues still,
Filling the universe with praise
From Heaven's lofty hill.
Secured by love and bought with blood,
By grace they're made to stand!
Their tears forever wiped away
By Jesus' mighty hand.

(Elder) C. C. Morris

Dearly beloved brethren,

I am shut up. I can not speak, I can not pray, I can not even weep. It seems I can only murmur and complain. The Lord's hand is heavy upon me. Total darkness is my path. There was a time when this was not so, unless my poor heart has deceived me, and I had glimpses from the top of the mountain that made my soul leap with joy and my lips sing

songs of praise to our great Redeemer.
O, how happy are they
Who their Savior obey,
And whose treasures are laid up above;
Tongue can not express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love.

This is the first verse of a song which I sang repeatedly with great joy of heart because I felt that Christ had spoken to me, had removed my great burden of sin, and had given me a light to lead me in the right way.

I could scarcely believe
That I ever should grieve,
That I ever should suffer again.

This is a part of the same song that I felt I could truly apply to myself. I do not mean to say that I stayed on top of the mountain all the time. There have been many days in which I walked the dark valley, but seldom did He keep me there for long, for which I hope I am thankful. His great mercies to this poor worm have been so many! But he has turned His face away from me again, and it has been so long!

Paul says, "We know that all things work together for good to those who love the Lord." I believe this, if I believe anything in the Bible. He said "all things", not just the good things. Our trials, tribulations, persecutions, etc. work together for our good as well as the good things, and yet when these grievous things come upon me I quickly become very rebellious. I desire to have these things removed, as did Paul concerning the thorn in his flesh, and seldom remember that Peter said the trial of our faith is much more precious than gold. If I have any faith to be tried it seems so little, especially during these many months of darkness. When I occasionally attempt to pray it seems I am only uttering words; and prayer without faith is worthless. "But let him ask in faith, not wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive any

thing of the Lord." (Jas. 1:6-7).

Brethren, if I may dare address you so, have you ever experienced such as this, or am I alone? I hope you have; not that I wish this upon you, but that I might receive comfort in knowing that my experiences are as yours. If our experiences are alike, then I may feel that my hope is not dead. Paul tells us that we are saved by hope; but when left to myself I constantly murmur and complain; not remembering that tribulations worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.

May God grant us faith (for faith is His gift to us and not of ourselves) to trust in Him and not murmur and complain at our lot. May He also grant that you remember this poor worm in your prayers of faith.

I have at times been comforted by reading the experiences of others. Now I feel a bit comforted in writing my own and feel the efforts of some value even if someone else is not comforted.

In bonds of love,
Clifford Wilbanks
217 Bastrop Drive
Monroe, La. 71203

1320 W. Buffalo
Holbrook, Arizona 86025

Dear Editors:

Enclosed is my check for \$15.00 to renew my and my mother's subscription for another year. You may use the balance to further the circulation of the *Signs of the Times*.

I look forward to my *Signs* each month. I live in Arizona and there are no Primitive Baptist Churches in the area. It is a great blessing to me to be able to read what I believe even if I can't hear it preached. I find great comfort in it and the taped sermons and hymns my brother in the faith, Elder Grady Dearmon, sends me from time to time. I have especially enjoyed the "Bank of Faith" article each month. I

feel a fellowship with the author as I find some parallels in his experiences and my own and it gives me great comfort. I hope you will continue with articles of this kind.

Thanks,
Vera Nell Potter

Greenville, Alabama

Dear Elder Smith,

I'm sending you a little poem that I wrote while sitting by my dear father's sick bed. In the wee hours of the morning I so felt my Saviour's blessings as these words came from the depths of my soul and I was made to rejoice in my God, Whose presence I felt to be so near.

It is my prayer that God will so wonderfully bless you Editors of the *Signs of the Times* to keep sending out the glorious truth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Praise His Holy Name.

In bonds of love,
Emmie L. Grayson

MY JESUS

Jesus is my song,
I love to sing all day long.
To sing His glorious praise,
In all His works and ways.

Jesus is my light
That guides me day and night
Oh! Happy shall I be
As long as my Jesus is with me.

Jesus is my all
To Thee, to Thee I call
Lord give me thy grace
And the smilings of Thy face.

Jesus is my love
Coming to me from above
May I be blest as He gives
To say, "I know my Redeemer lives".

Grace cannot be severed from its fruits. If God gives you Paul's faith, you will soon have James' works.

Toplady

LETTERS FROM SISTER PICKRAL

September 2, 1978

My dear Elder Spangler,

A few months ago I found some words addressed to you under the date of August 1, 1974. Having been unable to "finish" the letter or to discard it, I will try to mail it to you today. I carried it with me to several meetings where I expected to see you, but I find it still with me. I didn't rest well last night and finally arose very early, ate breakfast, and began reading the *Signs* (March, 1950, issue, a letter from Sister Duffus). I thought of the "unfinished" letter to you and here you find me. Tears fell as I read those words again for I knew the story behind each word although I'm not blessed to tell the "story" as I would like. Could it be, my dear one, that my "story" is simply Jesus, and who can tell of Jesus to his satisfaction? I am too sinful to speak His Name. But sinner though I am, I yet hope it is He who has blessed me.

I must try to stop and put words together. Elder Spangler, I enjoyed the meetings I have attended this summer, and the love there seen is still my food. I was not blessed to be at Springfield in August and hope the dear Lord shall bless me to meet with the dear ones this month.

I hope that you and Sister Spangler are well and that the dear Lord reveals a blessing to you each day.

With love, I hope,
Reidy Pickral

August 1, 1974

My dear Elder Spangler,

I received the August *Signs* tonight. I had been looking for it and had a happy feeling when I saw it in the mail box.

My first memory of the *Signs* is seeing my Mother read it and read it to my Daddy. He was blind in his late years and I can still see her read to him as he sat in the rocking chair.

Sometimes she would stop and they would talk a few minutes. Another distinct memory of the *Signs* is after the dear Lord took my Daddy. Often when Mother received a copy she would take the previous one to a sister (in Christ) who lived nearby. At times I went with her to visit this dear old lady, and I remember telling Mother one time that I wished she wouldn't give the *Signs* away, but just loan them. Now I didn't read them at this time in my life.

Also, at this time in life I was very conscious of wanting to hear one thing when I went to preaching and that was that the dear Lord came into the world to save sinners. I had become very conscious of the fact that I was a sinner. A few years back I had heard someone say that we sin every day. My reaction to that was to resolve to get up one morning and not do anything bad. Well, my dear one, when this resolution came to my mind again I had already sinned in that day. Needless to say, rather than my sins disappearing, they grew worse.

In following years I read the *Signs* some but didn't understand much, so didn't read much. I still wanted to hear that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I heard the preachers speak of hope and grace but I didn't understand these. I didn't understand experience, either. I had nothing I wanted to tell anyone. I only knew I was a sinner.

One night I was reading my Bible, trying to find something to make a sinner feel better, and I saw words that made me feel better than I had in a very long time. I remember thinking that maybe I can rest now because it plainly says Jesus forgave a sinner. I have always though the words were in Corinthians but have never been able to see them as I did that particular night. The years passed and the time came I have been trying to tell you about.

After the dear Lord took my Mother I began reading the *Signs* every chance

I had. I do not remember thinking anything but that the Baptists were the best people in the world. In fact, some of the condemnation I had felt in the past was knowing myself and knowing I was not good enough to be with them, and the condemnation grew so heavy I felt I would have to change or I couldn't even go to their meetings. When reading the *Signs* in this time I saw that all the dear ones confessed to be sinners. To this day I do not think of the dear Lord's people as sinners except in the sense that the God of Heaven has said He looked and there was none good, no, not one. I believe that because it is the word of God. Yet in the sense of my brothers and sisters, you are the dear ones the dear Son came into the world, in the form of man, to cleanse. The dear Lord Himself, I hope, hastened the revelation to me that He is God of Heaven and earth, that He had been leading me all the days of my life, that all the agony, pain, condemnation, and grief were for my good. And He revealed to me that all these are as nothing compared with the joy of one prayer answered by Him.

Now what do I hear when I go to hear preaching or sit to read the writings of those blessed by the same God of Heaven and earth who I hope has blessed me? The grace of the dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ! How wonderful it is to hear the things you hope the Lord has done for you. To hear of His love, mercy, and charity is so joyful to that soul who has tasted the Lord is good.

LETTER FROM SISTER LUCHT

Dear Brother Poole,

Today you spoke of Lam. 3:21, and of course, that included most all of the chapter. That message seemed to put a cap upon Scripture that has been on my mind for over a week, and I feel I want to tell you about it tonight, before the outside world has a chance to get mixed

up in my thoughts.

I always read a portion of Scripture each morning after I have had prayer. The other morning I felt I wanted to read a bit of Revelations, so I turned to it, got so engrossed in it that before I realized it I had slowly and quietly read 15 chapters. If the phone had not rung, I would probably have finished the book, but I saw it was late and I had not had breakfast. But I had enjoyed the whole thing as I had never been blessed to before. But that was not what I wanted to tell you. I am sure you have found the same beauty in the verses I will write upon, so if my thoughts are not your thoughts, just remember I am only me and very unlearned, I feel. The beauty and depth of the Word of God is beyond the comprehension of mortal minds.

The subject you were blessed to speak upon was basically "hope". In all the trials, tribulations, sufferings, and whatever else Jeremiah had to endure, he always came back to the fact that there was Hope. What a sweet word! Our Hope, as a true believer, is great, if our faith and trust rests completely in or on the Word of God, not straddling the fence, ready to fall which ever way is easiest and most comfortable. A believer's way was never intended to be an easy one, because as true followers of Jesus Christ, our way is beset by all kinds of pitfalls and Satan's stumbling blocks - temptations, doubts, fears, and every imagination of the mind. Our Lord suffered more than we will ever be called upon to suffer, because He bore it for us. As you so truthfully quoted, "My soul hath them (our trials and sorrows) still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope". What a blessed thing is our Hope! Each of us who claim Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord can look back and see the sinful way in which we once traveled, and we shudder to think how far from God we were. Then one day the Lord spoke and we began to see a glimmer of Hope. But we think, "Oh No,

that cannot be for me. I am not good enough or worthy for Him to think of me." But then we hear it again, and again, until finally one sweet day we feel perhaps there is a Hope. Many nights of sleeplessness and conflict, and that Hope became a reality. Jesus Christ gave me comfort! The light shone bright and the older I get the brighter it shines. Praise the Lord! The death and resurrection of our Lord brought a new bright shining Hope of life eternal with our Father in Heaven. When Christ was dedicated in the Temple, and Simeon was present he saw the fulfilling of the Hope that God had promised him, that he would not die until he saw the coming of the Messiah. He was in the spirit and knew Christ was that promised Messiah, and he praised God and blessed them, and was ready to die. I think that portion of Scripture is so beautiful. (Luke 2:25-32) So lovely! He said, "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel." Simeon saw and believed. So many see and hear but never hear or understand, and the sadness of it all is that they do not want to know or see. Our Lord knoweth them that are His and when He speaks they will answer. All this has led me to what I wanted to say to start with, but I am so filled with the beauty of it all as I see it, that I just cannot stop until it is all said. So please, my Brother, bear with me a little longer. I will try not to be tedious.

As we spoke of our Hope and how it rested upon every word of God coming to pass, in all things, from Genesis to Revelation, I was taken back to the Psalms and how we are taken care of by our Good Shepherd. That is where my thoughts have been and I will try to make you see it as I have seen it, as I read and meditated.

The 23rd Psalm tells us He is our Lord, the Shepherd of His sheep. In John 10:11, He tells us He is the Good

Shepherd, and on down into the 27-30 verses we see another side of that Psalm. He speaks of the sheep "Knowing His voice and they follow Him". Now, here is what I see in this portion of this chapter. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them to me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." Don't you see the beauty of that? Those Hands!! Christ's hands and His Father's hands! Such blessed security! Perhaps I can show you in my small way, what I feel blessed to see. Our Lord is preaching, or teaching, the mystery of the two hands, so I expect He will use His hands to illustrate what He means. He first shows how safe the believer is by putting him in His hand, where he will be safe and secure in the hand of Christ. No one can pluck him out. No harm can come to him. I think He also means that His sheep have eternal life and will never perish. Don't you think so? No one, no man, demon, or devil can ever get to them and harm them. Alright now, we have them safe, each one, and He put them there. They did not get there by themselves. God's Grace. Right?

His Father is greater than all, and no man, or devil, or demon is able to pluck them out of His Father's hand. As He speaks, in my mind's eye, I see Jesus Christ putting the believer in the other hand - His Father's hand. As we watch and listen, we follow His teaching - and His hands. We see the believer placed safely, securely in one hand -- Jesus' hand, then we see the believer placed in security and safety in the other hand -- the Father's hand. We watch and wonder how we can be in both hands at once? There is only one way, and we see how, as we read verse 30. He says, "I and my Father are one". He brings His Father's hand and puts it over His own hand, so both hands are together, one above the other, covering us securely

from all harm. There we see the perfect security. You can picture a precious believer, cupped in Christ's hand and covered by God's hand, and you can know for sure that you are safe. We know these things for sure because our Lord said so, that no one, but no one, can ever pluck them out of that place of maximum security!

I cannot think of a more beautiful way to express the reason why I believe as I do; why I have the faith, small as it seems to be at times, that the Lord has given me; why I trust in the blessed hope that is God-given. These are immutable facts, given us who claim a precious Hope of eternal life with Jesus Christ, when we are called home. Can anyone who loves our precious Saviour and the Heavenly Father desire to linger here in this world when all our riches are stored in Heaven? Oh, my dear Brother, the time grows short, and I long to be where He is.

I am sorry if I've tired you, but I am all through now, and feel emptied out. This doesn't happen often! Hope to see you all soon.

Love to all,
Ruth Lucht
Chestertown, Maryland

It is a great thing to have gospel humility. If you know you want it, it is a sign you are not quite without it.

Toplady

Paul was constrained by the love of Christ. It was a personal matter with him. It must be so with us. Paul's view of the blessed Saviour will not be ours unless we in our measure have been brought by the Holy Spirit to look upon Him whom we have pierced and mourn for Him. (Zech. 12:10) Only then shall we find that God's eternal Son in His person, His love and His finished work, is the life of our souls. Oh! May we be found at the Cross more!

C. Sleeman

WHAT IS LOVE?

Love is one of the most precious words in the English language.

First I will begin with the first love. In nature, when we first came into the world and grew to the point that we began to know anything about things around us we realized that Mother was our first love. Why? Because she taught us to love her and she taught us that she loved us. Also, Mother taught us to love our Father and our brothers and sisters and friends. How did our parents teach us to love? It was by first loving us. So love in nature is taught with love. So even in nature love is a good word.

As we grew up into young men and women we began to love and marry and raise children. We found that we loved our wives and children with a different kind of love from that we loved our mother and father, brothers, and sisters.

As I grew I came to the point when I was about seven years of age there was something that caused me to begin to love something else. The things I think that I began to love were the doctrines of salvation by grace and His goodness. So then the cause of love is because someone first loved you, and I hope me.

Now I would like to write about a greater love - the love of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This love that comes from the Father and Son is far beyond anything that we have ever known. If we are changed from nature's darkness into His marvelous light it is because He loved His children. Now Jesus said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love". As I understand it everlasting means something that has no end. No end means it is love all the way. So now as I begin to look at and try to understand this word, it becomes one of the greatest words I have ever known. The love of God is sure and steadfast. It is unchangeable. God changes not. We also read where the Bible tells that, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his

friends. (John 15:13) In this we begin to find out a little about what is being talked about. One brother said to me, "Do we know what love is"? I don't know if I do or not, but I believe I have felt a little of it somewhere along the way, and I would like to tell you what I feel about it.

First, it will make you love things that you have never loved before. In fact, it makes you love things that you would never love. And the things you did love, now you hate. It will make you fear and tremble and shake. It will make you love your brethren. Not only that, but it will make you love your enemies, also. It will make you love them that say all manner of hard things about you for abuse. It will make you stand bold. It will make you not fear those that wrongfully use you. It will be with you when all other things have failed. It will comfort you in distress, or whatever comes. When you are down in the valley it will be there. When it is time for you to go to the church meetings it will be there. Where ever you are called to go it will go with you. I find according to the Bible that God is love. If God shed His love in you and for you then I believe that you will love the things of God and hate the things of the world.

Why do we love the Lord? Because He first loved us. Then if He loved us, then we are chosen in Him. If we are chosen to love Him we are His, and if we are His children then we love Him and have a desire to be up and about the things of His love.

Many times I have gone to the meetings hoping to hear or find something that I would love, and when the Lord would bless His preachers to preach love and friendship, then I could say with a sigh, "This is love".

When I think of the love of Christ I wonder if I have ever been loved with this love. I have a hope that this love was shed abroad for me, as I feel it was for you dear brothers and sisters. In my later years when I think of love, it seems

that it means a lot more to me than it used to.

Now I will ask you a question. How could we have traveled all the way through the firey trials, tribulations, and heart aches and pains of life if love had not been with us? If love had not been in the cause, I believe that we would have fallen by the wayside a long time ago. I believe that this drawing love has been with the children of God all of the way.

Now I would like to say that this love is not just said in words, but it shines abroad in the faces and in the walk of His dear children, and it is visible to others. We find that love flows from breast to breast. If it flows in our breasts then it affects us, and that is love.

We will say again that God is love, and when we say this it means that God was with us (if I can include myself in it). Now we find all the way through the Bible, including both Old and New Testament, that love was the main factor. In the Song of Solomon love was the one theme of this book, not to mention other books. The Queen of Sheba traveled many miles, because of love, to ask Solomon all of those questions about love. She felt that Solomon was a man of much wisdom. The Queen of Sheba, when she had heard the answers, said that half of it had not been told.

I find many places through the Bible where that love had its part in it, so we will say again that God is love.

There is no condemnation to those who love God. If we have this love bestowed upon us then there is no condemnation for us because that was given to us of God and God will not condemn that which is His. Then if it was given to us, it is something that we did not reach out and get. Neither did we find it nor did we buy it, but it was a gift. By grace are you saved and not by works, and this grace is a gift from the God of love, so love is a gift. Now if it is a gift, how can we turn from it? This is the

love that I think will cause you not to hate. It will cause you to love in such a way that you will not want to do or say anything that will offend or hurt the dear children of God. If love flows from breast to breast then I cannot see or understand how any with this pure love of God could misuse the word and treat anyone with contempt.

This love that is born in us from God is pure and undefiled. If it is the pure or the true love of God, then it is holy.

I will close by saying if you want to print this you have my permission to do so. From a brother in love, I hope.

Clyde Caudle

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CHRIST-MASS, NO
ALPHA AND OMEGA, YES

If God had purposed we should know
The date of birth of Christ His Son,
His word would plainly, clearly show
The hour and advent of this one.

The day, the week, the month or year
Is not important to our ear
For let us not exhalt a day
Apart from Christ, who is the way.

We would not celebrate one day
As separate from the heavenly way
For all the work of Christ, the king,
To Him we would our praises bring.

To exhalt one day above another
In honoring Him, our elder brother,
I'm sure that we forgetful be
That He truly's deity.

His birth, His life, His blood, His cross
Makes all things else appear as dross.
He is alpha and omega, too;
The beginning and ending, Oh how true.

I remember the day, the month, the year
He was born in me. My Saviour dear,
The cross and trials along the way.
Has made Him more precious, day by day.

If round a tree your family meet
In spirit bow at His dear feet
Behold in Him abounding grace
And find in Him a hiding place.

This tree of life is ever green
Twas in the garden, first was seen
In Revelation Twenty-Two
We there behold, what it can do.

Elder D. V. Spangler

A house uninhabited soon comes to
ruin; and a soul uninhabited by the Holy
Spirit of God verges faster and faster to
destruction.

Toplady

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

Pursuant to the request of Briary Swamp Primitive Baptist Church, Pitt County, N.C., in their conference on the second Saturday in June, 1978, a presbytery, composed of Elders Noah L. Ambrose, Creswell, N.C., A. P. Mewborn, Farmville, N.C., and M.E. Garner, Greenville, N.C., met together on the second Sunday in July, 1978, for the examination of Brother Joseph A. Leggett, and if found qualified in accordance with the written word of God, at the satisfaction and discretion of their judgment ordain Brother Leggett to the full work of the ministry.

The service was begun by singing a hymn and prayer by Elder Noah L. Ambrose, after which Deacons Reeves Smith and Vernon Jenkin presented Brother Leggett to the presbytery. Examination was made by Elder M.E. Garner. The presbytery being satisfied with the examination and answers given by the candidate, Elder A. P. Mewborn delivered the charge. The presbytery administered the laying on of hands and prayers by Elders Noah L. Ambrose, A. P. Mewborn, and M. E. Garner were delivered.

The church was asked if she approved the work of the presbytery, which was answered in the affirmative.

A certificate of ordination was presented to Elder Joseph A. Leggett and the right hand of fellowship and brotherhood was given. Brother Joseph A. Leggett was delivered back to the church as an ordained minister of the Old School, Primitive Baptist Church at Brairy Swamp.

Elder Leggett was called on to preach and was blessed by the power of God to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the comfort and edification of the saints of God.

Written by one who loves and esteems him very much.

(Elder) M. E. Garner

From whatever quarter affliction comes it has a voice, and if we but have ears to hear we shall find God speaking in it. This is the grand difference between those who fear God and those who fear Him not; that the former see God in everything, and the latter see God in nothing.

J. C. Philpot

P.O. Box 317
Hazen, Ark. 72064
Dec. 12, 1978

Though sin abounds within as strong as ever, if not stronger; through the mercies of a Covenant God I am lifted up in glorious hope and joy in the Lord. It is amazing to me how freely and sovereignly the Lord seems to deal with me. It seems that most of the time I go about more dejected than lifted up. My sins lie heavily on me, and Satan accuses me, and I wonder and doubt my interest in saving grace. But many times the Lord just raises my hope and confidence till I am made to break forth in praise--and I cannot make the doubts or fears come. Because these miraculous visits usually come--not when I have made some great stand or won a great victory, but rather when I am almost swept away in temptation, sullenness and all manner of evil--I try to call up my doubts, but to no avail! I say to myself, "How can you rejoice and be at peace when you are such a sinner?" And I answer myself, "Because God has been gracious to my soul and I am accepted in the Beloved!"

Then I object, "But how do you know you are accepted and not deceived?" I answer again, "Because the Spirit of Christ is shed forth in me crying, 'Abba, Father!'"

Just when it seems most that God should thrust me away, or at least hold me at arms length, so far from doing that, He reaches down, down, down, into the depths to raise me up. Without my conscious effort to even look up, He draws me up from the pit and causes me to stand on the Rock. My heart and tongue are filled with song. "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord," because I have nothing outside of the Lord to boast in. Also because the Lord's wonderful and gracious works toward

me demand the boasting of my soul. "The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad," because they know their hearts as well as the mercies of God shown to them. They match this experience, and they are not offended. The proud, on the other hand, rail and cast stones at the blest. They stop up their ears and cry Duty! Duty! Means! Give us our MEANS! They want to deserve their favors, or at least take the first step, and let God meet them half-way.

The poor and helpless delight to magnify the Lord, and exalt His name; but the work-monger or means-monger always tries to find a way to magnify man and exalt free-will or MEANS.

I hope I am blessed to serve the Lord and walk before Him in meekness and fear. And if so, I know it is by the same free and omnipotent grace of God from whence all blessings flow. May His name be praised.

Shannon Vaughn

ONLY TWO RELIGIONS

There are but two religions upon earth. One, that which centers in the dogma of Free-Will; the other that which springs from the Divine Election. One which says, "Salvation is of self-movement;" the other, "Salvation is of the Lord!"

These two religions are two different systems. One metaphysical, which goes to philosophy for its reasons and argues from consciousness and from the nature of things--this system, brought within the circle and the influence of Christianity, does not refuse the Scripture, but evades those parts of Scripture which it cannot seem to subordinate, and of which it cannot make use. The other system stands on Scripture only, and argues from the truth of revelation--from the scope and details of the Book--from facts which have been witnessed by a competent authority, the Holy Ghost. This system, when brought

within the circle and the influence of human argument, does not necessarily refuse reason, but subordinates reason, and regards the "If?" of reason, where God speaks, as blasphemy.

These two systems in the Church have been called by different names--Augustinianism and Pelagianism; Calvinism and Arminianism; the Old and New School. With every spiritual crisis, side by side, these rival systems emerge--a bridgeless gulf between them, however names may change.

George Sayles Bishop

COMMENCEMENT OF THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF THE LATE W. GADSBY

This is the last will and testament of me, William Gadsby, of the township of Cheetham, in the parish of Manchester, in the county of Lancaster, Baptist minister of the everlasting gospel of God our Saviour, by the matchless grace of God, through the invincible power of God the Holy Ghost, made and published as follows: that is to say, First, I am brought firmly to believe and maintain that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only certain rule of faith and practice. And I also further observe that I firmly believe in Three equal Persons, namely, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, in one glorious undivided Jehovah; and that each glorious Person is an object of spiritual worship, and is loved, praised, and adored as such by all the heaven born family of God; and that a denial of this glorious truth is altogether Anti-Christian, and repugnant to the glory of God. I also believe in the glorious doctrine of absolute, personal, and unconditional election; and that God's dear elect were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, both to grace and glory. I believe in special, definite, and particular redemption, by the

glorious Person of Immanuel; and that the doctrine of an indefinite atonement is, to say the least of it, an invention of men, calculated to vamp up a whole-hearted sinner, and distress those whose hearts the Lord has broken. I believe in effectual grace in calling; and that God the Holy Ghost both has made and will make all the elect willing in the day of God's power. I believe that all the sins of the elect are absolutely pardoned through the glorious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that their persons are justified in His glorious righteousness, without any idea to their works, worth, or worthiness, as the cause, in any sense whatever, of their justification before God, but absolutely in and by the righteousness of Christ imputed unto them; and that they stand complete in Christ. I believe in the eternal and inseparable union of the elect to the Lord Jesus Christ, as the glorious Head of the church. I believe that all spiritual blessings are treasured up in Christ, and that all grace and glory, necessary for the holiness and happiness of God's elect, are secured in Christ for them, and made sure to them. I believe that nothing short of the divine quickening power and special teachings of God the Holy Ghost can make a sinner spiritually acquainted with the glorious truths of God's grace; and that all religion short of that which God the Spirit teacheth and leadeth into by His glorious, quickening, enlightening, teaching, guiding, anointing, and sealing power, is at best but a fair show in the flesh; and that every elect sinner must have his fleshly religion rooted up by the roots, and be fuel for the fire, in the day when God purgeth His people "by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning"; (Isa. 4:4) for every real believer in Christ must and shall in this world have his works tried by fire. (I Cor. 3:13) I believe that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom in all its bearings; and that God the Spirit sets up and maintains the kingdom of grace in

the hearts of all His people, and by His invincible power enables them to give God the whole of the glory. And I believe that all religion short of a spiritual religion, taught and maintained by the Spirit of God, will leave its possessor to perish in his sins. I believe that while God's quickened children remain in this vale of tears there will be a constant warfare between flesh and spirit, the old man and the new, but that "grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life". I believe that when God's people walk contrary to the will of God in Christ, as the Lord and Head of the church, He will visit (as a Father) their transgressions with a rod; nevertheless, He will not cease to love them, nor suffer His faithfulness to fail. I believe in the final perseverance of all real saints to glory. I believe in believers' baptism, by immersion, to the total exclusion of infant sprinkling; and that the Lord's Supper is a privilege belonging to the church of Christ, to show forth the death of Christ till He comes. I believe in the resurrection of the body, both of the just and the unjust; and that the bodies of the saints will rise a glorious body, like unto the body of Christ, and that they shall live and reign with Him in glory, in the presence of the Three-One undivided Jehovah, for ever and ever. I believe in the last judgment and eternal punishment of all the ungodly.

The above solemn truths, together with those truths in direct union to, and immediately connected with them, I firmly believe and maintain; and I pray that, if it be the will of God, the Lord will make all my dear family acquainted with the same.

A man would not be sorry to be ejected from a cottage in order to his living in a palace: and yet how apt we are to fear death, which to a child of God is but the writ of ejectment that turns him out of a prison, and transmits him to his apartments at court!

Toplady

EDITORIAL.

WHAT AND WHY BRIEFLY STATED

(Written March, 1955)

While searching through some old copies of the *Signs* to find what we felt would be an interesting and suitable article for "Voices of the Past", we found the one which is re-published in this issue, by Elder Gilbert Beebe.

While reading it, the language of Jeremiah came, and seemed to apply as an illustration of our thoughts: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may they also do good, that are accustomed to evil." We know it is not considered polite in these days to speak against any man's doctrine or way of worship, for it is generally agreed among the various denominations that all of them will arrive at the same place (Heaven), only in different ways and manners. We have no objection whatever to anybody worshipping how or what they please, believing this should be the civil right of all men -- and we are glad of this freedom, and could wish that it were world wide.

Then, it might be asked, why be such a stickler? Why not go along with them?

And we answer: If not entirely deceived, we have been commissioned to preach the gospel; and in doing this we are deeply impressed with the exhortation of Jude, "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 that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares,....", etc. We are entirely concerned, therefore, in contending for this faith.

But to know this faith and to be enveloped in it, is an amazing experience. It is as mysterious as it is real. Well might one ask, "How can these things be?" He was told, "The wind

bloweth where is 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." This should be enough to inform all that such is beyond the reach of carnal action; and yet to be absolutely necessary else no man can see the kingdom of God.

That there was a change wrought in me (and that without desire or work of my own), I humbly believe; and I was turned away from things that seemed right before. It was so wonderful that I stand in awe to this day, and often question, could it be possible? But surely old things had passed away, and all things had become new. Instead of an abiding trust in self and works, I found that there was absolutely nothing good in me. My foundation had given way, and I was sunk into a horrible pit; and all my struggling for relief only increased the misery. No one's condition could have been more hopeless than mine. Then, suddenly, there came a peace and calm never known before: My cries had been heard, and He who died for sinners was manifest as my Saviour. The impression to publish abroad what had been done for me was in my thoughts day and night. I was received as a member of the church and soon was asked to speak, and after a short time, I was given license. But the matter was too high and holy for such as I, and I just could not continue. For about ten years I ran away from it, going to Florida for two or three years where my impressions were not known, and tried to loose the impression by close application to business, and often remained away from meetings lest I be asked to speak again, -- all of these things and many more; yet the time came, undesigned by me, that I began to speak again, was ordained, and by the sustaining power of the Lord have continued to this day, though with much weakness and many doubts.

What do I preach? Why, the things I

was taught -- the things I learned -- in these sore trials. The Scriptures confirmed the things I found experimentally true. These, and these only, do I earnestly contend for with such ability as I have; and I hope to know nothing else among the Lord's people.

What do I preach? Had I found that salvation came by my own works and efforts, I would preach that; and would tell all men that they could have it the same way. Had I found that God was not a God of purpose in all His works, I would preach that: and contend for conditionalism. Had I found that the will of men controlled their eternal salvation, I would preach that; and urge every man to exercise his will. Had I found that the election of grace was something that men could come into merely by the effort of believing, I would preach that; and urge all men to believe. Had I found that God wants all men of the Adam family to be saved, I would preach that; and urge all men to accept salvation. Had I found that men who were once saved could fall away and be lost, I would preach that; and warn all men to keep themselves in the way. These and many other things I preach, had I found them true in my experience, and in the testimony of the Scriptures.

But what do I preach? Why, that salvation is entirely by the grace of God, and that the Spirit alone is effectual in bringing the elect of God into the knowledge of their election, and into their hope of eternal life - that men are not able to discover this themselves, nor to someone else - that the family of God, the redeemed, are those who were chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and to these their redemption is sure and certain, and this because Jesus completely finished the work His Father gave Him to do. Yes, I preach that Jesus is the Author and Finisher of their faith, and that they are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. I preach that these walk in

obedience when their flesh is subdued and they are led by the Spirit in the paths of righteousness. I preach that God's grace is sufficient for us, and that He never leaves us nor forsakes us; and that our pathway is laid out before us, and that our trials and troubles, doubts and fears, are designed in the eternal purpose of God to keep us humble, and to learn over and over again that all our strength is in the Lord, for the Lord's strength is made manifest in our weakness. I preach that we are awaiting the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body, and that which we have given us in this life is a sealing with the holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

Yes, these things I preach; and many others relating to them, which ascribe all power and glory and praise to our God, and declaring, with the Apostle, that it is by the grace of God that we are what we are.

I have stated briefly what I preach and why I preach. The matter is too sacred and holy to be trifled with. I feel that I know what is the doctrine of men, and why it is their doctrine, but, having been brought the way I have, I hope that I may be kept in the faith once delivered without waivering either to please friends or foes. There is no middle ground between truth and error. "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid." (Isaiah 8:12)

Elder J. D. Wood

C. H. SPURGEON ON ACTS 13:48

"As many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

"Attempts have been made to prove that these words do not teach predestination, but these attempts so clearly do violence to language that I shall not waste time in answering them. I read: 'as many as were ordained to eternal life

believed' and I shall not twist the text but shall glorify the grace of God by ascribing to that grace the faith of every man. Is it not God who gives the disposition to believe? If men are disposed to have eternal life, does not He--in every case--dispose them? Is it wrong for God to give grace? If it be right for Him to give it--is it wrong for Him to purpose to give it? Would you have Him give it by accident? If it is right for Him to purpose to give grace today, it was right for Him to purpose it before today--and, since He changes not--from eternity."

"Get grace - get faith - get an interest in Christ," say the Arminians. When, in truth, grace is not of man's getting, but of God's giving; nor is faith of man's acquisition, but of God's operation.

Toplady

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

AN APPEAL

We have been pained to learn that in some sections of the country some churches have been making the doctrine of the predestination of all things a test of fellowship. We have been anxious that brethren should be forbearing to each other, even though they could not see eye to eye upon this matter. We have not heard of any churches who hold this doctrine declaring non-fellowship for those who do not hold it; but we have heard that in several instances churches who do not hold it have closed their pulpits against those who do hold it and in some instances have declared non-fellowship for ministers who believe and preach it. We can but feel sad at such news; and we can but protest, and beseech brethren to pause and consider all that is involved in this action. While we suppose it is generally known that we personally believe that God has predestinated all things whatsoever

come to pass, yet we have never felt like rejecting a brother because he could not see his way clear to accept it. None of our churches that accept this doctrine have ever, so far as we know among all our eastern associations, excluded a brother for not believing it. We therefore think that we can with good ground appeal to those churches of whom we have heard the reports stated at the head of this article to pause and consider all that is involved in what they are doing.

In declaring non-fellowship for those who believe in the predestination of all things they are also declaring non-fellowship for the hundred or more Baptist Churches which by messengers met in London in 1689, and among other good and wholesome things declared the following as their faith with regard to God's decrees: "God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin, nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established, in which appears His wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decrees." (Hassell's Church History, page 670) We have omitted scriptural references. This was adopted by the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1742; also the Charleston Association in South Carolina, in 1751, and the Kehukee Association, in North Carolina in 1765, were organized upon the basis on this same London Confession.

Are brethren willing to declare non-fellowship for their brethren during these past two centuries in London, in Philadelphia, in South Carolina, and in North Carolina? Surely no one has ever stated his faith in the doctrine of predestination any more strongly than in the above sentence, which we quote

again: "God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass".

We hope that all our readers will carefully note that we are not here entering into an argument to prove the doctrine true. If this were our object we should not quote the London nor any other Confession as authority, but appeal to Scripture alone. Our only design is to urge upon brethren the fact that in declaring non-fellowship for those who hold this doctrine now, they are also cutting off our former brethren during all these past two centuries.

Coming down to a more recent date, we would call attention to another fact. When, sixty-three years ago, at Black Rock, Md., sound Bible Baptists declared their withdrawel from all the vagaries of Arminianism, which like a moth had eaten the beauty and glory of all away from many Baptist Churches, one of the principles of faith expressly laid down was that God had from all eternity predestinated all things that came to pass. This doctrine was then advocated by the *Signs of the Times*. This paper circulated in all parts of the country, among all Old School Baptists, north, south, east, and west. This doctrine continued to be advocated as strongly then as it ever has been since. No protest ever came up against it except from New School sources. It is but fair to presume that it was then believed by all where the *Signs* circulated. Those who believe in predestination now, believe no more nor no less than was then believed by all Old Baptists where the *Signs* circulated. Are brethren prepared to declare non-fellowship for all those who fought then against New Schoolism? *The arguments against the predestination of all things sound to us who believe the doctrine just like what we have been accustomed to hear from Arminians all our lives.* May we not be patiently borne with if we cannot all at once be

convinced that their arguments are sound?

We trust that brethren will pause before going farther in this way. We hope that they will be patient with those who cannot all at once give up the faith which has so long been dear to their hearts. It surely is not a crime to believe this doctrine now, any more than it was for our fathers to believe it. Are brethren prepared to say that they have no fellowship for all the churches and brethren in the past of which we have here spoken? No one, we are persuaded, now believes more than that God has unchangeably and freely ordained all things whatsoever come to pass. If this was not heresy in the London Baptists, in the Philadelphia Baptists, in the North and South Carolina Baptists, in the Baptists all over the land in the early years of the *Signs of the Times*, surely it is not heresy now.

We trust our brethren will bear with us in this appeal, and that it may do good, and not harm.

(From *Signs of the Times*, 1885)

Elder F. A. Chick

RELATIVE DUTIES OF PASTORS AND CHURCHES

By request of an esteemed brother in Alabama, the following remarks on this important subject are submitted for the consideration of the readers of the *Signs*.

In professing to accept the New Testament as a perfect rule of faith and practice, every christian acknowledges the authority of the apostolic decisions therein contained as paramount to all other considerations. Then we have only to examine the perfect law to ascertain all the duties devolving on those who desire to yield obedience to the King in Zion. In deducing from this unerring standard the law of Christ on this subject no apology is requisite, though perhaps the language of Paul to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:33-35) may justify me in observing that I speak not with

reference to myself in this essay. Not being engaged in the service of any church, I have no pastoral claim on any; and yet I should be guilty of base ingratitude indeed, were I to fail to acknowledge the undeserved kindness which has been uniformly manifested to me by the churches where my lot has been cast.

It appears from Acts 2:44, 45, that in the organization of the church on the day of Pentecost there was a common stock of all the worldly possessions of all them that believed. Yet they were not exempted by this general distribution, from the necessity of each individually using all diligence in business to provide things honest in the sight of all men. (Rom. 12:11, 17.) And the Apostle in setting in order the things which pertain to the visible church organization, effectually prohibits the turning of this common provision into an encouragement to laziness, by commanding "that if any would not work neither should he eat". (II Thess. 3:10) And in the context Paul records his own example in working night and day to avoid being chargeable to the church, although in this connection, as also in I Cor. 9:1-14, he expressly asserts his authority to claim a support from the earthly possessions of the saints to whom he ministered. So plainly is the obligation of this duty enjoined on the churches throughout the scriptures that it would seem that there could be no excuse for any of them to plead for disobedience to the laws of their Lord. Surely those who overlook their obligations in this respect have not considered the injunction recorded in Gal. 6:6-8, "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting". The scriptures referred to with their connections are sufficiently plain and definite

to clearly show the gospel rule by which the churches are required to support their pastors. We will now consider the limitation of that obligation, or, in other words, the extent of the claim to the carnal things of the members of the churches of their charge, which may be set up by a pastor according to the New Testament rule. On this point, while there is no specific apportionment to each individual member, the gospel rule is very definite. In the second letter of Paul to the Corinthian church, he states the proper principle for the distribution of all the burdens incident to the temporal existence of the church, when in the eighth chapter he is treating upon the equitable distribution of their goods to the assistance of their poor brethren at Jerusalem, who had forfeited their earthly possessions for the profession of their faith in Christ. He does not levy a forced tax upon them, but simply appeals to their own sense of equity, and states to them plainly that he means not that others should be eased and they burdened; but that there may be an equality. This is in strict accordance with the whole spirit of the New Testament. The principle which pervades the whole gospel revelation is mutual love, and that of the most unreserved and unselfish character. And whenever the hateful principle of selfishness was manifested in any of the disciples, it was promptly rebuked by our Lord, as when the disciples contended who should be greatest, or when the mother of the beloved disciple sought special honors for him and his brother in the kingdom of glory. No more sacred principle could originate in the natural heart than the maternal affection which prompted her request, yet the answer to her petition must indeed have crucified her natural heart. Then it is clear that the burden of the gospel ministry is not to be borne alone by those to whom is given the gift of preaching; neither are they to be exalted after the manner of the anti-christian clergy, as an order of aristocracy to live luxuriously upon the

labor of their brethren. But the mutual love of Christ leads both preachers and hearers cheerfully to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. It may be asked, how is it then, that very many faithful ministers of the gospel are allowed to serve churches year after year at their own charges? Clearly because the law of mutual love is not in operation. In some cases the false pride of the preacher has caused him to shun to declare the gospel rule on this subject, lest he be accused of preaching for pay; while in some and perhaps most instances this wretched state of affairs results from an inordinate love of the world, or plainly speaking, covetousness on the part of the members of the churches they serve. Now this is a painful point to touch upon, but I dare not shun it. The law of Christ is perfect and changes not. Covetousness is idolatry and is an abomination, if not the particular thing spoken of by Daniel, yet one whose desolating traces may be seen in most of our churches and, I had almost said, in the experience of most of the saints in the evil times which are now upon us. Bitterly indeed have we proved that in living after the flesh and gratifying our selfish desires we die to all spiritual enjoyment in our individual experience; while the desolate walls of many old meeting houses where the gospel was formerly proclaimed, bear melancholy witness that the destructive ravages of a terrible departure from the laws of Christ have inscribed "Ichabod" on all their former glories. The Church of Christ always flourished most under the bitterest persecution. Prosperity and worldly favor have always proven baneful and destructive to her peace and spiritual welfare. Selfishness is nourished by the sunshine of fortune, and it is now, as in the time of our Saviour's incarnation, impossible to serve God and mammon. Indeed, the deceitfulness of riches will frequently so bewilder those whose hearts are set upon them, that they are unconsciously held in slavery to their

wealth while they fancy that they control it. God will deliver His children from such idolatry, even though the stroke which breaks their chains should dash their most cherished plans to destruction and overwhelm whole nations in blood and ruin. In chastising the nation of Israel He suffered them to be oppressed by the wicked nations by whom they were surrounded, which nations, when they had accomplished the will of God as a scourge to His people, were overthrown with utter destruction. Truly, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God". His people have ever found Him faithful in His judgments as well as His mercies. His children are certain to feel the rod of affliction as often as they forsake His righteous statutes. For to all their transgressions He is a consuming fire. His truth is pledged that He will thoroughly purge the sons of Levi. He purifies them by fire, as the word itself signifies. This must necessarily imply suffering which is also expressed by the word crucifixion.

It is a cross to the selfish old nature of the saints to submit to the law of Christ on this subject. The preacher must deny himself to serve destitute churches and even to look after the poor of the flock without hope of compensation for his toil, other than the reward of conscious obedience. Yet this is reward beyond expression great. The hearer of the word must bear the cross in every step of obedience, as well in contributing to the support of the ministry as in obedience to every other command of our King. It is not obedience to the command of Jesus when we simply contribute from our abundance such a pittance as we cannot feel, because in so doing we bear no burden, and our gifts are acceptable according to what we have. On this principle the widow's two mites exceeded all the proud munificence of the rich Pharisees.

But probably some may suppose that the necessity for such an article as this sustains the charge which has been

brought against the Primitive Baptists in which their enemies accuse them of illiberality. On the contrary, I feel no hesitancy in asserting that there is more true generosity and christian liberality among the Old School or Primitive Baptists than in any or all the rest of the human family. And for proof of the assertion I can refer to my own experience, when sick and in prison I was the recipient of the bounty of those whose faces I had never seen, and who knew me only as a suffering member of the household of faith. Hence, what they gave was given me in the name of a disciple, and was the effect of the love of Christ actuating the saints who gave not to me only but to many others in like distress. While personally I can never cease to be grateful to them I see in their hearty liberality only compliance with the example recorded in Acts 4:34-37. All that a christian has, as well as his whole heart, should be laid at the Apostles' feet; that is, held subject to the divine directions, not as considering our property exclusively our own; but as being committed to our keeping by our Lord who will hold us responsible for our stewardship. Remember, brethren, that even our minds and hearts are the property of our Lord who has redeemed us by His blood; and let us endeavor in all things to render cheerful obedience to His laws. This is the true manner of proving that we are the disciples of Jesus, by doing what He has enjoined upon us. (John 13:35, and I John 3:15-21)

In many cases, no doubt, the remissness of the private members of churches in looking to the temporal welfare of their pastors may be traced to the negligence of the deacons in the performance of the duties devolving on them. If they are the successors of the seven faithful brethren mentioned in Acts 6, it is evident that their duties are by no means limited to the service of handling the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper. They should intimately know every member of the church and

be informed of the temporal affairs of each sufficiently to be certain that none of them suffer for the necessary comforts of life without the knowledge of the church. Especially is it their duty to see that their pastor is released from the necessity of being overburdened with the cares of the world in securing necessary supplies for himself and family. Where this duty is neglected the church robs herself of the benefits of an obedient gospel minister wholly given to the work, and suffers the consequence. The marks of christian love do not appear in such cases. The minister sees no fruit of his labor, or in other words, he feels that his services are not appreciated, and consequently his zeal is abated and if he continues to endeavor to serve those who have neglected him it is with the continual consciousness that he is laboring hopelessly and that he is not profitable to his brethren.

Thus far, I have spoken mostly of the disregard of the laws of our King on the part of private members. But with sorrow it must be confessed that there are corresponding faults on the part of the ministry. How many preachers give themselves wholly to the improvement and exercise of their gifts, as enjoined on Timothy? (I Tim. 4:6-16) You may say this would result in ruin to the minister who should attempt to wait on his ministering to the neglect of his worldly cares. If God requires continual ministerial labor of any, He will feed them even if the ravens have to bring their food. He is not an austere man. Duty rightly understood does not call any one in opposite directions, or to conflicting works. If God has called a man to devote himself to the ministry, he is to consider that duty paramount to all other claims on him; for he belongs soul and body to his Lord. But as Paul, in whom the grace of God wrought more abundantly than all the other apostles, found time and opportunity to labor with his own hands to minister to his own necessities, it is hardly probable that any other

minister of Christ will ever be too much engaged in his ministry to have the opportunity of laboring to a greater or less extent for the temporal sustenance of those dependent on him. Not compulsory, for the Lord hath ordained that they that preach the gospel shall live of the gospel; but from the exuberance of his affection for the cause of truth, the apostle was willing to labor with his own hands that he might be enabled to relieve his oppressed brethren from any of the burdens incident to the support of the gospel ministry, and herein he thought it worthy of his lofty position in the church to glory, that he made the gospel of Christ without charge. (I Cor. 9:18) The saints to whom Paul ministered were improverished by persecution, and he thought it ample reward for his arduous toil that he was enabled to serve them without charge. So at Rome it seems that he hired the house in which he preached. (Acts 28:30, 31) From the example of Paul it is plain that the principle of mutual love is the rule by which the mutual relations of pastors and churches should be regulated. The preacher who makes merchandise of his ministry runs greedily after the error of Balaam for reward; yet the church which would receive the services of a faithful minister without endeavoring to assist him to bear his burdens according to the abilities which God has given them, falls into temptation and a snare, and those who will be rich, coveting the wealth of this world, have erred (or been seduced) from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (I Tim. 6:9, 10) If the avaricious shepherd seems to care for the fleece rather than the flock, the careless or negligent flock manifesting no solicitude for the welfare of their pastor certainly show none of that christian affection which marked the true believers in the primitive age of the church.

It appears from the gospel rule, then, that it is incumbent on each member of

the church to render to every other member all the assistance in his power to enable all to bear the burdens of this life with as nearly equal weight as practicable. This duty devolves alike on official members and those in private positions, on preachers and hearers, and preachers should show themselves patterns in this, as in all other particulars. See James 2:15-17, and Titus 2:7. Yet as by the peculiar demands which pastors must attend to, they are required to devote much more labor and time to the service of the church than other members, it is enjoined on those who are taught in the word to give especial care to the relief of those who minister to them in word and doctrine.

May the Great Shepherd watch over His flock, and cast out from among them every hateful spirit and thought of selfishness, which might tend to harrass His sheep, and give to each of His children that spirit of fraternal love which will banish all jealousies and evil surmisings. May He quicken our mortal bodies to walk in obedience to His great commandment, that we may bear fruit to the praise of the glory of our heavenly Father's grace; and to His great name be unceasing thanks, is the prayer of the unworthy writer.

This communication is unsatisfactory to me, not that I have any doubts of the truth of what is expressed, but that much more should have been told in fewer words. Such as it is, however, it is submitted to the consideration of the saints. If any brother will give his views on the subject in the manner and with the ability which its importance demands. I shall be gratified; especially if he succeeds in causing the saints to "awake to righteousness" in their practical course in this matter. I hope my brother at whose instance this is written, will pardon my delay in complying with his request, and may the grace of God which is in him, enable him to use his office well, and so purchase to himself a good degree, and

great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

I beg the readers of the *Signs* to pardon the length of this letter, and remember in their prayers their unworthy brother in the joys and sorrows of the kingdom of the Redeemer.

Feb. 1, 1869

William L. Beebe

OBITUARIES

OBITUARY

Elder Ephraim C. Harrison of Rt. 4, Williamston, North Carolina was called to rest from his labors on Tuesday, July 25, 1978. Born April 20, 1901 in Martin County, he was the son of the late David and Louendie Bowen Harrison and had spent all his life in the Bear Grass Community.

Elder Harrison was a man of firm convictions, reasonable in his approach, steadfast in the declaration of the Gospel of the Son of God and uncompromising when the principles of truth and the practices of the Church were concerned. He united with the Bear Grass Primitive Baptist Church third Saturday in October 1924, and was pastor from June 1962, until his death; Clerk of the Kehukee Association from 1960 to 1968; Moderator of the Kehukee Association from 1969 until his death. He was ordained to the full work of the Gospel Ministry in 1957. A good and faithful servant, was he.

Brother Harrison was married to Maggie Wynn on July 14, 1923, and to this union seven children were born, four sons and three daughters. One son and two daughters preceded him in death. Survivors include his widow, three sons, Levi Harrison of Kinston, North Carolina, Eli D. and Billie Harrison of Route 4, Williamston, and a daughter, Miss Diana Harrison of the home.

Funeral services were held for him in the Bear Grass Primitive Baptist Church by Elder Noah L. Ambrose, Elder Joseph Leggett, Elder M. E. Garner and Elder Donald E. Smith on July 28, 1978, with interment in Martin Memorial Gardens near Everetts.

By order of Bear Grass Church while in conference, August 20, 1978.

N. L. Ambrose, Moderator
Fannie Myrtle Cowin and
Theresa R. Ayers, Committee

ELDA PHYLLIS LAWS

I want to write a few words in memory of our darling Elda Laws who departed this life on November 9, 1978 at Sparks Regional Medical Center. She suffered from Leukemia and bore intense pain with patience. Her Bible was always beside her and she was reading and discussing it when ever she could.

Elda will be missed greatly because she was one who walked about Zion considering her bulwarks, and what her hands found to do she did with all her might. In the community where she lived she will be missed as she was so helpful in sickness and any in need of help.

Funeral services were conducted in the Pleasant Hill Primitive Baptist Church with Elder Ersel Tillery officiating. Interment was in Hartford Cemetery at Hartford, Kansas.

Survivors are her husband, Mr. Roy Laws, of Mena, Arkansas; one daughter, Mrs. Susan Nobles, Emporia, Kansas; father, Mr. Ross Mark, Burlington, Kansas; and two grandchildren.

We need the prayers of all. Written by one who dearly loved her.

Lillie Ramsey

SISTER ANNIE EDMONDSON

On September 25, 1978 a dear mother in Israel was taken from our midst, Sister Annie Edmondson. Her family, the membership of Spring Green Church, her brethren of like faith, her friends, neighbors, and all that knew her mourn her absence and a void is left by her passing. Seldom in our life time has one so filled with the Grace of God passed our way. This Godliness was manifested in her walk, talk, faith, in her strength, and devotion to her church to which she was a member for sixty-two years.

She was born in Martin County, North Carolina March 30, 1895, making her stay

here 83 years. She was married to Robert H. Edmondson in 1911, who preceded her in death in 1972. To this union was born ten children. Surviving are four daughters, Miss Annie Ruth of the home, Mrs. Janie Roberson and Mrs. Magnolia Forbes of Robersonville, N.C., three sons, James of the home, Joe of Milford, Connecticut, and Roy Edmondson of Robersonville, N.C. Also left to mourn her passing, one brother, S. A. Edmondson of Hackensack, New Jersey, sixteen grandchildren and one great grandchild. Her children tenderly cared for their mother during her sickness. She had been in declining health for many years, but patiently waited upon the Lord to take her to her rest, often expressing her desire to be absent from this world and be at home with her Lord.

Funeral services were conducted at Biggs Funeral Home in Robersonville, N.C. on September 28, 1978 by Elders M. E. Garner and Joseph A. Leggett. Her body was laid to rest in the family cemetery, beneath a mound of beautiful flowers to await the morn of the resurrection.

Done by order of conference Saturday before the fourth Sunday in October, 1978.

Elder Joseph A. Leggett, Moderator
Mary J. Jenkins, Clerk

EPPA LYNN NORMAN

Brother Eppa Lynn Norman was born in Loudoun County, Virginia, April 26, 1916, the son of Charles Walter and Inez Long Norman. He died at his home near Winchester, Va. April 30, 1977.

He was a farmer most of his life. He lost a limb above the knee in a farm accident about two years before it was discovered he had cancer, which led to his passing. For several years he had been exercised with the desire to be baptized, and was received into the fellowship of Mt. Zion Old School Baptist Church in Loudoun County, Virginia, during his illness. All who knew him had much love and fellowship for him, for he was deeply taught of the Lord. He loved to attend the meetings and is greatly missed from our congregations.

He is survived by his wife, Anna Carpenter Norman and two sons, Lewis

Walter Norman of Warren County, Va. and James Lynn Norman of Frederick County, Va., and four grandchildren. Surviving also are four brothers, Walter W. Norman, Richmond, Va., I. Gregory Norman, White Hall, Va., William L. and Garland R. Norman of Herndon, Va., and two sisters, Mrs. Robert Pope and Mrs. Fred Case of Front Royal, Va.

Funeral services were held May 1st at the Jones Funeral Home, Winchester, Va. by his pastor, Elder John D. Wood, and interment was in the Leesburg Union Cemetery, Leesburg, Va.

The many friends and relatives and their flowers, testified of the high esteem in which he was held.

May the Lord give reconciling grace to his family and all who mourn his passing.

Elder John D. Wood

ABEL GLENN ROBERTS

Pleasantville Primitive Baptist Church records the passing away of our Brother in Christ, Abel Glenn Roberts, at 88 years of age.

He was a native of Rockingham County, N.C., and lived in the Bakers Cross Roads Community most of his life. He was a retired farmer. He was the son of the late Tony J. and Ida Williams Roberts. His wife, the former Ludy Comer Roberts, died in 1969.

Surviving are daughters, Mrs. Rufus Knight, with whom he made his home for many years, and Mrs. Garland Everett of Rt. 4, Reidsville, N.C.; sons, Kent W., of Durham, N.C., Jerry, of Clearwater, Fla., Rex, of Lynchburg, Va., Ralph, of Seminary, Miss., Ray, of Reidsville, N.C., who is Chief of Police; 21 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren; three brothers and one sister.

Funeral services were held at Pleasantville Primitive Baptist Church house and burial was in the cemetery there. Officiating was his pastor, Elder Haywood W. Wray.

Brother Glenn was a member for many years and always attended his meetings until the last several years, when he was not able to be out. He manifested the love and grace of our Lord in his walk of life. Though his loving spirit is gone from us we can say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ, Who giveth us the privilege of knowing His dear children and blessed be our dear Father Who calls them home to rest, to die no more."

Written by request of Pleasantville church and approved in conference on September 30, 1978.

Rachel P. Wray

SISTER SUSAN BRUMFIELD HOLLY

It pleased our Lord to remove from our midst, Sister Susan Brumfield Holly. Sister Holly was born June 24, 1884. She was the daughter of the late Ferdinand and Martha Johnson Brumfield. She was the wife of the late Charlie Lester Holly.

Sister Holly passed from this life September 13, 1978. She was laid to rest September 15, 1978 in Highland Burial Park, Danville, Va. Her funeral was preached by her pastor Elder O. K. Tench; Elders Haywood Wray and Julian Williams.

Sister Holly joined Springfield Primitive Baptist Church, June 12, 1915. She loved the church and attended faithfully as long as her health permitted.

Sister Holly is survived by four daughters, Mrs. Inez Holly, Mrs. Viola Davis, Mrs. Gladys Stegall and Mrs. Mabel Wilson. Three sons, Posey Holly, Russell T. Holly and Irvin Holly all of Danville Va. She left twenty-four grandchildren, thirty great grandchildren and four great great grandchildren.

Sister Holly will be sadly missed by all. We hope each one will be reconciled to God's will.

Written by a sister in hope.

Carol Pickral

Elder O. K. Tench, Moderator
Oscar D. Pickral, Clerk
R.F.D. #1, Box 279
Gretna, Virginia 24557

BROTHER DANIEL A. LAW

We at Chapel Church must bow in humble submission to the will of our Heavenly Father, who in His infinite wisdom saw fit to call from our midst one of our beloved members, Brother Daniel A. (Ford) Law, on

March 1, 1978.

He was born in Franklin County eighty-two years ago. He united with the church at Chapel on May 19, 1974, and was a faithful and lovely member as long as he lived. He loved the church and always welcomed the brethren into his home with a welcome and warm hand shake and a friendly smile, making them know he was glad to have them. He was a World War I veteran.

Brother Law is survived by his wife, Sister Pearl Akers Law; one foster son, Max C. Johnson of Richmond; one brother, E. E. (Dock) Law of Rocky Mount; three sisters, Mrs. Aurie Southerland of Penhook, Mrs. Elizabeth Powell, of Wirtz, Mrs. Alice Johnson of Roanoke County; and many good neighbors and friends.

We trust he is resting in peace with God our Saviour, where there will be no more sickness and sorrow, no more pain or death, and where God will wipe away all tears from our eyes. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints". We know God makes no mistakes.

His funeral was preached at Oakey's Roanoke Chapel by his pastor, Elder O. K. Tench, and was laid to rest in the Law family plot in Mountain View Cemetery to await the morning of the resurrection, when Jesus will carry His children home, where there will be peace and love forever.

Elder O. K. Tench, Moderator
Mary B. Brown, Church Clerk

DEACON ADOLPHUS PASCHAL

"Cast Down but not Destroyed" was his favorite song. Cast down but not destroyed was the evidence he bore so much of his time in this life. Cast down but not destroyed are our humble feelings and thoughts of a very dear soldier of the cross that has left the presence of a few humble poor that loved him so very much. I feel so deeply that Brother Adolphus James Paschal was cast down in this life here so many times, and I feel so sure he is not destroyed.

Our dear Pastor, Elder Clyde Kiser, as he spoke so beautifully at our dear Brother's last respects on this earth, mentioned the song, "Cast Down but not Destroyed", as being Brother Paschal's favorite song, saying it was referred to by our Little Church as "Brother Dolph's Song".

The last time he attended our meeting at New Hope, being in so much pain before the service was over, Brother Roy Somers asked him if he wanted him to take him home. His reply was for him to bring a car up close to the church door so that he might rest there and continue to hear the preaching. Yes, the gospel of salvation by the grace of God meant this to him.

The next day he was carried back to the hospital, and he passed away six weeks later. While sitting by such a stilled and seemingly unconscious body, his Pastor hummed, "Cast Down but Not Destroyed". Yet surely God works in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.

Brother Paschal was born August 31, 1900. He asked for a home in New Hope Primitive Baptist Church, Rockingham County, North Carolina, in November, 1947. He was ordained a Deacon on June 13, 1948, and died July 17, 1978.

Brother Paschal is survived by his wife, Sister Martha Knowles; four sons, Adolphus, Jr., Bill, Ronnie, and Rodger; one daughter, Rebecca P. Isley; two brothers, David and Carl Paschal; four sisters, Sister Lizzie Perdue, Sister Vesta Bobko, Sister Pattie Tate, and Shirley Brumfield.

Done by order and request of the church, and written by Sister Fannie Sue Ware.

Elder Clyde Kiser, Pastor
Sister Dixie Kiser, Clerk

**ELDER MAJOR L. SIMMONS
SADIE M. SIMMONS**

Whereas God in His infinite wisdom has called from us by death our beloved Brother and Pastor, Elder Major L. Simmons, who calmly fell asleep in Jesus on January 18, 1978, at the age of 88 years, and his wife, whose death preceded him by a few weeks, on November 27th, 1977, at the age of 89 years.

Sister Sadie was devoted to her family and made every sacrifice possible for them and the many church members and friends who visited them.

She united with the Primitive Baptist Church of Newport River on June 20, 1931, and was baptized the following day by Elder W. W. Roberts.

Brother Simmons united with the Primitive Baptist Church of Newport River on

May 31, 1913, and was baptized the following day by Elder Isaac Jones.

In 1932 the Church recognized his gift, as he was impressed to comfort others with the comfort wherewith he was comforted. On June 18, 1932, he was licensed by the Church to exercise his gift wherever his lot was cast. On June 14, 1934, he was ordained to the full work of the ministry and was a faithful minister until suffering a stroke in April of 1975. For 33 months after this until his death he was unable to preach, but did attend church a few times.

Brother Simmons became pastor of his home church after the death of Elder W. W. Roberts in 1964, and remained pastor until his death. He was also pastor of the Hadnots Creek Primitive Baptist Church from September 1934, until his passing, a total of 41 years.

Brother Simmons was faithful to the cause he so much loved and had the utmost respect of those who opposed him.

Brother Simmons and Sister Sadie were invalids during their illness of more than 2½ years, but were blessed to live at home. They had very good medical attention and through their children, friends, and nurses, excellent care until the end. But let us remember that earthly wisdom and loving care cannot stay the hand of death.

We pray that the good Lord will comfort the children and grandchildren in their loss and that His good council will follow them. We miss Brother Simmon's comforting words in the church, but desire to be reconciled to God's holy will and feel to say, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done". We know that though we walk through the Valley of the shadow of death we shall fear no evil for God will be with us. His rod and staff will comfort us; even then nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. No other is worthy of our trust.

Funeral services were conducted in the church of their membership by Elder John M. Draper, Assistant Pastor, assisted by Elder William Benton. They were laid to rest in the Amiriah Garner Cemetery to await the second coming of our Lord, when their bodies that are sown in weakness will be raised in power and see the great King in His glory, be like Him, and be satisfied.

Submitted by Ethel Mason, 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.

Route 7, Box 483

Burlington, N.C. 27215

**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 4/79
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

INCARNATION OF CHRIST
(Luke 2:8-15)

Hark! the heavenly chorus sounding
Through the vaulted, midnight sky:
Peace to mortals! love abounding!
Angels with the tidings fly.
Christ, the Saviour!
See him in a manger lie.

"Fear not, O ye favour'd shepherds;
This shall be a sign to you;
Ye shall find the babe there wrapped;
God incarnate go and view
You, in Bethlehem,
Jesus love and serve him too."

Lovely babe, dear child mysterious,
Son of David, Son of God,
Gift of gifts the best, dear Jesus,
Come to shed thy precious blood
For thy people,
Those for whom He Surety stood.

Glorious news! Our God is faithful:
Christ, the promised seed, appears:
Ancient records, how delightful!
Now revealed, forbid our fears.
Hope of Israel,
Welcome to this vale of tears.

Hell, and sin, and death, and Satan,
Thou shalt conquer, though thou die,
And shall rise, th' elect engraven
On thy heart, to reign on high.
Blessed Zion!
See thy dear Redeemer lie.

Great Messiah! Lord of glory!
All our hopes on thee depend.
Saints, repeat the joyful story,
Jesus Christ, the sinners' Friend!
Hail! dear Shiloh,
We to thee ourselves commend.

Dec. 1844

G.T.C.

SHORT DISCOURSE

BY WILLIAM HUNTINGTON

*"For he that is dead is freed from sin."**(Romans 6:7)*

The elect of God, as well as all others, are by nature dead; they are dead in sin, living without any spiritual life; and to be carnally-minded is death: they are without any affection for God, motion towards Him, delight in Him or in His service; and they are dead in law, being condemned in Adam, for judgment by one offence came upon all men to condemnation; and they are under the curse of the law, and by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

In this state the law could give us no strength to obey its precepts, and consequently it could give us no life; for all our obedience thereto is only dead works. But "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh," hath done for us. Christ was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh. "The children being partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same." And to him were our actual transgressions and inbred corruptions imputed. "He was made sin for us," and He stood charged with the whole of our sins, and was arraigned and condemned, "being numbered with the transgressors;" and, under the sentence that fell on Him, "our sins were condemned in his flesh." He dies the death of the cross, and "makes his soul an offering for sin." And "our old man is crucified with him", and we too, for we died in our Head by virtue of a preceding union with Him. "I am crucified with Christ", says Paul; I died in my Head; in Him I have died the death due to me for sin by virtue of my union with Him, and by His being cut off, not for Himself, but for me; in Him I died, in Him I suffered the law; "for if one died for all, then were all dead" when He died. And in this sense we were all dead together; the Head and all the members

in Him. But there is a voice in the promise: "Thy dead men shall live," saith God. "With my dead body shall they arise", saith the Saviour. And in our Head we all arose. "Ye are risen with Christ; God hath quickened you together with him, having forgiven all your trespasses;" His blood has purged your sins; His resurrection is a pledge of ours, and eternal life is in Him for all His members.

To let us know this, the law that cast condemned, and cursed to death the covenant Head, who was made sin for us, that law comes to us, sin revives, and we die; which is a planting us together in the likeness of His death: the Spirit directs the eye of faith to the death and atonement of Christ, and quickens us by His influence; and we rise under the operation of the Spirit of God, and are planted together in the likeness of His resurrection. Now we live no more in the old way; we are dead, buried, and risen with Christ. To the lust of men, to the lust of the flesh, to the will of men, to sin, and to the law, we live no more.

"Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." We are dead to self. "No man liveth unto himself nor dieth unto himself. Whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's." And to this end "Christ died, rose again, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living;" the Lord of those elect souls who are as yet dead in sin, and of them that are already quickened. He is dead to sin and lives no longer therein. He is dead to the law by the sentence passed on the body of Christ, and by the sentence felt in himself; and expects no life from that. And by a sweet union to Christ, and the enjoyment of it; by communion with the saints, and affection for them, "he is crucified to this world", He can find no life in the company of the dead; "and the world is crucified to him", they can find no delight, or life, in the company of one that is dead to sin and alive to God.

The old life, and all old things, are

now passed away, and all things are become new. He is born again, walks in newness of life, in a new and living way; lives by faith on the Son of God, or the risen Saviour lives in him; he has a new heart and a new spirit; he speaks with a new tongue; finds new desires and new delights; pursues a new end, and chooses new company; the form of godliness passes away, and every branch of vital godliness is entirely new to him.

And "he that is dead is freed from sin". What! from the inbeing of it? No. "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us". Are we freed from the in-dwelling of it? No. "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Is it a freedom from the oppositions, motions, and struggles of it? No. "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind." Are we free from all slips and falls into it? No. "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not." "In many things we offend in all." "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults." "For the just man falleth seven times, and riseth again." "And if thy brother sin against thee until seventy times seven, and turn again, and say, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." Are we freed from all carnal desires after evil? No. "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." "The spirit in man lusteth to envy." Are we freed from all the usurped power of sin? No. "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that do I." But are we freed from it in the house of prayer, and when engaged in God's service? No. Groundless fear and trembling are often in the pulpit, the carnal wanderings in the pew. "When I would do good evil is present with me." Is there nothing in us that serves evil? Yes. "So, then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

What is this freedom, then? Answer: The new man of grace is put on, which is

created in righteousness and true holiness; such are new creatures in Christ and complete in Him.

The old man is put off, as condemned, crucified, dead, and buried, by the sacrifice of Christ for sin; and therefore saith Paul, "It is no more I (the new man) that do it," but the old man. "It is sin that dwelleth in me", which evil I would not, which I hate, which is the source of all my misery. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened;" having a soul on the stretch for heaven, and yet clogged with corruption.

What is this freedom, then? Freedom from the reign of sin; for grace shall reign in every believer, over sin, to eternal life; but sin never shall reign in a believer over grace, to eternal death, for "the just man shall live by his faith." We are freed from sin touching the hand-writing, or debt book, that was open against us. The hand-writing is blotted out and nailed to His cross; and so are our transgressions blotted out as a cloud, and as a thick cloud our sins. Freed from the destroying power of sin, and from the imputation of it. Sin shall not be our ruin, for, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin." Freed from all liability to eternal punishment on the account of sin. "The sins of Israel shall be sought for, but there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve". Christ shall present us to Himself a glorious church, having neither spot nor wrinkle.

I am redeemed from all evil; the price of my ransom is paid; I am justified freely from all things. And who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died to expiate my crimes; and is risen again to see me justified, and to plead my cause and revenge my wrongs. I am in Christ,

and there is no condemnation to them that are in Him; I have the law of faith (by which I am to live) written on the tables of my heart, and that law of the Spirit of life in Christ has made me free from the law of sin, which is in my members, and from the law of death engraven on tables of stone.

Moreover, my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost; He has taken possession of it, and dwells in it, and is the pledge and earnest of the future inheritance, and has sealed me up to the last day of redemption; that is, the redemption of my body from the grave, which will be revealed in the last times, when Christ will be the plague of death and the destruction of the grave; when the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed, and He that only hath immortality be all in all. This is Paul's language.

Furthermore, God's promised grace is sufficient for me. When I am as a saint, an apostle, or as fruitful, "by the grace of God I am what I am," saith Paul. If my success is great in conversion, in victory, gifts, fortitude, I am not the labourer, "but the grace of God that is with me": that which changed my heart at first was "the abundance of his grace upon me."

If I stand fast, it is by faith; and I am a debtor to His grace both for my faith and my standing. Should I fall, I shall not be utterly cast down, for grace shall raise me again; should I backslide, He will heal my backslidings, and grace shall restore me. His grace is sufficient for me.

Thus am I free. If I look to the law, the hand-writing is blotted out and nailed to His cross. If I look to the book of God's remembrance, the debt is cancelled, and God will remember my sins no more. If I look to justice, it is satisfied, and God is just in forgiving me my sins, and in cleansing me from all unrighteousness. Nor is He unrighteous, to forget my works of faith and labours of love; nor will His justice forbid me the crown of righteousness when I have finished my

warfare; no, the righteous Judge will give it me in that day. If I look to Christ, I am complete in Him; if I look to God the Father, it is He that justified me; and if I look to my infirmities within, it is sin that dwelleth in me, for my soul hates evil. My will is sanctified: "I would do good"; my mind is renewed: "With the mind I myself serve the law of God". My affections are sanctified: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man". I will glory therefore in my infirmities, for they drive me from all confidence in the flesh, and make me cleave the closer to Christ, and rejoice in Him; they keep me humble, watchful, and grateful to my Saviour for so great a salvation. I have renounced all that I was, and all that I had, and have received Christ as all in me and all to me. I am a dead man in His death and in the law; and, as such, He took possession of me, and I live by Him; yet, not I, but Christ lives in me, shines out of me, speaks by me, and mightily works in me. I fill up the measure of His suffering in my flesh, and His strength is made perfect in my weakness; His wisdom is displayed in my ignorance, His beauty in my deformity, and His matchless grace in my preservation and salvation, and in the salvation of all that believe on His name. "For to me to live is Christ, (for He lives in me), and to die is gain", for Christ is the portion of my soul and my all in all. "He that is dead is freed from sin".

November, 1850

"Gospel Standard"

Among the great variety of preachers, some give the pure gospel wine, unadulterated and undashed. Others give wine and water. Some give mere cold water, without a drop of wine among it.

Toplady

A minister can only lay on the caustic; God alone can make the hearers feel it.

Toplady

Dear Editors,

"Ye must be born again". By nature we are born to pain and death - born at the appointed time and place, to the earthly parents that God chose for us before the foundation of the world. God hated Esau before the foundation of the world, but Oh! dear born again children of God, He loved Jacob before the foundation of the earth, not because he had done any good thing, or would ever do any good thing, but because he was a chosen vessel of mercy. We only have a hope that we are a chosen vessel of mercy. If not, then hell is our everlasting home. In nature we are sinful and will be until death takes us to the grave, and we do confess we are the most vile creatures that ever walked. But when the spirit of God comes down upon one of His chosen, and shows him or her, what a vile wretch they are, then they will lay in dust and ashes, till the God of all mercy lifts the burdened soul out of darkness, and gives you a hope in Jesus Christ, the one that was crucified, and our sins did crucify Him - the Lord of glory. When they cried, "Let His blood be on us and our children, and our children's children," they did not know what they were saying, or understand it till the Lord pricked them in their hearts on the day of Pentecost. Then they knew what their sins had done. They had nailed Jesus to the cross.

Now, after you are born again, you also will cry, "Oh Lord, let His blood be on us and our children and our children's children" because we do know very well that without the shedding of the blood there is no remission for sin.

Before you are born again, you are a rebel to your God. You will have everything contrary to God in your feeble mind. This is also absolutely predestinated or ordained to be this way. But by His spirit you are born again to see the Kingdom of God, not the kingdom of men. Then you are raised to newness of life, and cannot walk in the old letter,

which is the law, with a good conscience. Because if you stray back under the old law, God will surely lay the chastising rod on your back, and bring you hither again to His feet, and you shall not have any gods before Him, and Him only will you worship. This makes you desire a better country, a house not made with hands, a building that no man can touch, or build of himself, a foundation that cannot be built upon by man or woman. Because just as sure as you start works system in this building, God will throw it down. We are commanded to wait upon the Lord. The ones that you bring in will be a vessel to dishonor. I still say all this is ordained of God, because in a great house there are some to honor and some to dishonor. He has a right to make a vessel to honor and one to dishonor. They all are walking every step God has ordained them to walk. The Devil has no power of his own. He sows the tares among the wheat at God's appointed time and place, because the wicked shall do wickedly, and shall not understand, but the wise will understand.

Dear brothers and sisters, I have written this letter to you desiring not to offend in any way, but I hope I have been taught these things in the valley by God Almighty. These things are hid from the wise and the prudent, but we hope they are revealed to us little babes along the strait and narrow way.

I remain a helpless sinner and hope I have been born again to see a new Kingdom.

Pauline Spencer

Gospel ministers are usually, in will and desire at least, employed for God to the last moment of their lives. Their work being accomplished, they are called from labour to heaven; as Cincinnatus was found at the plough when he received his call to the dictatorship of Rome.

Toplady

ENJOYED BANK OF FAITH

Box 48
Duanesburg, New York
December 27, 1978

Dear Elder Smith,

I would like to go on record as one who obtained comfort and spiritual uplifting from the "Bank of Faith" series of articles printed in the *Signs of the Times*.

I could, somewhat, understand Huntington's humble beginnings, as I feel that it was only by the grace of God that I have come this far. My father died at the age of 49, when I was 17 and in the 3rd year of high school. The Lord provided a way and as I look back 43 years I can see that the Lord was a wonderful provider. Much more than I deserved. As it reads in the beginning of the 124th Psalm, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side..." Oh! we can say many times, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side". It is too wonderful for words what a wonderful God we have for we do not merit esteem or give the Creator delight, by ourselves. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13)

The Truth is the Truth, whether it is expounded by a humble converted Methodist, a previous Free Will Baptist, or "a dyed in the wool" Old School Baptist, or any other. I am told that the Lord has a people in every kindred, tribe, and tongue.

I thought Brother Gooch's article "Is there not a cause", was so fitting in the December issue. Is there not a cause?

In Second Corinthians 5:12-17 it says, "For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that

if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

You, probably, many times have heard the song, "Will the circle be unbroken"? It will not be broken because God elected Himself a people. In the 8th Chapter of Romans, starting at the 29th verse you will read of foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification.

In John Chapter 6, Verse 39, we read, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

The *Signs* came in my parents home and I have enjoyed it for many years, and I hope it is the Lord's will to keep it in print.

With Hope and trust in God,
Woodrow W. Bellinger

(We appreciate Brother Bellinger's good remarks and words of encouragement.
Editor)

SIGNS NOTICE BY D.V. SPANGLER
APPOINTMENTS

The Lord willing, Elder James Poole, one of the editors of the *Signs of the Times*, will fill the following appointments.

Laurel Ridge, near Roanoke, Va., Friday night, April the 27th, at seven o'clock p.m., Saturday at the Staunton River Union, Saturday night, April 28th, Reed Creek Church, near Bassett, Va., and Sunday, April 29th, at the Upper Country Line Union Meeting, at Dan River Church.

The Lord willing I expect to accompany Elder Poole to these appointments.

D. V. Spangler



P.O. Box 82
Coffee Springs, Alabama

Dear Elders,

On October 21, 22, and 23rd, 1978, the Clay Bank Association met in her one hundred thirty-fourth session. The Lord blessed us with an experience most wonderful and different from any thing we have had in the area before. I am copying from our Minutes a portion of the proceedings:

"Proceedings of the one hundred thirty-fourth annual session of the Clay Bank Primitive Baptist Association, being held with New Providence Church, near Kinston, Coffee County, Alabama on October 21, 22, and 23, 1978. Appointed Elder Clyde Barton, Moderator for the beginning. The Association was opened with song and prayer by Elder Collins of the Western Primitive Association. The introductory sermon was preached by Elder J. P. Morgan of the Conecuh River Association, with no special text, followed by Elder Sam Dean of the Ebenezer Association — Text Daniel 12:1-9. Dismissed one hour for lunch. The Elders and Delegates met in the house and organized in conference with song and prayer by Elder Paul Stott of the Mt. Enon Association. Invited visiting Brothers and Sisters of our faith to sit with us. Read letters from the various churches and enrolled delegates as per tabular statement. By motion; received letters, together with the bearers. (These churches were Ebenezar, Cool Springs, New Providence, New Travelers Rest, Travelers Rest, and Pleasant Ridge.)

By motion elected Elder W. A. Williams, Moderator, and Roace Bass, Clerk, with Sister Ruth Parrish, Assistant Clerk for this session. The Moderator then called for petitionary letters. Elder Williams made a statement about the letters. By motion received the churches together with the Delegates. The churches are: Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Carmel, Bethany, Paran, Bethel, and Gethsemane. By motion

extend the right hand of fellowship to all who came by petitionary letter. We are now in direct correspondence with the following Associations: Ebenezer, Conecuh River, Western Primitive, Mt. Enon, and Yellow River."

Our hearts are overflowing with joy and with that sweet peace that passeth all understanding. For this cause we humbly bow before the Throne of God's mercy and as much as in us we endeavor to thank Him for His goodness towards us and for His marvelous grace.

Yours in Hope,
William A. Williams

January 4, 1979

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?" Matthew 21:42.

That stone, which is Christ, the only true church, never has fit in with the rest of the stones. The builders, (those who put their dependence in their own works of the flesh) cannot use it. It is in the way. It will not fit into any opening that they have prepared. It's shape is wrong, so they reject it. But God, who prepared the stone in the first place, puts it where it belongs, as the head of the corner. It is the only stone that will stand, it will be there when the rest have fallen. This is truly marvelous in our eyes.

This stone has always been a stumblingblock in this perverse and alien world we live in. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence." (I Cor. 1:27-29.)

It is only through him, that we are in Christ Jesus, who of God is make unto

us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: "That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let his glory in the Lord." (I Cor. 1:31)

A sister in hope
Lois L. Cottrell
Route 3, Box 15-A
Hurricane, W. Va. 25526

The Arminians think, that in conversion God does little or nothing for men, but gives them a pull by the elbow, to awake them from their sleep. Rather, He acts as maritime officers do by their sailors; He cuts down the hammock or carnal security in which the elect are; down they fall, and the bruises and surprise they receive awaken them from their death in sin, and bring them to themselves whether they will or not.

Toplady

213 Virginia St.
Minden, LA 71055

Elder Poole:

It is with a felt sense of unworthiness that I attempt to write the *Signs*. If the Lord blesses me, I would like to make a few comments on the eighth and ninth verses of the First Chapter of Job.

In the eighth verse God asks Satan to consider my friend Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil.

In the ninth verse Satan asks God, "Doth Job fear God for naught?" This verse seems to me to involve all the difference between the two Peoples set forth in the scriptures as the elect and the non elect. Those that serve God or serve self. Those that are obedient unto death or those that are obedient for reward. Those that possess true religion or the ones that have worldly religion.

All who profess religion, whether true or worldly, are on one side of this question or on the other. One has Christ

in him the hope of glory, the other the spirit of this world with a hope for gain.

Worldly religion looks at this question the same as Satan. They do not serve or fear God for naught, but in hope of reward. In exchange for their service or fear, they expect something in return. Theirs is a selfish motive, for selfish reasons, not because of love or any such thing. Always expecting to get the better of the exchange.

Not so with the child of God. With these their actions are because of the reward, not to obtain the reward. Their virtue or goodness is because of the Spirit within them. Their obedience is because of love. This Spirit and love causes them to follow after holiness even without the fear of hell or the hope of heaven, but from the sincere desire for good.

All else is self seeking, self glorifying, self rewarding. All such things are hateful in the eyes of God and as far from the truth as the east is from the west.

After Job had been stripped of all he possessed, he was blessed to say, the Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. The same is true with the child of God. No matter what kind of circumstance he finds himself in, whether trials and afflictions, or joy and thanksgiving, because the Lord doeth it, it is marvelous in our eyes. Nothing less will satisfy the child of God.

Thus it is so, that in pure religion, the Spirit causes us to walk in unselfish obedience, in a way that at one time we knew not, with a desire for that which is good, that at one time was completely alien to us.

Therefore Job did not fear God for naught. Brethren consider, doth thou fear God for naught? Job's was not a legal or law service but of God given faith with love as the moving force. Job was given true freedom, freedom from unselfish motives, freedom of heart which loves and seeks after God. May this be our happy lot.

Brother Poole, it was good to meet and talk with you at Dallas. I am looking forward to seeing you again.

If these few comments are agreeable to you, you are welcome to use them. If not discard them.

Remember me in your prayers.

Elder G. R. Smith

Old Adam never was a saint yet, and never will be; (Rom. 7). On the other hand, the new man, or principle of grace in the heart, never sinned, and never can. (Rom. 7, I John.)

Toplady

I have just read this sentence: "God has promised to bless His people when they obey Him." My own experience concerning this subject is that the Lord's blessing causes the obedience, and so I think every child of God feels to thank the Lord that he has obeyed the sweet commands of Jesus. He does not feel that he is entitled to the credit and praise of it, but humbly thanks the Lord that he has been given the spirit of obedience. He does not say, "I went in paths of righteousness", but, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake". We must have grace in order to serve God acceptably. It is not grace because of our good works, but good works because of grace; it is not the blessing of the Lord because of our obedience, but obedience because of the Lord's blessing. The disobedient child of God will feel that he is altogether to blame for his evil walk, and that his punishment is well deserved; but when he is restored, and is walking again in obedience, he will not, cannot claim any of the credit for his return to paths of obedience; he will say with Naomi: "I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty". His going away was all of and by himself, but his coming back was all of and by the Lord.

Fragments

Silas H. Durand

THOU ART STRONGER THAN I, AND HAST PREVAILED

Dear Friend,—Yours I have received, and have read it with pleasure and profit, proving the same ins and outs, ups and downs, more than ever I did before in all my life; which brings me to praise sovereign, electing, discriminating grace more than ever.

"O, to grace, how great a debtor

Daily I'm constrain'd to be!

Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,

Bind my wandering heart to thee."

My greatest trouble is my wretched departings, backslidings, and wanderings from my covenant God and Father, who has been with me in so many storms, held me up under so many sinkings, supplied me so richly, so freely, so abundantly in all my needs and necessities, and delivered me out of so many great and sore troubles. Bless His dear Name, He has been very good, very merciful, very kind, very tender, and very faithful; for not one good thing has ever failed that He has promised me; all have come to pass; yea, I say, not one good thing has ever failed.

It grieves me, my friend, to find and feel such a host of devils in my heart pouring all manner of insults upon my God and Saviour, which makes my very soul heave up with groans of sorrow. "My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness." "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?" O the sad pangs it brings me to feel that, after all His loving kindness which He has caused to pass before me, in the way, going hard upon fifty years, when He has never once failed me, but has ever been a very present help in all my troubles. O, my friend, this is grief, this is real trouble, to see and feel how I am abusing and sinning against so compassionate, so tender a Father; a dear Friend that has ever stuck closer than a brother; a dear Saviour that has ever saved me out of all the pits, gins, snares, and prison-houses that ever I have been

in to this present moment, and has very many times assured me that He will be with me even unto the end, and has given me many sweet hopes that when my little work is done here upon earth I shall be with Him in glory; and yet at times to feel so carnal, so worldly, so peevish, so proud, so lifeless, so stupid, so filthy, so devilish! My friend, I stand astonished, and cry out,

“Can ever God dwell here?”

Can ever a Christian feel like this?—a precious Bible to read, without a heart to read it; a precious throne of grace to approach unto, without a heart to draw near to it; a comfortable house to dwell in, a good bed to lie down in at night, food and clothing, the use of my natural faculties, a measure of health and strength, and yet no heart to bless God for one of them! O, my friend, it is grievous to me to see and feel how basely I reward my God for all His kindness! I do indeed sometimes fear that He never can bear with me long. I have verily many times looked and expected His judgments to come and rid the earth of such a lump of nuisance at a stroke; but, instead of this, He has come with love in His heart, tenderness in His eyes, mercy and kindness on His tongue, and proclaimed with much power in my soul, “Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.” My dear friend, such a sudden burst of His glory, full of loving kindness, mercy, and grace to such a filthy, hell-deserving wretch, who has looked for, and expected nothing but wrath and frowns, has so astonished, amazed, humbled, shamed, and broken to pieces my soul, that I have cried out, “Who is a God like unto our God, that

pardoneth iniquity, transgressions, and sins, for His name’s sake?” O! I have not known where to hide my blushing, shame-covered countenance, to see how I have abused Him, and to feel how He loves me; to see and feel how I have departed from Him, and to see and feel how close and fast He sticks to me; to see and feel my unfaithfulness to Him, and to see and feel His faithfulness unto me! Can I help loving Him, adoring Him, thanking Him, praising Him? No, I cannot, I must not, I will not; for if such a worm were to hold his peace at such seasons, the very stones would cry out. I must sing out, “The Lord has done great things for me, whereof I am glad. I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living”.

O what pleasure and delight to be here! Here is a large room indeed, where there is plenty of space to walk, to dance, yea, and to fly in, without any weariness, stupidity, bondage, or guilt of soul. And is this but a drop of that heavenly joy and peace in our Father’s house above, where our souls hope to arrive? What must the fountain be? If my poor soul land safely in that heavenly kingdom, I shall know all about it; but the drops are so rich, full, and glorious, that it beggars both tongue and pen to describe it. The apostle says, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is;” and my soul can say with David, (and so can yours,) “Then shall I be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness”.

I shall conclude my poor, weak scrawl with my soul’s desire towards you, that you and I may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,

being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; that we may be strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering; with joyfulness giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. That God may grant that this may be the happy lot of you and me, is the prayer of

Your worthless, unworthy brother
for the truth's sake,
Trowbridge, June 14, 1844 J. W.

The Gospel ministers do, indeed, in some sense, turn the world upside-down. The fall of Adam has turned human nature upside-down long ago; and converting grace must turn us upside-down again, in order to bring us right.

Toplady

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EDITORIAL

"And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel; they are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. 11:26-29)

The way the apostle lays this down to the children of God is certainly good news to those thus addressed. In fact, this is the center, the nucleus, of the gospel. Ancient tribes enjoyed this promise, ancient scribes found it filled with nutritious substance as they heralded the coming of Immanuel. If this has a hidden or a double meaning to the Jews as a nation, well and good; if it only has a meaning as reaching all of the spiritually born children of God, good, and very good it is indeed; for it reaches all those under consideration.

The saving under consideration is to all Israel, and it is to come about through the merits of the Deliverer, who is to come out of Zion. As for agitators, skeptics, critics, disturbers of God's poor and afflicted people, I leave them to their own, but I do hope that I write to all of the poor wayfaring children of God everywhere. If called and qualified and sent of God, then I begin what I have to say as gospel news. All of them will be saved, and this salvation is all from first to last to come to this Israelite nation as a free gift from God. I do not believe that a minister of Jesus Christ sits in some high and exalted seat (who, the most of the time so sits only in his own estimation), studying smart things to say, but that his plea is that the Lord would bless him to know nothing among his brethren save to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and he to be made to realize that he is a poor unworthy servant of Jesus Christ. This Deliverer was, and is, God. God sent Him, and this

God is full of grace and truth, and fills us, and delivers us, world without end.

How true it is that not the first one of Jacob's brethren are a contributing factor in this Deliverer turning ungodliness away from them. They do not know God, let alone know godliness. Before ungodliness is turned away from any of them, they have already had godliness applied to them. The work is accomplished before they can know to start. In fact, any start that they make is the wrong one, for they know not God, as they knew not the Saviour. The first aspiration after godliness is a sure sign that ungodliness has already been turned from them. That is the first indication that His covenant with His people is being made manifest. Up until this revelation is made to them, the law had them under bondage, under corruption, under slavery and bondage to sin. They have labored and struggled under a covenant of works until they know not what to do. (Acts 2:17; 16:30) When mankind gets to the place that he does not know what to do (to say nothing about doing anything to be saved) he is then and there in a helpless condition. All of Israel did not know what to do about anything, and certainly if they do not know what to do about anything, then the only thing that will ever turn ungodliness away from them is to show them what it will do for them, and then show to them the all important matter that only this Deliverer can save them. If they are taught this by God, he and she then know that the covenant of works is a failure from beginning to end and if a failure all of the way, then they learn for the first time that salvation must come from a covenant based on better things than Moses' law or covenant can ever do for them. What a miracle when poor sinners are taught that they do not know what to do, nor what it is that they must be saved from. Here now, in this astounding revelation the text takes on added beauty and deliverance. They

have found no deliverance, not even any hope of it, but they have had the denunciation of God against sin, and its sentence has been so austere that they could see nothing for them save the avenging wrath of God being poured out upon them with all of His power. Behold what a miserable, dejected creature is this. No hope for mercy can he or she find by searching. The inflexible vengeance of God; yes, it is seen, it is felt, but mercy for such a character - never. But let us pause for a moment. Let us wait, for it is certainly encouragement for troubled hearts.

There is a pleasant sound coming from over the lea (pasture). A description of these is given. "They are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For "(now let us mark that word well)," the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." No, No, dear heavy laden sinner, there is no dis-annulling of His covenant of redemption. The promise of God is as new today as it was to our ancient brethren when God appeared to them in the long ago. It makes glad the heart of burdened souls today, as it eased the aching hearts of ancient Israel; as it did our brethren when He took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. This kind of comfort comes only from Israel's God. It can only come from a being like unto Him, and only a poor ruined sinner ever will find any rest and comfort and consolation, as did Job. It has been said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation". In fact, this is the only way by which objects of our text ever enter the kingdom (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; II Cor. 4:17), and this fitted the description of Job. What a picture of God-given faith. As it was with the suffering woman to make her whole, and as it was with the poor woman who kissed the Saviour's feet, and it saved her (Mat. 9:22; Luke 7:50) even so does God-given faith save those today, and as living water flowed backward to the hinder sea, even so the

cleansing water of life giving faith enabled Job to say, "Even though He slay me, yet will I trust Him". (Job 13:15)

As it was in the times of the Saviour and the apostles, so it is now, and since God is unchangeable in all of His ways, it will continue to the end of time. The world did not know us in His time, and it does not know us in our time. The reason for this was not because of a reason based on the conduct of Him or His people. The reason was that they did not know Him. What a change there would have been had the world known Him. The woman at the well would have fell prone at His feet in holy worship had she known Him; Herod would have sought Him that he might lay all of his kingdom's wealth down in service to Him and His kingdom, and you and I, if we had known Him, would have followed Him to Gethsemane. Even so today, could we know Him all of the time, as we some of the time hope that we know Him, we would not be arrayed in persecution against Him and His dear people. Ah, how cruel and unforgiving we are of our weak neighbors and friends, and brethren, because that they do not all line up and follow Him as we do. Yet, we know (if we do know) that we follow Him if we do, because we have been commanded to lay down everything that we are striving for, and everything that we have, and follow Him, and that one of the fundamental tenets of what we profess to believe is that God effectually calls His people. People do not follow Him because He has not been revealed to them, and they have not been called to follow Him. The reason that we follow Him (if we do) is because He has been revealed to us as our Saviour. Thus one of the families of the earth know Him, and knowing Him by revelation, they love Him. The other family of the earth does not know Him.

It is certain that if we know him (thus loving Him) that we love and cherish His doctrine. If we do not love Him, we thus do not love His doctrine. John tells

us, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not". (I John 3:1) "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before that it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you". (John 16:18-19) The hatred of the world for the Old Baptist people, as well as the hatred of the brethren for one another, is because of the discriminating love of God that has been bestowed upon this one, and the others left out. In our preaching and our writing, that is, if it is wrought in us by the power of the Holy Ghost, it is going to arouse hatred, malice, jealousy. It is not a mark of God's displeasure against us, but it is a mark of His love, even His discriminating love. Any time a people is chosen to show forth His praise, those not thus chosen will hate that people; any time one poor wayworn subject of grace is blessed to go to a place or to pastor a church, or is chosen and sent where others aspired (in the flesh) for that favor, hatred is displayed. This is not because that the one thus favored is hated because of his earthly conduct but because of God's favor toward that people or that individual.

If we have travelled in the kingdom of God's dear Son, it has been a varied journey. We boldly ascended Sinai, having already freely said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do". (Ex. 19:8) If people could read, they would never refer to what they had the ability to do again. This shows that their eyes are blinded and that they can not read. What a debauchery was enacted on Sinai! What blasphemy, that in the midst of it a sinaitic bound crew of law worshippers today are still saying, "Let us hasten there and do what is commanded and thus become acquainted with God". Thanks be unto God that we

have been, as we humbly hope, delivered from Mt. Sinai, and have been blessed with a hope that we have journeyed to Mt. Zion, the city of the living God.

As we look over the beautiful situation (Psa. 48:2) our hearts are made to leap for joy unspeakable and our lips are filled with praise as we hear it sounded throughout the abode of the family of God that every gift given to His children is sure to the whole relationship and each of these gifts are in no way dependent on the whim or fancy of any created thing. These gifts are given us in Christ Jesus our Lord. When I was in school a great many years ago, I joined my schoolmates in singing, "Count your many blessings, Name them one by one. Count your many blessings, see what God hath done". I did not know anything about such sacred matters then, and often doubt that I do now. But today our song is the truth, and today it means everything that is worthwhile to me. In taking a look or an inventory of what He has done, I think the most meaningful gift of God is the bestowal of eternal life on poor sinful wretches. Let men pout and allegorize and satirize the precious and comforting doctrine of grace to their let, it still is the truth that the gift of God can never, no never at all, be repented of giving, or a change made in the gift in any way either by precept or by degree or those appointed for it. This cannot be said of what the Holy One determined to do. He is the only Constant One that can be in any government. He is of one mind and who can turn Him? And no created being can challenge the question. Thus no created being having ever challenged Him, the text still stands. It was this Holy One who moved Job to issue the divine message to poor storm-tossed little children that their Maker is their Husband and that He has given to each of them what His soul desires for His subjects to have here in this world and in the world to come. He has not, and He will not, and He cannot, repent of

having given these things to them.

God inscribed the names of each son of God in the Book of Life, and this Holy One gave them Himself, and He gave His Son to them, and there is no way for one name to be erased from that Book of Life, and there is no way for one to be added to the list. He was satisfied at the time (the time was in eternity) with the names written therein, and He was satisfied with the names left out of the Book, for (call it what you may) the names of each one, both elect and non-elect, were known and determined. Verily, the gifts and the callings of God are without repentance.

Poor tried and afflicted saint, draw near; let us come together in praise to our Almighty Friend. He has wrought all things after the counsel of His own will. Can a doubt ever be cast on the fact that the gifts and callings of God will ever be repented of? This doctrine as declared by Paul in Eph. 1:11, is all to the point. In order for God to give what He pleased, to whom He pleased, it is of necessity, that he do just that; no more and certainly no less. His saying so would not be enough to encourage and comfort them unless He did do just that. If He does not work all things after the counsel of His own will (in all things) then His declaration that His gifts are not to be repented of falls even before it is executed. Everything included in the declaration is freely given (not reluctantly given) and unconditionally given.

As we sum up the beauties of the text, let us not forget that He has given us all things. He did not spare His Son, but He did spare us all. He took away the life of His Son, even leaving Him forsaken in the midst of the enemies of both God and man (the Man), and gives us now all things, and with the all things He gives us the guiding presence of Jesus Christ our Redeemer God. These gifts are all good gifts. And remember, dear saint, that He will not withhold anything from them that walk upright, that is, that

walk in Christ, Who is our uprightness. The text grows--may those that sit in solitude and that seldom see a well day, those who are often tossed about by the wiles of Satan, those that a few more rolling suns at most will bring an end to ill health, false brethren, walking in darkness, fearing that they have no light, and He that gave them a sweet and abiding hope in the Lord, will break forth in a refulgent endless morning and shall enter into the joy of the Lord. To those that were given to Him, and that He was given them, which gift shall never be repented of, they shall welcome the soundings of Heaven's comforting voice, "Come ye blessed (who blessed them?) of the Lord, enter into the joy of the Lord and into the kingdom not made with hands, but freely given to you before the world had a beginning, and everything ordered in all things and sure to the end that the appointment of you to better things was not in jeopardy, made with regret, nor in repentance, nor was heaven moaning with regret that He whose abode is in Zion had made a mistake". May God be praised.

(Elder) W. D. Griffin

"Get grace - get faith - get an interest in Christ," say the Arminians. When, in truth, grace is not of man's getting, but of God's giving; nor is faith of man's acquisition, but of God's operation.

Toplady

Gifts may differ; but grace, as such, is the same in all God's people. Just as some pieces of money are of gold, some of silver, others of copper; but they all agree in bearing the king's image and inscription.

Toplady

Ministers then only draw the bow successfully, when God's Holy Spirit sharpens the gospel arrow, and wings it to the hearts of them that hear.

Toplady

June 23, 1903

Who is it that follows Christ? What is the path in which He went? How can one follow Him? His was a path of suffering, of shame, and of reproach. He had not where to lay His head. "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," and yet was most deeply and sorely afflicted on account of sin--the sin of others. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men". He was feeble and sore broken. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief". He was finally crucified. And He said, "Except a man deny himself, take up his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple". One decides to follow Christ, sets out to do so, as he thinks, and complacently regards himself as a disciple, a Christian, and yet has never seen Christ, and knows nothing of the path of suffering and self-denial in which He went during all His life. How many such professed followers of Jesus there are in the world, proud, self-confident, self-satisfied, to whom the suffering Jesus is a stranger, and who would be His revilers if He were here in the flesh.

Another feels a desire to follow Jesus, and sets out to do so, but cannot find the way. Again and again he tries, but seeks in vain for the way. He cannot get away from the path of sin, for he finds that he is all sin. Sin has a hold upon him, and the law is the strength of sin, so that he cannot get away. He cannot get into the path of holiness, for he is all unholy. He finds his strength is weakness, his wisdom foolishness, and his righteousness filthy rags. Finally he gives up, and feels that he must be lost--that he is already lost, and justly, too. He can find no foundation in himself upon which to rest a hope, and nothing in the world upon which he can rely.

Now, just when he has become entirely discouraged in his efforts to follow Jesus, when he has lost all hope

that he can ever come near to the holy One, he is upon the right road. How strange such an assertion would seem to him at such a time. Nevertheless it is true. He is now following Him who went down to the depths of suffering on account of our sins, Who was bruised for our iniquities. The fear of the Lord, which has been put into his heart, and which "is to hate evil", has made him hate himself, and hunger after righteousness. He sinks down, as Jesus sank down, in deep waters of affliction, and as he follows Him into the depths, so he rises with Him to walk in newness of life. As he still follows Him in suffering in the flesh, so he shall follow him in the joys of His kingdom.

The following of Jesus is all by faith, whether it be following Him in sorrow or in joy; in feeling the waves and billows of the Lord go over us, or in feeling the sweet, mysterious power of His resurrection; in receiving the reproaches of the world, or in feeling the answer of a good conscience and the testimonies of the Lord that we please Him; all is by faith. And in all our works in the church, in obeying the commands of Jesus, and in all our self-denial and bearing the cross, and in our experience of the suffering of Christ abounding in us, and of our consolation also abounding by Christ; in all of this we are followers of Him only by faith; "for we walk by faith and not by sight". Therefore, so far as we do follow Jesus we are faithful followers of Him.

Fragments

Silas H. Durand

BLACK CREEK UNION

The next session of the Black Creek Union will be held, the Lord willing, with the church at Aycock's the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in April, 1979.

All lovers of the truth are invited to come and worship with us.

Harold Pittman, Clerk

Box 4524

Rocky Mount, N.C. 27801

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

THE NEW BIRTH

When Jesus said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," he gave a name to a hitherto nameless fact. The doctrine of the new birth as announced by Christ and developed in the New Testament Scriptures, was a novel doctrine at that age of the world, and remains a novelty yet. The fact of the new birth, as exemplified in the experience of God's people, is as old and as universal as man himself; but the doctrine had never been named before. The new birth is not stated in the Old Testament, although the effects of it are clearly manifest in the experience of patriarchs, prophets, priests and kings, and many in the humbler walks of life, among both Jews and Gentiles. It is not mentioned in any religious writings, either Jewish or Pagan, before the New Testament. The ancient epics of India, the ethical codes of China, the complicated systems of Egypt, the fanciful philosophy and poetry of Greece, the gorgeous ceremonials and mystic rituals of ancient Mexico and Peru, are all silent upon this doctrine. It came from the lips of Jesus a novelty, an original doctrine, a new name for a hitherto nameless truth, a golden key to unlock the rich mines of Christian experience so long closed by human ignorance, so completely covered by ceremonials, and so deeply buried in tradition, a lamp by which the wonderful works of God in the children of men was to be more clearly understood, the exceeding greatness of his power to usward more fully known, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints more fully beheld.

The novelty of the doctrine is one of the clearest proofs of the divinity of the great Teacher who was the first to announce it. The most gifted prophet,

the most highly favored priest, the great law giver, Moses, nor even the favorite Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, had never been blessed to discover this truth or honored with the commission to announce it to men. Thus the novelty of the doctrine gives weight and prominence to its

IMPORT

“Ye must be born again” is the initial statement of the doctrine of Christ, and constitutes the fundamental difference between Christianity and all religions. Take away the necessity of the new birth and Christianity will take its place on the common plane of all other religions, and will be robbed of that which alone entitles it to the distinction of divinity, and will be degraded to a mere system of ethics, a naked code of morals, or to empty, meaningless and vain ceremonials. The fundamental idea in all other religions is man’s ability to reform himself into newness of life, based upon the alike false idea of the universal fatherhood of God. The last of these, the universal fatherhood of God, gave birth to the World’s Congress of Religions in Chicago; and the first, man’s ability to save himself, formed the basis of every system presented, whether by Buddhist, or Brahmin, Mohammedan or Morman, Catholic or Protestant. Hence all of them are loud in their cry for reformation; and the only difference to be found among them is the name and manner in which the end is to be reached.

The superficial notion of religion is deeply fastened upon all men; but it seems that modern Protestantism has a double portion of it. The Jews, in the time of Christ, were extremely zealous for vain traditions, empty formality and hypocritical appearance. They thought that drinking wine and eating with unwashed hands polluted and defiled a man. But the Saviour condemned their foolish traditions by the simple axiom, “It is not that that goeth into a man that

defileth him, but that cometh out.” It is from the heart that evil thoughts, thefts, murders, and all other wickedness, proceed, Evil thoughts are not in the wine a man drinks. Bad conduct does not come from the food taken with unwashed hands. A man steals because he is a thief; a man kills because he is a murderer, or lies because he is a liar. The theft is in the heart before the hand is put forth to steal; the murder is in the heart before the hand is stained with blood; the lie is in heart before it rises to the tongue or is coined by the lips. The tree bears fruit after its kind. Cultivating the tree can never change the kind of fruit; the only effects of cultivation are seen in the quality and quantity of the fruit. Can a thorn tree ever be made to produce grapes, or a thistle to bring forth figs?

Men are carried away with the notion that through religious instruction, training and favorable opportunities, children or men are made Christians; that men enter the kingdom of God through teaching and moral suasion. Agrippa had this idea when he said to Paul, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian,” and Nicodemus betrayed the same weakness when he said to Christ, “We know that thou art a teacher come from God.” But the answer of Jesus covered the whole ground, when he said, “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” This is as much as to say, “Why, Nicodemus, this is not a mere matter of teaching; there is something vastly deeper; a man must be born again.” A man does not have to be born again in order to be religious; he may be infatuated with religion, and be a zealous devotee to creed and ritual; he may be taught to observe most rigidly forms and ceremonies, and to subject himself to the strictest discipline; to mutilate his body and deprive himself of all earthly comforts; to yield perpetual obedience to priestcraft; to pray three times a day and give

tithes of all he possesses; take up the sword in defence of his religion, or lay down his life in testimony of his zeal; but except he be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. A man must be born again in order to receive Christ, or embrace his doctrine in truth and reality. The import of the doctrine leads us to consider its

NECESSITY

“Ye must be born again” is not a mere dogma of theology, but a necessity, arising from deep fundamental, basal principles of biology; hence we shall first consider the biological necessity. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” The term flesh, here, is generic, and is used in the Scriptures to designate man as a whole, and comprehends him with all his attributes, all his powers, parts and capacities, including body, soul and spirit in their mysterious combination in constituting human personality. It is equivalent to saying, That which is born of man is man.

Men by nature are dead in trespasses and sins. This death is not merely a moral or ethical condition, but a condition extending far beyond the moral or ethical sphere. It is a biological condition. Take this illustration: Science divides this world into two great kingdoms, the organic and inorganic, or in equivalent terms, the dead and the living. The stone belongs to the inorganic or dead kingdom, the plant to the organic or living kingdom. The difference between the stone and the plant is a biological difference. Again, the organic kingdom manifests different orders of life: animal and vegetable life.

The difference between the animal and the tree is a biological difference. They belong to different orders of life. Now, just as the animal life is of a higher order than vegetable life, so Christ life is of a higher order than Adamic or natural life. And just as the tree, although alive in its own order, is dead

to the presence and voice of the bird that sings among its branches, so is man, although alive to all within his environment, dead to the things of the Spirit of God. This truth, although most persistently disputed, most vehemently opposed and wickedly ridiculed, by professors of Christianity, is legibly and indelibly written in the stones and in the trees, in the earth and in the sky, and in the experience of millions of human hearts. Man, then, is cut off from the kingdom of God by the deep, mysterious, impassible gulf that separates the non-living from the living, the organic from the inorganic, the natural from the spiritual. As man enters this world by birth, just so he enters the kingdom of God by birth; and as his birth into the world was contingent upon things entirely outside of himself, so his birth into the kingdom of God is contingent upon things entirely outside of himself. This birth is “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;” so says the Scripture. Except a man be born he cannot see the world, is a fact which none can deny, and which none would ever think of denying. But how few of all who have read it acquiesce so readily in the conclusive truth of its analogous expression, “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

We turn now from the biological to the experimental necessity of this birth. Children may be most carefully trained from their youth in the name of Christ and in the precepts of the Scripture and religious observances, but except they be born again they have no more knowledge of Christ than if they had never heard his name.

This birth is the beginning of the Christian experience, and all that is ever seen, felt, heard and known of grace in this world, or glory in the world to come, is but the development of the life imparted in this birth. All knowledge of Christ is vital or experimental knowledge; this includes all knowledge of the

need of Christ. I once thought that the time when the child of grace received his hope and experienced deliverance, was when he was born again; but I have come to a different conclusion. Who can remember when he was born naturally? Let the mind run back to childhood, to our earliest recollections, even to the very borders of infancy; but our birth was prior to that. All things fade from our memory, and we are lost in a sea of oblivion, and still the time of our birth is not reached. We grew into the domain of memory, passing through a long stage of which we know nothing at all. Think back over your experience; you came to many Ebenezers, to many milestones and memorable places; you approach the time when hope came to you, a helpless sinner; but the birth was before this. You pass on to the time when you first realized that you were a sinner indeed; but the birth was before this, and this was only the result of it. How long before you felt the first movements of soul I cannot tell, but it was before. Those who place their birth upon conditions to be complied with by those receiving it, have never seen the necessity of it. If a man can repent of his sins and believe in Jesus before he is born again, then the Scriptures are not true. This notion of religion puts the cart before the horse, puts the fruit before the tree, the effect before the cause. Without this birth sin would never be hated and holiness would never be loved, poverty of spirit would never be felt, and the riches of Christ would never be prized; none would ever hunger and thirst after righteousness, and the bread which came down from heaven would never be desired; the fountain of living waters would never be sought, there would be none to love the truth, and faith would not be found on the earth; the wilderness would never blossom as the rose, and the parched ground would never become a pool; the name of God would be but an empty sound, and his existence a mere matter of speculation, and all worship

would be but dry formality and empty mockery.

EFFECTS

The person affected by the new birth is the Adamic sinner. This needs no argument, for there is no other personality on earth, and personalities in heaven do not need it. The immediate effects make up what is called Christian experience, and belong to time; the ultimate effect is to awake in the likeness of Christ, and is realized in the resurrection. The effects are evidences to us that we have been born again. Let us now examine ourselves, and prove ourselves, and see whether we are indeed what we profess to be, or only graceless hypocrites, carnal professors, who have never known the love of Christ or the power of his resurrection. The most momentous question ever propounded to an exercised heart is, Have I been born again? And when we begin to examine ourselves, the evidence that the carnal mind seeks is not found within us; but we are full of things that our traditional notions of religion record against us. The carnal mind is not eligible either to sit as judge or to testify as witness in the trial of a Christian, because it is enmity against God, and cannot be subject to his law.

One of the best evidences that any one has ever had that he is born again is that he is personally concerned about his own case. The man who thinks that salvation is by works is never concerned about the new birth; but the heart upon which the import and necessity of being born again have been impressed, is bound to be personally concerned in the matter; but the import and necessity of the birth are only communicated through the birth itself. Let us begin the examination with a question. Do you know that you are a Christian? Every exercised heart answers at once, I do not know that I am a Christian. Do you know that you are a sinner? O yes, I know that I am a sinner. Do you know

that you are saved? O no, I do not know that I am saved. Do you know how a sinner is saved? O yes; a sinner must be saved by grace. How did you find that out? Everybody does not know that. If you know that salvation is by grace, rest assured that you are saved, for that knowledge comes only by experience. None of the princes of this world know that. Human wisdom has never made that discovery. Those who have this knowledge are in possession of that hidden wisdom which God before the world ordained to our glory.

The knowledge of sin is one of the brightest evidences that you will ever have that you have passed from death unto life. Permanent, incorrigible, inherent sinfulness has always been acknowledged by holy men. David said, "I am a worm, and no man," Isaiah confessed that he was a man of unclean lips, and Paul exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" There was a time in the experience of many of us, perhaps, when we thought that we would never know sin nor sorrow again, but that we would live in the comfortable peace of that sweet deliverance all the rest of our days. But when we began to feel again the power of sin in our members, we sank into a sea of doubts and fears, and disappointment bordering on despair. We thought that one who is born again is free from the motions of sin; and when we found that sin still remained in us, we concluded that we were still in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity. But we have learned many lessons since that time, and are still learning. We have learned that in the flesh we are ignorant, sinful creatures, no better now than at the first dawn of our hope. I think these lines of Newton express the experience of us all:

"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.

"I hoped that is some favored hour
At once he'd answer my request,
And by his love's constraining power
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

"Instead of this he made me feel
The hidden evil of my heart,
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

"Yea, more, with his own hand he seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe,
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this? I tremblingly cried;
Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?
'Tis in the way, the Lord replied,
I answer prayer for grace and faith.

"These inward trials I employ,
From self and pride to set thee free,
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may'st seek thine all in me."

— Newton

Men in nature have most strenuously assailed the doctrine of total, innate, inherent depravity, and have long devised and proclaimed their lying, deceptive and seductive argument against it; but God will make his people know the truthfulness of it by a daily experience of their own sinfulness. A vital knowledge of sin puts to flight every traditional theory of human ability or Adamic purity, and fastens upon the conscience a pungent conviction that man is a sinner, from the cradle to the grave, with no part or capacity reserved. It is not the Christian's burden that he only sins by word and deed, but his thoughts are unclean, and above all he discovers lurking like a serpent in the deep recesses of his heart the love of sinful things. This almost drives him to despair, and makes him hate his own life, and trust nothing but the blood and righteousness of the adorable Redeemer.

How prone we are to take comfort in the thoughts of our own hearts, or the state of our own feelings, and to look within ourselves for something good to build our hope upon. How often do we

say, "O! if I could only see myself as I desire to see myself, I would have some hope that I am a Christian." If you could always see yourself just as you would like to be, would you ever deny yourself? And if you should never deny yourself could you ever be the disciple of Jesus? Did he not say, "If any man will be my disciple let him deny himself?" When Jesus said, "Let him deny himself," denial of self must follow. God said, "Let there be light," and light was. He also said, "Let the earth bring forth," and it was so. Have you not yet been able to translate those feelings of unworthiness that fill your soul, and stand like an impassable wall, an immovable mountain, between you and your ideal Christian character that your own imagination conjures up and places before you? They are translated into this sentence, "Let him deny himself." This is the first qualification to follow Christ.

The tempter comes with another plea that we are not the children of God. This plea is our weakness. How often do we consider this suggestion of the tempter and put it on file as evidence against ourselves? Christ put the tempter to flight by quoting what is written; so allow me to bring the same weapon to our defense; it is written, "Except ye be converted and become as a little child ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." What did the Saviour mean by this expression? I heard preachers say, in my early exercise of mind, that little children are innocent, pure and sinless, and that we must get like them or we can never be saved. I thought this was true, and set about most diligently to attain unto this child-like purity of character, but failed, utterly failed, failed as completely as Hermes in his search for the philosopher's stone, or Ponce de Leon for the fountain of youth. The more I tried it the more hopeless it seemed to grow, and yet I thought it must be so. O what absurd things will men not undertake in the name of religion! If all the absurdities that have been taught

and practiced in the name of religion could be collected and placed before men's eyes, the exhibit would shock the world, and would doubtless surpass in quantity and quality all other follies, whims, caprices and wickedness that the world has ever known. Suppose for one moment that little children do receive the kingdom of heaven upon the grounds of their purity of character, and we must become as they, where is hope to be found for any who have grown out of infantile purity? How can a man ever be a child again? We might repeat here the question of Nicodemus, "How can a man be born when he is old. Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Suppose a man could be born when he is old, would he not come forth again in the likeness of his parents?

A man might be made a child again, ten thousand times, if such a thing were possible, and still he would never be raised above the nature and likeness of his parents. A corruptible seed can never bring forth an incorrupt object. So if a man should be born again of the same father and mother, would he not come forth the same natural man, and grow up the same blind, alienated, wicked sinner? It is not only necessary to have another birth, but a birth proceeding from an entirely different source, a birth from above, from an incorruptible seed, a birth of water and the Spirit, of that water which is above the firmament. The Saviour did not mean that the little child is sinless, and we must become such. Sinless persons have no need of Christ, and he has no blood for them. What is the characteristic of the little child that forms the basis of the Saviour's teaching here? It is the helplessness, the weakness of the child, its inability to provide for itself. The child is not only unable to provide for itself, but unable to minister to itself what others may provide for it. Food and drink and raiment might be abundantly provided and placed in the

closest proximity to the child, and it left to itself, and it would be none the better off. It would perish as certainly and as speedily as it would if nothing had been provided. The man or woman who has experienced this helplessness in a spiritual sense has become as a little child, or, in other words, has been born again; and the very weakness which he so much deploras, and from which he would daily flee, is the sure and abiding evidence that God is his Father. Our blindness is often urged as an evidence against us, but God says he will bring the blind by a way they knew not, and in strange paths will he lead them. God leads his people as those who are blind, and cannot find their own way. If your travels have been in entirely different ways from what you yourself marked out, if you experience daily the opposite of your own planning, if you are led as one blind in unknown ways, then you are led of the Lord; and "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Belief in Jesus is an effect of the new birth, and consequently an evidence of it. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." (I John 5:1) What a comprehensive, decisive and conclusive statement! This birth raises men to a knowledge of Christ, and imparts to them the evidence that he is the Christ. The doctrine that men have the capacity to believe in him as a condition of salvation, is as fabulous, as illusive and as foreign to the gospel of the grace of God as the grotesque mythologies of the ancient Northmen, the fanciful poetry of the ancient Greeks, or the nonsensical nursery rhymes of Mother Goose. Belief is not a volition of the will. We do not have to revert to dusty libraries of philosophy to prove this statement, but to our own minds. Each man knows more about himself than the wisest philosopher knows about him. Belief is a condition of mind produced by evidence; it is an effect, and evidence is the cause. Every

day we hear reports that we do not want to believe, and seek in every direction a refuge from the conviction of the truth of the report. Every power of the mind is aroused against it; but facts come, evidence conquers, and we reluctantly, unwillingly sink into a belief on the very thing we tried so hard not to believe. Upon the other hand, how often have we exerted every power of will to believe a certain thing to be true; but notwithstanding our ardent desire and willing efforts we at last had to yield, to lack of evidence or to contrary evidence, and believe against our will to the contrary. Believing in Jesus is brought about by the new birth. It is only by the Holy Ghost that any man can say that Jesus is the Christ; and the man who believes in the only begotten Son may rest assured that he is born of God. "He that hath the Son hath life." It is he that hath the son that believes on him.

Faith, which is the substance of the Christian's hope, is the evidence upon which we believe; and this faith is born of God, is the fruit of the spirit, and is found alone in the man who has been born again. Believing in Jesus, repentance and faith, are new covenant blessings themselves, instead of being conditions of blessings, and are the fruit of the new birth instead of conditions upon which it is brought about.

The ultimate effect of the new birth is to awake in the likeness of Christ. This birth constitutes the man who receives it as a son of God, and consequently an heir of God, and guarantees to him a resurrection in the likeness of Christ, and consequently an eternal and enduring satisfaction. The development of Christ's character is a process begun, carried on and consummated by the inherent, sovereign, unfailing working of Christ-life in the soul. It is an evolution, but a grander evolution than ever Darwin dreamed of; not the process that transforms a monkey into a man, but an evolution that conforms a wretched, wicked, hopeless, helpless sinner into

the image of Jesus, the immaculate Son of God. This process is first the blade, then the stalk, and after that the full corn in the ear. The blade and the stalk may appear here, but the full corn in the ear must appear hereafter. Inasmuch as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

This birth originates from above, and is directed alone by sovereign, unconditional election. It comes by virtue of life given us in Christ before the foundation of the world, according as the saints were chosen in him in the ages eternal. We could never be born from above without a life above. This heavenly, eternal, incorruptible Christ-life is implanted in the subjects of God's electing grace, by the sovereign, irresistible, unconditional working of the Holy Spirit. It is imparted in God's own time, whether it be in the babe upon its mother's breast, as was the case with David, or from its very birth, as with John the Baptist, or in the declining days of old age and decrepitude, as may be the case with many; but whether in the babe upon its mother's breast, or in the man in the prime of life, or in old age upon the verge of the grave, the issues are all the same, and alike certain in results. All who receive it shall awake in the likeness of Christ.

Elder H. M. Curry
March 20, 1895

No sooner is a ship built, launched, rigged, victualled, and manned, than she is presently sent out into the boisterous ocean, where she is never at rest, but continually fluctuating, tossing, and laboring, until she is either overwhelmed and wrecked, or, through age, grows leaky and unserviceable, and so is knocked to pieces. So no sooner come we into the world as men or as Christians, by a natural or supernatural birth, than we are thus tossed upon a sea of troubles. "Man is born to trouble, as

the sparks fly upwards." The spark no sooner comes out of the fire than it flies up naturally; it needs not any external force, help, or guidance, but ascends from a principle in itself; so naturally, so easily does trouble rise out of sin. There is radically all the misery, anguish, hid in the coals, so does misery in sin; every sin draws a rod after it. And these troubles fall not only on the body, in those breaches, deformities, pains, aches, diseases, to which it is subject, which are but the groans of dying nature, and its crumbling by degrees into dust again; but they fall also on all our employments and callings. (Gen. 3:17), These are full of pain, trouble, and disappointment. (Hag. 1:6). We earn wages, and put it into a bag with holes, and disquiet ourselves in vain. (Flavel)

As bread to the hungry, as water to the thirsty, as sight to the blind, and liberty to the imprisoned, so - and a thousand times more - is Jesus Christ to the wounded and to them that are broken-hearted.

Bunyan

Those who are born again know that the unlawful indulgence of their appetites and lusts is sinful. While they see in themselves the same sinful nature they had before they received a hope, they abhor themselves for it, and do not feel that they can excuse themselves for any indulgence on the ground that it is in their nature, and that they cannot restrain themselves. There will be a check of conscience, and punishment will follow transgression. Paul says, "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest having preached to others I myself should be a castaway". Castaway from the fellowship of the church, from usefulness to the brethren, and from the comforts and blessings of the gospel.

Fragments

Silas H. Durand

OBITUARIES

BROTHER GUY SISK

It is with great sadness that we try to report the passing of Brother Guy Sisk on March 16, 1978. He was born on October 21, 1894 at Nobility, Texas, the son of Robert Marion and Lillie Anderson Sisk. He married Eulah Oliver in 1923. She preceded him in death in 1973. He married Daisy Sellers on July 21, 1977. He had no children.

Survivors include his wife, Daisy, and a brother, John. Both reside in Emory. Also two sisters: Miss Gertrude Pound of Point and Mrs. Pauline Irwin of Royse City, Texas.

Brother Sisk was a member of Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church, a World War I veteran, a retired mail clerk, and a farmer. Brother Sisk was a faithful church member and supporter. He will be missed by all.

Derrell White
Church Clerk
Mt. Zion Primitive
Baptist Church
Cash, Texas

MARJORIE POTTER KERMAN

By the request of the Norfolk Primitive Baptist Church I will attempt to write the obituary of Sister Marjorie Potter Kerman.

Sister Marjorie was born in Pamlico County, North Carolina and departed from this life February 17, 1978 in Norfolk General Hospital, Norfolk, Virginia. She was the daughter of the late James and Julia Whitford Potter. She is survived by two children, a daughter, Mrs. Marjorie Maddrey of Garner, North Carolina and a son, James Kerman of Norfolk, Virginia, and five grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Sister Marjorie united with the Norfolk Primitive Baptist Church on Saturday, September 17, 1955 and was baptized on Sunday the 18th by her Pastor, Elder R. B. Denson. She loved the doctrine of Salvation by grace as it is in Christ Jesus. She loved her church and the brethren and sisters, and was always faithful to attend her meetings until her health failed in late 1977 and she had to go into the hospital. We all loved her and miss her very much at the Norfolk

Church, but we feel that our loss is her eternal gain.

Her funeral was conducted on Sunday, February 19, 1978 at 3:00 P.M., by Elder A. P. Mewbern at the Hollomon Brown Funeral Home Chapel on Tidewater Drive, Norfolk, Virginia, after which her body was taken to Reelsboro, North Carolina where a graveside service was conducted by Elder Curtis Raines and she was laid to rest in Reelsboro Cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers there to await the second coming of our Lord, when He comes to claim His own. We, at the Norfolk Church bow in humble submission to His will. May the Lord bless her family and all who mourn her loss and enable them to say Thy will be done.

Written by one who loved her
Sister Thelma Wilson

Done by order of the Norfolk Church in Conference, September 16, 1978. The Church request that three copies be made, one for the family, one to be sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication, and one for the Church records.

Sister Ruby Cowart, Clerk
Elder Joseph W. Leggett, Moderator

SISTER EULA DOT McCORKLE

With a heavy heart and much sadness we try to report the passing away of Sister Eula Dot McCorkle, a faithful member of Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church, Cash, Texas. She died August 15, 1978, and was buried in Simmons Cemetery next to the church.

She was born in Hunt County on May 15, 1891 to J. F. Cross and Lodia Skinner Cross. She married Porter McCorkle in February, 1911. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, one brother and one sister, one son Justice and one daughter Margie Faye.

Survivors include two sons, David of Garland, and Willie Ray of Texas City, also one sister, Minnie, eight grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted by Elder Lloyd Wall.

Derrell White
Church Clerk
Mount Zion Primitive
Baptist Church
Cash, Texas

Signs of the Times

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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THE SPIDER AND THE TOAD

Some author (no great matter who,
Provided what he says be true)
Relates he saw, with hostile rage,
A spider and a toad engage;

For though the poison both are stor'd,
Each by the other is abhorr'd:
It seems as if their common venom
Provok'd an enmity between 'em.

Implacable, malicious, cruel,
Like modern hero in a duel,
The spider darted on his foe,
Infixing death at ev'ry blow.

The toad, by ready instinct taught,
An antidote, when wounded, sought,
From the herb plantane, growing near,
Well-known to toads, its virtues rare

The spider's poison to repell;
It cropp'd the leaf and soon was well.
This remedy it often tried,
And all the spider's rage defied.

The person who the contest viewed,
While yet the battle doubtful stood,
Remov'd the healing plant away,
And thus the spider gain'd the day;

For when the toad returned once more,
Wounded, as it had done before,
To seek relief, and found it not,
It swell'd and died upon the spot.

In ev'ry circumstance but one
(Could that hold too, I were undone!)
No glass can represent my face
More justly than this tale my case.

The toad's an emblem of my heart,
And Satan acts the spider's part,
Envenom'd by his poison, I
Am often at the point to die:

But he who hung upon the tree,
From guilt and woe to set me free,
Is like the plantane leaf to me.

To him my wounded soul repairs,
He knows my pain and hears my prayers;

From him I virtue draw by faith,
Which saves me from the jaws of death;
From him fresh life and strength I gain,
And Satan spends his rage in vain.

No secret arts or open force
Can rob me of this sure resource:
Though banish'd to some distant land,
My med'cine would be still at hand;

Though foolish men its worth deny,
Experience gives them all the lie;
Though Deists and Socinians join,
Jesus still lives, and still is mine.

'Tis here the happy difference lies,
My saviour reigns above the skies,
Yet to my soul is always near,
For he is God and everywhere.

His blood a sovereign balm is found
For ev'ry grief and ev'ry wound;
And sooner all the hills should flee
And hide themselves beneath the sea,

Or ocean, starting from its bed,
Rush o'er the cloud-topt mountains head,
The sun, exhausted of its light,
Become the source of endless night,

And ruin spread from pole to pole,
Than Jesus fail the tempted soul.

John Newton (Author, "Amazing Grace")

THE BREASTS OF CONSOLATION

I received the epistle of my beloved son, the heir of promise. "It is enough; my son is yet alive;" and my heart said, "I will go and see him before I die". The bondwoman, I perceive, is about to leave the tent; and her son, who is nothing but slavish fear, will go with her; for surely he "shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac;" for the mother is nothing but bondage; her very conception genders this; and the fruit of her womb is servile torment. Cast them forth; for the servand abideth not in the house for ever; but the son abideth for ever. "If the Son make you free, then are ye free indeed"; for "we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free". The better

covenant suckles the heir of promise. The promises are her breasts; consolation is the milk; faith is the mouth; and the new man is the babe. And let her breasts satisfy thee in all times; and be thou ravished with her love. Why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, an Egyptian, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings.

Let faith consider the noble pedigree, "Now are we the sons of God". O the honour! Keep this Father in view—the Father, I say, and not the master; the Fountain of living waters, and not the consuming fire; our exceeding great Reward, and not the inexorable Judge. And view Him in His covenant made with Abraham, not in that made with Israel; dwelling and resting at Zion, not at Horeb; shining in the face of His dear Son, not at the back of Moses, nor hid in his vail; shining out of Zion, "the perfection of beauty", not smoking on Sinai; reconciling the world to Himself, not devouring the earth with the fire of His jealousy. These evangelical prospects of faith, and this propitious Object of hope, thus viewed, will be an assimilating view. It will change thee into the same image, from glory to glory; and this will sweetly waft thee into the arms of thy lawful mother, Sarah, and set thee nibbling and quibbling at her breasts. Her milk will soften, sweeten, cheer, revive, animate, and evangelize thee; whereas, the contrary views to the above are the prospects of slaves, servants and hirelings, who look for the reward of their work, and earnestly wait for the shadow. And sure I am that such views, taken in the false mirror of unbelief by the deceptive rays of carnal reason, betray thee into the arms of Hagar. And sad experience tells me that she comforts in vain; for, being in bondage, and in the flesh, she nourishes the flesh, and nothing else but self-love, self-pity, self-seeking, self-exaltation, with hard thoughts of God, of Sarah,

and of all the heirs of promise, yea, a shyness of them, and a shunning of them, with the heart alienated from them all. These views of God taken from the law betray even the heirs of promise into all this. Therefore, listen thou, my son, to the voice of Wisdom. She crieth at the gates, at the coming in of the doors; she uttereth her voice, saying, "Hearken unto thy father, that begat thee; and despise not thy mother when she is old". The voice of thy Father is sure to be directed to the sons; and the Father's voice to the heirs of promise is in the promises; which are all yea and amen in the First-born of the family. And these are the breasts of old Sarah. Despise her not, though she is old. She can bear, and suckle too, though she is past age. "Look to the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham, your father; and unto Sarah, that bare you; for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places".

The old coalheaver has been over all this ground, and has done much business in these bitter waters of strife. You may read this to the flock. Many of them will find these ingredients in their hearts, if they cannot distinguish them with their heads; for you will never see a churlish or surly husband, or a scolding wife, unless there be some union with Hagar.

My love to dame and all the flock,

W. H., S. S.

Cricklewood, Nov. 27, 1807

LETTER FROM ELDER RUSTON

Dutton, Ontario

March 2, 1965

Dear Stewart and Viola,

Your letter of January 20th, with the one you wrote December 19th, 1962, brought us great joy and gladness and I have wanted time to answer them and I feel after seeing you at Dan's funeral,

Stewart, I must try and answer them. I have missed dear Kate Sinclair very much, along with others of like precious faith down around Duart.

In your December letter you told of being comforted at one time with the words "continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving". (Col. 4:2) As I read that it seems to encourage poor me, for I know I have so much reason to be instant in prayer and I also have much to be thankful for. I remember so well the Elder in New York, who baptized Esther and me, said, "Brother George, watch the hand of the Lord", and I have found in watching His hand we have been much strengthened in the task He has for us to do. How often we have had to say, "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform". He made a way for Israel in that great wilderness and I feel He makes this world a wilderness to His dear people and He has said, "Thy bread shall be given thee, Thy water shall be sure". I have been in my feelings much on my knees crying to the Lord for myself and for quite a few other dear ones who are in trouble. Yet we need every bit of trouble and trials the Lord sends. John Berridge says, "When our dear Master would bestow, Much patience on his friends, He loads their shoulders well with woe; And thus obtains his ends". He has a purpose; He will bring us down, and there we learn of Jesus, of His sufferings and also find fellowship with those who with patience inherit the promises. Your letter of December 19th, 1962, was not written in vain. Thank you for it.

Now I turn to your sweet letter of Jan. 20, 1965, which did us good to receive, for we had been thinking of your dear boy doing so poorly, and then we had heard that you, too, were far from being as well as you wish to be. We were so glad to be with you at Dan's funeral. It was wonderful that you could be there. I am sure it did your Mother a great deal of good, for she has been doing beyond her strength during Dan's illness.

Yes, the book of Job seems to show God's complete wisdom and power over all things and also it shows man's inability to understand God's dealings with the sons of man. I have several of Elder Durand's books written on Job. I will mail one to you if you don't have one. It is very worthy reading, I think. He thought Job was a type of the Church of God, who, through passing through many trails, finds at the end she has all that God gave her before the world began. The Word of God is, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction", and we learn it is never for our good that we have an easy path. "Trials make the promise sweet. Trials give new life to prayer. Trials bring us to His feet, Lay us low and keep us there."

I have just received a letter from a dear brother, Woodrow Bellinger, a boy I used to know when his parents brought him to meeting over 40 years ago. He says he is alone in what seems to be an outpost, and it made me think of you in Peterborough, except that Elder Slauson does have meeting at Duanesbury, N.Y., where Woodrow lives, two or three times a year. He loves the truth. He came to the church during Elder Bellow's ministry. I have felt many times how happy his father and grandfather would be to see him so interested in things that are divine. "The fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above". How we do love to hear others tell of their travel, and how quickly one who is being brought and led of God can detect in the conversation of people generally just about where they are, and if they are in the right way at all.

Light on God's word is something that must come from above so that we can say, "In Thy light we see light". The word written so long ago was written for us that we through patience and comfort of the scripture might have hope. God has a merciful purpose in showing to us our own view of ourselves, so that we cease to trust in ourselves. The 97th

Psalm says, "Ye that love the Lord hate evil; he preserveth the soul of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart". I remember once finding much sweetness in Psalm 118:27, "God is the Lord which hath showed us light....."; such light seems to shine in His word both old and new and the words of the verse that follows, ".....Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." The sacrifice for us is the Lamb of God, and the cords, all scripture given by inspiration of God, and when Jesus is revealed to us He is the substance of all prophesy. Jesus Himself opened their understanding when He expounded to them in all scripture the things concerning Himself. (The two disciples going down to Emmaus in Luke 24:13:32). No wonder one of the prophets would say, "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that took off the yoke on their jaws and I laid meat unto them". (Hos. 11:4) It seemed as if I was blessed to see the whole word of God, the testimony of the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, were like a three fold cord that bound Christ as a sacrifice for poor guilty sinners like us.

That is a lovely hymn you mention singing together, "We travel through a barren land, etc." How good the last line is and how true; "The christian's hope can never fail".

You may seem to be in a wilderness, yet the Lord, I am sure, is feeding you even there. I was once in a very low place, feeling everything against me and He gave me these words, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee"; drawn with the cords of man.

We were so glad to have you with us at Dan's funeral and hope you got back home safely.

Much love to all of you,
Elder George Ruston

P.S. Dear ones,

It was good to have time for a nice visit, Stewart, but we missed you Viola. We do hope your dear Robert is coming satisfactorily. Such an anxiety for both and all of us. May God bless you in every way. Alex spoke very sweetly Sunday afternoon at Ekfrid.

Lovingly,
Esther Ruston

HE HOLDETH OUR SOUL IN LIFE

Dear Sister, May grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ abundantly refresh your spirit.

We received your letter, and its contents melted my heart. Ah! my dear sister, how my poor soul is filled with wonder at times that ever so holy a Being as the eternal God can bear with such a wretch as I am, and still more so that He should entrust me with His ever-blessed gospel. And what a mercy, that God the Holy Ghost should, by the ministry of one so vile, breathe into your soul the spirit of adoption, enabling you to cry Abba, Father. I frequently feel such death and barrenness in my poor soul, that I think I must give it all up. Some time ago I was walking in the fields, bewailing my weakness and the strength of my inward and outward enemies, and fearing that I never should hold on my way, when the dear Lord spoke these precious words to my soul, "I have prayed the Father for thee, that thy faith fail not." O how my heart was melted in a moment, and my eyes overflowed with tears of joy! I then felt the blessedness of these words, "He is the strength of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in time of trouble"; and so I have found Him. I remember, some time ago, being brought to my wit's end, the providence of God frowning on me, and the saints looking very shy, nor could I feel any nearness of access to God at a throne of grace; and thus refuge failed me on every side, when one night, in my

bedroom, I fell on my knees before the Lord, telling Him what a poor vile wretch I was, and that if He left me I was undone for ever, for I had no dependence but on Him; when He was graciously pleased to apply these words, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee". And O the joy that filled my poor soul I never can describe. I cried out, "It is enough, Lord, it is enough". But no sooner is the sweet savour of it gone than I feel the truth of Hart's words:

"I to my own sad place return,
My wretched state to feel;
I tire, and faint, and mope, and mourn,
And am but barren still."

Then the devil will begin to taunt me, saying it was all a delusion. "For see", says he, "you know you have been praying for this thing and the other thing, and you have not received them; and you know that it is written, that 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, it shall be done, that the Father may be glorified'." And O how my soul has sunk within me, and I have cried out, "Changes and war are against me." Then the devil has roared out, "Where is now thy God?" which has made me heartily wish that I had never been born, my soul choosing "strangling, and death rather than life". But, my dear sister, there is one before whom devils tremble; and David, by the Holy Ghost, saith, "He holdeth our soul in life". Therefore, however dark, lifeless, and shut up we may be, "he is the resurrection and the life", and He it is, by His own almighty power, that bringeth out "such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death", and He breaketh "their bands in sunder". And when we are blessedly set at liberty from the fiery darts of the devil, and from our prison of gloom, we can with our whole hearts and souls join with David in saying, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, bless his holy name, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruc-

tion, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies". Yes, my dear sister, we have indeed found that all our diseases were healed, yea, and sores that run in the night, some of which we feared would cause our death; and thus have we proved the virtue of atoning blood, in curing all diseases, removing all guilt, vanquishing the devil, overcoming the world, and, by its manifestive power, we have enjoyed sweet peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. But as to myself, I can assure you that I do not long remain in this blessed frame, but soon return to my old place; for if the Lord hides His face for a little while, my confidence seems all gone, and the devil and my vile heart begin to rise and rebel against God, and I think my lot very hard. I look around me, and see the wicked prosper, and they that tempt God are set up; and then I again begin to bewail myself, and say, "He hath hedged up my way, and surely against me is he turned". Yet, notwithstanding all my murmuring and complaining, because of God crossing my desires and thwarting my plans, there are seasons when I feel ashamed that, with all my taking thought, I cannot add one cubit to my stature. I am satisfied that Hart is right where he says,

"For shouldst thou wait till thou couldest meet

Reception worthy thee,
With sinners thou wouldest never sit;
At least, I'm sure, with me."

I am a living witness of the truth of the above, and so are you, my dear sister. But our dear Lord generally sends a messenger to prepare a room for Himself; at least, I find it so--such afflictions in my poor soul, which make room for Him as my Rest. And I think that Job knew something of this when the Lord sent one messenger after another till he had instructed him; and he knew that the answer of the tongue, as well as the preparations of the heart, were both alike from the Lord. And when we are taught experimentally that

we can neither add to, nor diminish from, the eternal blessedness and safety of our souls, we then discover what poor paupers we are, and behold also the eternity of the nature of that grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Thus, my dear sister, we soar as the eagle, and again we mourn like the dove; sometimes shut up in our prison, and then crying out, "The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage". And thus I have found it, more or less, ever since the Lord manifested himself to me, as the chief of sinners, with these words: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief". And thus you see that I received mercy as the chief of sinners; and so I feelingly bow at times before the mercy-seat. Last Lord's day morning, I did in my very soul bow as such (the Lord is my witness that I lie not). I had to go to M___ and O___ to preach; and I felt quite unable. The weakness of body was one reason, having sprained my foot when a boy, which pains me much at times; and the Bible appeared a sealed book to me. This brought a lamenting of my hard fate before the Lord; and while I was lamenting it, O the cutting reproof that I felt from these words: "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they answered, Nothing!" And so cried I with shame to myself; while I never shall forget the words that followed, for they spoke to my very heart: "Have I been a barren wilderness unto thee?" O how I dropped my vile head in the dust! and said, "No, Lord;" while my eyes gushed forth tears of shame and gratitude. My very soul was humbled in me as a little child. All my murmuring was then at an end for a time, and my poor soul was willing to be fashioned by His dear hand for His own glory. So I went and preached at M___ and O___ in the evening; and the Lord was with me; and

I believe that some of the dear people were much refreshed, and were willing to give God the glory.

And now, my dear sister, may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, of being cleansed by His blood, justified by His merits, upheld by His arm, constrained by His love; and that ere long we shall be out of the reach of a tempting devil, a lying world, and our evil hearts. And then no more the falling tear, no more deep-fetched sighs, no more the sacred groan; for we shall be like Him, we shall see Him as He is, and so shall we be ever with the Lord. Adieu.

Ever thine in the best of bonds,

John W.

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CIRCULAR LETTER

October 8, 1978

To the Brothers and Sisters meeting with the Salisbury Old School Baptist Association at Indiantown Church, Powellville, Maryland.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In Philippians 4:6-9 we read, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

With the exception of the subject of love nothing is more on the lips of God's children than the word, Peace, and if appearance is to be credited, nothing is generally further from being their condition of life.

This subject lends itself to many branches, such as: 1.) Peace within; 2.) Peace with our-

selfes; 3.) Peace with our fellowman; 4.) Peace from oppression; 5.) Peace with God; 6.) Peace with our family; 7.) Peace within our church; 8.) Peace among the churches.

For the purpose of this letter I should like to consider the latter two branches, namely, Peace within our church and peace among the churches. First, it must be borne in mind that there is no peace for the wicked, (Isa. 57:21) and to whatever extent the wicked have crept in unawares among us, to that extent there shall always be unrest. For that reason alone, we should be cautious and much in prayer that our God would give us wisdom in the receiving of members. To let down the standard of the Bible and to take in anyone is in itself a breaking of the peace. Better that we should meet with two or three in sweet peace and love than to dwell in a church full of blind and worldly members who will vex and wound our soul at every turn until we could scarcely believe that peace has ever existed.

What is Peace? Jesus is the Prince of Peace, (Isa. 9:6) therefore peace, whatever it is, must be vitally linked to Him, else it would soon be discovered to be a false peace. The clearest illustration of Peace from the Word of God will be found in the fourth chapter of Mark, verses 35-41. In this wonderful scene Jesus is seen arising from His sleep on the little ship, as the storm beats upon it and rebukes the wind and says to the sea, "Peace, be still". And what was the result of this brief exhortation from the Word made flesh? Why, the wind ceased, and there was a great calm! Truly a matchless display of Divine power. How easy it would be to be caught up in the wonder of it, but let us again look to our theme of Peace. When Jesus says, "Peace, be still", even the elements must obey His command. Until then the disciples can expect tossing and heaving in a turbulent sea. The church, like the disciples on the little ship, find that even Jesus in our midst does not assure us smooth sailing. Nor will His presence alone keep our hearts from sinking at the sight of the dreadful storms about us. But when we have been sufficiently aroused to cry to Him in prayer, then, and not until then, we shall see what a great calm He makes when He says, "Peace". Remember too, that the first thing our risen Lord said to His disciples when He appeared to them was, "Peace be unto you". (John 20:19)

Jesus rebuked the waves and sea and so brought calm to the elements. But the greatest calm was the one He wrought in their soul. What peace it is to see the display of His power and hear His command drive back the storm. Such Peace as this is not easily shaken or soon disturbed. And mark well that there was no peace until Jesus bid it come.

So must it be in the Church. There may be calm. All may be smooth on the surface, but is it Peace? No, not until our Lord makes it so. All true Peace is of Him. (II Peter 3:14)

The church should value its peace. It is a precious possession. When we are in peace we feel a flowing of love and fellowship among our members. Peace will shut our eyes to the faults of others. It will still an otherwise loose tongue. Peace, flowing like a river, is a visible condition. It can be seen. Peace pervades an assembly so that it may be felt, and it resembles an actual sensation or feeling. To be in Peace is to gather without malice or hard feelings and draw us to one another in fond embraces. In summary, peace in the church is a Spirit of Christ-like-ness and living with the family of God without any fear. May God give us peace in the churches. May Jesus say, "Peace be still".

Peace among the churches is a somewhat more difficult subject to define. Churches may associate in geographic arrangements or be linked together in doctrinal unity. But, we ask, are they in peace with one another? Again we observe that any peace must be associated with the Prince of Peace or it is no peace at all. ("Peace; Peace", when there is no peace is all too familiar a cry to God's weary children.) To find churches together in peace is to find churches led of the One Spirit of God, to worship the One Holy Father thru the redemption that is in their One Lord. One church will not be promoting this theme while another is promoting that theme. A group of churches or even one strong church will not try to impose upon its weaker sister church anything at all that is not according to godliness.

We might say that churches together in peace is like members of one church living in peace. One is not lording it over the other. Neither is one seeking pre-eminence or dominion over the conscience of others. Peace among the churches is a living together in

the same sweet fellowship that the members of any one church enjoy. We may not enjoy the same frequent contact with sister churches as members of the local assembly have, but will that make the union any less? We think not, and feel sure that to the extent our union with other churches diminishes, to that same extent our peace among them weakens.

We must be on a constant guard that our peace is not assaulted or thrown into jeopardy by wicked men or devils. Well might we keep in mind the words of Paul to the Church at Corinth, "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints". (I Cor. 14:33)

We say, in conclusion, that whether we speak of peace in the churches or peace among the churches, that from first to last our "God of Peace" must bring us the "Peace of God" or there will be no peace. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain". (Psa. 127:1)

"Within these walls may peace
And harmony be found;
Zion! in all thy palaces,
Prosperity abound!

For friends and brethren dear,
Our prayer shall never cease;
Oft as they meet for worship here,
God send His people peace!"

(Verses 5 and 6 - Hymn #358

Lester, Durand Hymn and Tune Book)

Respectfully submitted,
(Elder) James F. Poole

When Christ entered into Jerusalem, the people spread their garments in the way. When He enters into our hearts, we pull off our own righteousness, and not only lay it under Christ's feet, but even trample upon it ourselves.

Toplady

It is not deemed presumptuous for the favourites of an earthly king to know and be conscious that they are so; and why should it be deemed presumptuous for the favourites of God to be assured of His love?

Toplady

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

THE REGENERATION AND THE NEW BIRTH

From what has been written and published in our columns on these two very important points of the doctrine of God our Saviour, there seems to us to be a failure on the part of some of our dear brethren, either to understand the spiritual import of these words, or to comprehend the meaning of each other; and we are confident that the difference is much greater in appearance than in reality.

The divine command to the saints of God requires of them to be of one mind; and it is therefore of great importance that on subjects of vital moment, we should all labor to obviate every seeming difference, and to see eye to eye. Every proposition should be carefully tested by the only infallible standard, the Scriptures. Nothing can redound to the glory of God, or conduce to the edification of the saints, that is not sustained by the scriptures of truth. That even the saints, while in the flesh, should fail to understand every portion of the word alike, is not surprising; for we can only perfectly understand the inspired testimony of the Bible so far as it is opened to us by the Spirit, which Christ has given to lead His disciples into all truth. When any difference, or seeming difference arises, and we are drawn into any thing like controversy, we should carefully avoid all fleshly ambition to excel, or strive for mastery; and above all that we inflict no unnecessary wound on those of God's children who may fail to appreciate the force of our arguments. In reviewing the communications of brethren, before we indulge in any severe animadversions, we should be sure that we understand the positions assumed by them. It is true, whatever is published by any brother is open to the

careful examinations and criticism of all who read it, and should be candidly, but kindly scrutinized; that we may prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. All who write with the single desire to elucidate truth for the edification and comfort of the saints, will desire to have their views tested by the divinely authorized standard; and if anything be detected which the scriptures will not sustain, especially anything conflicting with divine testimony, its detection and exposure should be regarded as a favor equally to the writer and the readers.

Recently some difference has been obvious in the views of brethren in regard to the scriptural signification of the word regeneration, as used in the New Testament; some holding that it is, and others that it is not the same in signification and application with what is called the new birth. Some applying the word regeneration to the resurrection power of God which brought again from the dead the crucified body of Christ, and in Him the resurrection life and immortality of all His mystical body and members, from under the law which was the ministration of death, into the resurrection life and immortality of the Son of God.

Now, as a birth, either natural or spiritual, always implies a generation, because without generation there can be no birth; and whatever is born, is the development of that which was generated, it is not strange that the two terms have been thought by many to mean one and the same thing. Such indeed had been our view for years; but as we now conceive, because we had not been led to closely investigate the subject, until it was presented for consideration by some of the brethren. Here let us observe that those who take the position that the terms regeneration and the new birth mean one and the same, and that both apply to the experimental quickening of the children of God, do not deny that all the saints

are redeemed and quickened together with Christ, and raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Nor, on the other hand, do those brethren who apply the word regeneration to the quickening of the whole elect family of God by the resurrection of Christ, hold with less tenacity the vital importance of the new birth, as it has always been held by the church of God, in its personal application to all of the saints in their individual experience, in being quickened by the Spirit, and born into the liberty of the sons of God.

While, so far as we understand them, we agree with our brethren that the regeneration which is mentioned but twice in the Bible, in both cases refers to the reproduction from death of the whole mystical body of Christ, by His resurrection, we at the same time hold, as we have ever held, that every member of the body of Christ must experience the new and spiritual birth, of which Christ spake to Nicodemus in John 3:3-10. Still in perfect harmony with that vitally important sentiment, we also believe that Christ in His incarnation took on Him the seed of Abraham, and that all who are Christ's are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise; and that they were so identified with Him in His assumption of our flesh, that when He died, they were legally dead with Him; and when He arose from the dead, they were quickened together with Him, and they were raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places. The whole church, as the body of Christ, was buried with Him by baptism into death, regenerated, or reproduced from death, by the resurrection life of His resurrection; so that in like manner as they were buried with Him into His death, they were raised from the dead with Him to newness of life; married and identified with him in resurrection, or regeneration life. How else can it be said we are quickened, and raised up together with Him; that we are risen with Christ, and dead to the law by His

body? How else shall we understand that we are raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, to walk in newness of life? Raised up from under that law which holds dominion over a man as long as he lives; being by that law crucified with Christ, dead with Him to the law by His body, and regenerated in a new life, and reproduced, in a new relationship, over the which the law of wrath and condemnation has no dominion; and being thus risen with Christ, now instead of continuing to seek for righteousness by the works of the law, or for those things which belong to the legal dispensation or worldly sanctuary, we who are risen with Christ are instructed to seek those things which are above, even in the heavenly places of the regeneration, which are the heavenly places of the spiritual kingdom, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

If it is conceded that our participation of flesh and blood by our creation and generation in the first Adam, placed us in and with him under the law that he was created under, which he transgressed, and by the transgression of which he involved us in guilt and death, from which Christ, the second Adam, to redeem us was required to be made flesh, and to dwell among us, under the same law, and that in doing this, He took on Him the seed of Abraham, that seed of Abraham which was reckoned in Isaac, (not seeds, as of many, but to thy seed, Abraham's seed, which is Christ), and that in being made flesh, He was to suffer in the flesh, bear our sins in the body of His flesh, be put to death in the flesh; then not only was He put to death in the flesh, but the flesh in which He suffered was also put to death. Now observe, the reproduction of those thus buried in death by His baptism of suffering, was not a mere resuscitation, or recovering to that life which was put away, but a resurrection to immortal life, and to a spiritual state perfectly free from guilt, condemnation and death.

Hence it is said that God hath begotten us again to a lively (or vital, immortal) hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance which is (like the seed by which this immortality is generated), incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away. Is it heresy to call this regeneration? Redeemed from the generation of the earthly Adam--reproduced in the life and immortality of the second Adam, which is the Lord from heaven, our relation to earth, to the flesh, to the law, to sin, corruption and death is dissolved and we are identified with the risen Saviour in His resurrection life, is not this regeneration? But in other words, was not that life which quickened and resurrected the crucified body of our Lord, the same resurrection life of which we are made experimentally the partakers when we are born again? If so, was it not communicated to the whole church of God, in her spiritual Head, when He was raised from the dead? If not, at what period was it communicated from God the Father, through Christ, the Mediator, to His mystical body and members? But why apply the terms generation, regeneration, begetting and birth, to this reproduction of the church in her spiritual life? Because the Bible uses terms which in our judgment fully warrant us. That His resurrection was a regeneration, will appear from the record. He was begotten in the flesh by the Holy Ghost, conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, and that holy thing which should be born of her should and was called the Son of God. Thus by generation He was made flesh, made of a woman, made under the law, that in this flesh He should be put to death. In His resurrection divine inspiration has used similar terms. "Thou art my Son. This day have I begotten thee". (Psa. 2:7) And in Acts 13:33, these very words are applied to the resurrection of Christ. "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise made to the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same

unto us, their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." If these scriptures together with those which declare Him to be "the first begotten of the dead", (Rev. 1:5) "The first born from the dead", etc. (Col. 1:18) do not imply a regeneration, we are at loss to find words in our language to express the idea. Generated, in being made flesh, circumcised, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, and begotten again from the dead, and born from the dead, in immortal life, over which death hath no power; and to be known no more in the flesh, but to be known henceforth as the Resurrection and the Life of all His members.

But, admitting the application of the term, to the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, some may ask why we include it in the regeneration of the church.

Well let us see. Did Christ arise from the dead and leave His church, or any part thereof, behind Him, and under the curse of the law, the guilt of sin and dominion of death, or did He not rather abolish death, and bring immortality to light in His resurrection? When He went forth weeping and bearing precious seed, did He not return again rejoicing, bearing His sheaves with Him? (Psa. 126:6) In what other sense, or by what other generation does Christ claim His members as the children of the resurrection? Can the relationship of children exist without generation? It is written, "A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done it." (Psa. 22:30, 31) Is it not presumptuous to deny that the church was quickened together with Christ, and that they were raised up together? In what other sense can we understand that impressive and striking illustration which He Himself gave of His death and resurrection.

"Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24) The context proves that this double asseveration was used to impress deeply on the minds of His disciples the application of the figure, as illustrative of His death, and the quickening and reproduction of His seed, whom He would redeem from the earth, and bring up with Him, and in Him, as their Resurrection. A very similar figure is used in illustration of the resurrection of the saints, in I Cor. 15:36. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be; but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." If Christ is that corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died, what is His own body which God has given Him, in His resurrection? Let the inspired apostle answer: "According to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead", etc. "And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all". (Eph. 1:19-23) "Thy dead shall live, my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew, the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead". (Isa. 26:19) Compare with Hosea 6:1, 2. "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will also bind us up. After two days will he revive us; and in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Ages and generations may pass before all the members of Christ's mystical body shall be quickened and live in the sight of any but God. But in the sight of the omniscient eye, when his soul was poured out into death, all his seed was clearly seen, as living in his sight, and in that life which is hid with

Christ in God, and which in the absence of Christ can never be seen. When, and wherever He, who is their life, appear, then, and there do all His members appear with Him in glory. In His death, the corn of wheat containing the germ, of all the harvest, fell into the ground and died. Here is the planting in the likeness of His death, which is set forth by christian baptism; and resurrection with Him to newness of life. By death this relation to the earth is dissolved. We have known Him in the flesh, as a Man of sorrow, acquainted with grief, subject to pain and death: but henceforth know we Him no more. "He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare His generation; for he is cut off out of the land of the living?" (Isa. 53:8) "Thou sowest not that body which shall be". Before His death He was under the law, laden with all the sins of His people; for God hath laid on Him the iniquities of all His people; prepared for the sufferings of death, and made a little lower than the angels. But God giveth it a body as hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body. Now, in his own body, the church, quickened with immortal, or resurrection life, He dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. The greatness of God's mighty power is displayed, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him up from the dead. Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, which were on Him when He was put to death in the flesh. He has nailed them to His cross--and leaving these all behind, He has arisen from the dead in a spiritual resurrection body, begotten by the Father from the dead, He is exalted in His resurrection body, "far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come". The seed which fell into the ground and died has burst the bands of death, and triumphed over the grave. Bearing His sheaves with Him, He

enters the portals of immortality as our triumphant Prince and Saviour. "God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet". "Lift up your heads,

"Ye everlasting doors, fly wide,
Make ready to receive my bride;
Ye harps of heaven, come sound aloud.
Here comes the purchase of my blood".

Now tune your sweetest harps, ye ransomed sons of God, and without a jarring note, swell the immortal notes written by Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again". Don't falter at that strain--heaven shall resound with its melody; sing it loud, sound it clearly, and high as the heavens your voices raise when you repeat the chorus. Blessed God, who hath begotten us, in this Resurrection Regeneration, "to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance which is 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".

Now, brethren, does this doctrine of Resurrection Regeneration alarm any of you? Examine it closely, carefully, and prayerfully, and compare it with the scriptures and with your experience.

We have called your attention to the scriptures on the subject; now suffer us to appeal to your own experience. You are born again of an incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. What think you; was that incorruptible seed in Christ when like a corn of wheat He fell into the earth and died for you? Were you quickened by the power of the resurrection of the Son of God, when you passed from death unto life? If not, from what begetting did your new birth proceed? To what generation do you by it belong? Do you really think the Head of the church was begotten from the dead at one time, and

the body and fullness of Christ at another? Has your new birth brought you forth as children of the Resurrection? Is the life of the Head of the church the same that is the life of His body? Is Jesus Christ your Resurrection and your Life?

But, say you, Jesus arose from the dead eighteen hundred years ago, and our birth transpired but recently. True, but can you ascribe it to anything short of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ? Had He failed to have risen from the dead, could you have been born again? Was not the very first gleam of hope that cheered your desponding heart, a view, by faith, of the risen Saviour? Could you rest upon any other hope than that power which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead? Were you quickened and made to believe in God, as were the saints at Ephesus, and all the faithful in Christ Jesus, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead? If you were born of the spirit that raised up Christ from the dead He shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Rom. 8:11)

Now let us review the decree, in the second Psalm, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee", and the inspired explanation of it in Acts 13:32, 33. "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made to the fathers, God hath fulfilled unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee". How is the resurrection of Jesus Christ the fulfillment of the promise made to the fathers, unto us their children? This risen Jesus is our Resurrection and our life. The day of this decree of God was ushered in by the resurrection of Christ, and cannot terminate until all who are begotten by His resurrection shall be born of the spirit that raised Him from the dead. It has been rightly said by

some of our brethren, that generation must always precede a birth; begetting and quickening are always before the new birth. This generation chosen in Christ, as a seed that shall serve Him, which shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation, shall come, and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born. (Psa. 22:30, 31) Paul declares to us the gracious purpose of God, in quickening, and raising us up together (or simultaneously) with Christ; and it is, "That in the ages to come", for in the order of time, ages are required for the development of this regeneration, and the personal development of that people, who, being already regenerated in Christ, shall be born of His resurrection life and spirit; yet all this shall certainly be accomplished in the one day, in which God will make up His jewels, and in which a nation shall be born. So in the ages to come, the ages which have come, and the ages yet in the future, God will shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:7)

One farther consideration. Our Lord Jesus Christ is expressly called the Only Begotten of the Father; how then is it possible for us to be brought into the vital relationship of sons of God, unless we were begotten and regenerated in Him, as sons of God, and heirs of immortality? We have supposed that the eternal deity or Godhead of Christ, is unbegotten, underived, self-existent, and eternal; and that His Sonship has reference to His mediatorial Headship of the church over which He presides, and that the members of the church, as being the members of His body, have their sonship in His Sonship, their life in His life, their righteousness in His righteousness, and their heirship jointly with His, to an inheritance of glory. In what other way we can be sons or heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, we cannot conceive. In the election of grace all His people were chosen in Him before the

foundation of the world, and their eternal life was and still is hid with Him in God. In the divine purpose, so far as that purpose is made known to us, our God ordained to manifest the body of Christ in all its members, by a first and second birth; provided for them through the first and second Adam. Through the generations of the first (in the order of their development) in Adam, they were partakers of flesh and blood, in which they were subjects of the law under which Adam was created and under which he fell; so that in Adam all die; and in their Adamic nature they were all children of wrath, even as others; but in their regeneration and new birth by, and through the second Adam, which is the Lord from heaven, they are made partakers of the divine nature, are washed from all pollutions, and cleansed from all guilt, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Hereafter, we propose to treat on the new birth, as taught in the word and experienced personally by the saints.

August 15, 1868 Elder Gilbert Beebe

November 12, 1903

GIFTS

The Scriptures of the New Testament present the gospel church in her perfection, as the workmanship of God. Her doctrine and order are plainly shown there to all of her children, as they are also revealed to each in his experience, so that the word and the experience witness together to all that is of God. We are to look only to the inspired Scriptures of truth to decide concerning any point of doctrine, or any ordinance, or any gift to the church of God; and there alone shall we find the proper order of those things of God, as arranged and established by His authority.

Whatever assumes to belong to the church is to be tried by the pattern shown to us in the Scriptures of the New

Testament, and if not found there it must be discarded by every lover of the truth. The gifts of Jesus to the church are named by the inspired apostle in his letter to the Ephesians: "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers". The object of these gifts is also there stated: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ". Any professed gift that is not included in this catalogue and description, must not be recognized as of God; and any one who claims to have work to do as a gift of God to the church in behalf of any but the saints, or in order that any may become saints through his work, is clearly not manifesting the character of a gospel gift, for all of these gifts are declared to be exclusively for the benefit of the body of Christ, to which they themselves belong as "joints and bands" which minister nourishment to the body. (Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 2:10)

Fragments

Silas H. Durand

Christ would not entrust our redemption to angels, to millions of angels; but He would come Himself, and in person suffer; He would not give a low and base price for us clay. He would buy us with a great ransom, so as He might over-buy us, and none could over-bid Him in His market for souls. (Rutherford)

Wherever Christ is, clusters of divine promises grow out of Him, as the motes, rays, and beams from the sun, and a family, as it were, and a society of branches out of a true. (Rutherford)

All the disputes between us and the Arminians may be reduced to these two questions: 1. Is God dependent on man, or is man dependent on God? 2. Is man a debtor to God, or God a debtor to man?

Toplady

EDITORIAL

MOUNT ZION

But ye are come to mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

To the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (Heb. 12:22-24)

In this chapter, Paul is comforting the Hebrews by telling them that they have not come to Mount Sinai, as the children of Israel had come in the wilderness, for that mountain only God could touch and when He did, it burned with fire and was covered with blackness, darkness and tempest, but ye are come, declares Paul, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God even to Mount Sion. The sight, alone, of Mount Sinai was terrible and no man could endure what was commanded there. If so much as a beast touched the mountain, it was stoned, or thrust through with a dart. Moses, himself, did exceedingly fear and quake at its presence for the law which came from this mount brought death, whereas the law which comes from Mount Sion brings life for the law of the liberty of Christ makes us free from the law of sin and death.

“Wherefore,” says Paul, “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; 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.” (Heb. 12:1, 2) Paul’s words are just as applicable today, to you, dear child of

God, as they were to those he addressed among the Hebrews as “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling”. For there is one generation of Jesus Christ though members of it live in every age and in every nation, kindred and tongue, for there is but one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Let us begin to examine, now, what Paul declares that we are “come unto” for this city of the living God is the ultimate triumph of all our spiritual hopes and aspirations.

Clearly from Hebrews 11:16 God has prepared this eternal city for those who confess they are strangers and pilgrims on this earth and who are seeking a better country, even an heavenly. For God is not ashamed to be called their God, neither will He overlook the poor and needy in the day of the restitution of all things. By faith, David described this city of Zion as beautiful for situation and the joy of the whole earth. He assures us that God is known in her palaces for a refuge, and that the kings of the earth pass by her walls and ramparts and marvel and haste away because of her strength. Indeed, David prompts us to, “Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.” (Ps. 48:12-14)

While speaking to His beloved from the Mount, Jesus said to them, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.” (Matt. 5:14) For this city or habitation of God is really in the hearts of His people for the kingdom of God is in you and it is the city of a great King. And just as the natural city of Jerusalem is set on a hill surrounded by other hills and mountains, so are ye set among the hills and mountains of

God's promises. For it is of great comfort to know that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, and we, therefore, will not fear though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. And of no less comfort is God's assurance when he said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love and with heavenly kindness have I drawn thee." Moses, when blessing the tribes, makes our mountain to stand strong when he declares, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms...Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency..." (Deut. 33:26-29) It is little wonder that David mused, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth." (Ps. 121:1, 2) And so close was God's presence to Ezekiel that he felt to be an integral part of this city and in triumph disclosed that the name of the city from that day shall be, "The Lord is there."

Now, this city has cold flowing waters which run through it, even a river the streams whereof make glad the city of our God, the holy place of the tabernacles on high. And this river is the love of our Heavenly Father which flows from the throne of God and from the Lamb and reaches the farthest corner of the city to the very least of its inhabitants, even to you and I. This river is like the river of paradise which went out of Eden to water the garden and parted and became into four heads severally known as Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel and Euphrates. Now each of these streams flows from the main source with a fixed purpose to bring comfort to the inhabitants of the city of Zion, to the trees of righteousness the planting of the Lord.

The river Pison means a multitude or flowing and there is a constant flow of the Lord's people into this city for "one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh:" (Ecc. 1:4) From the days of the Patriarchs, through the legal dispensation and later from the days of the Apostles until the end of time, there is a great multitude which no man can number. And they all have something in common for the river Pison encompasseth the whole land of Havilah which means affliction. In Revelation, one of the elders identifies these afflicted as those, "which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:14)

The second river is Gihon which means grace for it is by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. The third river is Hiddekel, meaning a voice or sound which represents the voice of the Lord which is full of power and majesty and divides the flames of fire, shakes the wilderness, makes the hinds to calve, discovers the forests and breaks the cedars even the cedars of Lebanon. The fourth river is the Euphrates which means fruitfulness, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth:" saith the Lord, 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." (Is. 55:11)

All of these streams flowing through the city refresh the inhabitants of Zion and prosper the cause of truth so that there is no turning back. I believe the inspiration and comfort of these waters prompted Jeremiah to declare, "Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?" (Jer. 18:14)

Now this blessed city of Zion is

exceedingly precious to us for we have no continuing city here on earth because this world with all its fleshly enticements is a waste howling wilderness to the people of God. And when we are refreshed by another glimpse of this eternal paradise through a renewal of the hope of better things that is within us, we often become overjoyed as David when he said, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.", and sometimes we reach the exultancy of Newton in his hymn when he exclaimed, "Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God! He whose word cannot be broken, Formed thee for his own abode: On the Rock of Ages founded, What can shake thy sure repose? With salvation's walls surrounded, Thou may'st smile at all thy foes...See the streams of living waters, Springing from eternal love, Well supply thy sons and daughters, And all fear of want remove. Who can faint while such a river, Each flows their thirst t'assuage? Grace, which, like the Lord, the giver, Never fails from age to age."

It was this same city which Abraham was hunting when he went out from his homeland not knowing whither he went, for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Abraham, in his age, saw the city from afar off as did David who warned us that except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain. This city is the Lord's design and it is His prerogative who shall enter his gates and walk its streets of gold. And no one shall find shelter within its walls who is not born again of the water and of the spirit and who does not come as a little child in meekness and humility. But what a comfort it is to know that when Naomi and Ruth approached Bethlehem-judah on their way from the fleshly

tabernacles of Moab, the whole city was moved at their appearance for the inhabitants of Zion are made one body and one spirit in Christ for which cause may he ever be eternally praised. David captured the sweetness of the moment for the poor pilgrim in every age as he or she comes nigh the gates of the city when he said, "Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God." (Ps. 84:3)

In any one single place or period of time, the city often looks small as it did to Ecclesiastes, the Preacher, for he asserts there was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and built bulwarks around it and beseiged it. This enemy of the city, of course, is Satan who makes war incessantly with the woman (the Church) in the wilderness. Ecclesiastes continues, however, to say that there was found a poor wise man, who by his wisdom delivered the city, yet no man remembers that same poor man. Now Christ came meek and lowly and riding upon an ass for He was the poor wise man and when he approached the city of Jerusalem there was a great multitude which spread their garments and palm branches in the way and rejoiced singing. "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." (Matt. 21:9) And it is said that all the city was moved when Jesus came, yet no man remembers the poor wise man. The inhabitants of Zion are so prone to forget His mercy and His love that we are all too like the lepers who went on their way without returning to give thanks.

Often, as we travel through the vast regions of our land and yours finding only selected areas where spiritual life seems evident, we wonder, sometimes, if the very image of this eternal city is gradually being removed from the earth and, though, this, no doubt, is true for

the period of the fullness of the Gentiles seems to be quickly approaching, we should not, we must not despair. We do well to remember that in Christ's messages to the Churches in Revelation, it was only to Philadelphia that He said, "thou hast a little strength." For He has declared that His people shall be gathered one by one as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wings and wherever the two or three are gathered together there He has promised to be in the midst of them. And often we feel the greatest sweetness in meeting when the handfuls are assembled together in His name, but we joy, too, when we witness on occasion the larger assemblies when we see a greater portion of the "great congregation" come together.

But the more we capture a glimpse of this celestial home, the more we long for its coming. We desire to see the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. We pray and long to see it shine as a jasper stone, to see its great wall and gates, to behold the twelve foundations of its wall garnished with all manner of precious stones. We beg to walk its streets of pure gold, transparent as glass. We plead to see the throne of God, and the four and twenty elders, its four beasts and the Lamb in the midst as it had been slain having seven horns and seven eyes. For we cry to realize the eternal noon which this city emanates where there will be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; nor pain, for God, himself, it is said, shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. I cry as Paul did to the Philippians, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." (Phil. 3:10, 11)

Now ye are come, also, declares Paul, to an innumerable company of angels. When Abraham sent the eldest servant of his house to find a bride for Isaac, his

son, he assured his servant that the Lord would send his angel before him to guide and prosper his way. The angel of the Lord was sent to tell Zacharias that his prayers had been answered and that Elizabeth, his wife, would bear a son whose name was to be called John for he would make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Six months later the same angel, Gabriel, announced to Mary that she would bring forth a son, whose name would be called Jesus. Likewise, Gabriel appeared to Joseph to allay his fears regarding his espousal to Mary already great with child. And it was Gabriel, again, who descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the sepulchre so that Mary and others could see that the tomb of Christ was empty. Angels in chorus praised God at the birth of Christ, ministered unto Him following His temptation and cast the great dragon, that old serpent, out of heaven into the earth by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. David reassures the Lord's people in Psalm 91 that the angels of the Lord would have charge over them in all their ways. A precious deacon, recently told me of the last hours of an aged one years ago who said on a certain morning, "The angels are coming to take me home today." And during the day her family could not dissuade her otherwise. About four o'clock that same afternoon she was taken home in a quiet rest. It is related of the late Elder W. I. Carnell, who served our church in Canada for several years, shortly after the turn of the century, that he preached almost until his last breath when he raised his arms in exultation and exclaimed soaring! soaring! Indeed, comforts Paul, ye are come unto an innumerable company of angels.

In addition, Paul proceeds to comfort the Hebrews by saying, ye are come to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven. We know that the names of the Lord's people are written in heaven even in the

book of life and that He has graven His elect upon the palms of His hands. Indeed Christ has raised the members of his body from servitude under the law to be sons by adoption and if sons then heirs and if heirs then joint heirs with Himself. He has raised His people to become Kings and Priests unto God. Collectively, they are the general assembly and the Church of the firstborn or the "great congregation" for Christ through the words of David in Psalm 40:9 edifies His people when He declares "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest."

Furthermore continues Paul, ye are come to God the Judge of all. What a solemn and yet glorious awakening there remains for you, dear child of God, to be raised among the saints and brought before the Judge of all the earth and presented there unblamably and unprovably before Him in love through the merits of His gracious and merciful son. You know, when Christ was born, he was wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And these swaddling clothes represent, as I see it, two things. First, of all, they suggest clothes which are tightly bound signifying the covenant by which Christ is inseparably bound to His people and, second, they represent the mystery which permeates the entire realm of godliness as "thick darkness" is declared by God to be a swaddling band for the sea. We cannot by searching find out God, but He will reveal Himself unto whomsoever He will and we know that "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." (2 Tim. 2:19)

Let us go on, now, to consider the spirits of just men made perfect. We know that the word spirit in the scripture is used to denote the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Trinity, but it is also used to signify the renewed

nature, or spiritual part in man. In fact, from Proverbs 20:27, we learn that, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly." Now Christ said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (Jo. 3:5) To emphasize this truth, Paul tells the Corinthians, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." (I Cor. 3:16) The Lord's people are a trinity within themselves having body, soul and spirit, and Paul in praying for the Thessalonians asks God that their "whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Thes. 5:23)

Joshua was to succeed Moses for God said to Moses, "Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him:" (Num. 27:18) It is said of Daniel that an excellent spirit was found in him. The spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha. Now from Ecclesiastes 12:7, we know that at death, the dust or body shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. And this spirit which dwells in the Lord's people is the same spirit that abides in Christ for there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. For, "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:11) This is why Paul exclaimed to the Romans, "even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Rom. 8:23)

Furthermore this is the reason for the hope of our calling for "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit," declares Paul, "that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8:16) For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of

adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made you free from the law of sin and death.

But Paul tells the Hebrews they are come unto the spirits of just men made perfect. How are His people made perfect? This is very high ground. We know that Job was described as perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. Certainly this perfection comes not as an inheritance from Adam for he was of the earth, earthy, and the carnal mind is enmity against God for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Therefore, we must look to another for perfection, that is, to Christ. When Jeremiah was commanded to go down to the potter's house to behold the potter who wrought a work on the wheels, he saw the first vessel which the potter made marred in his hands, so he made it again another vessel as seemed good to the potter to make it. Is this not a picture of Adam and Christ? For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Adam is of the earth, earthy. Christ is of heaven, heavenly. Adam is a living soul. Christ is a quickening spirit. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. But as ye have borne the image of the earthy, ye shall also bear the image of the heavenly. And it is in bearing this image of the heavenly that ye are made perfect in Him.

Let us behold, now, some of the ways in which ye are made perfect in Christ. When Jesus entered the temple and cast out all them that bought and sold and then healed the lame and blind, the children began crying, "Hosanna to the son of David." When the chief priests and scribes became displeased with Jesus, He said unto them, "Yea have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." (Matt. 21:16) He perfected praise out of the mouth of Jonah, as

well, after he had spent three days and nights in the belly of the great fish, for Jonah said, "I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord." (Jonah 2:9) This is one way in which ye are made perfect, by rendering praise and thanksgiving unto God as did Peter, Paul, Anna, Simeon the Centurion and a host of others.

Furthermore the trial of your faith worketh patience, and patience must be allowed her perfect work that ye may be perfect and wanting nothing. For tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience and experience, hope; and hope maketh us not ashamed for the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. We need to remember that even the Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through suffering. At this point we are reminded of the silver-smith, who heats the furnace and continually removes the dross from the surface of the molten mass until, finally, he can see his image in the liquid metal. Then he knows that his work is finished. Paul, having spent his life in the ministry of God, and suffered, sometimes immeasurably, in the cause of truth, wrote to Timothy toward the close of his journey and said, "I am now ready to be offered, 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: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:6-8)

Love is also a source of perfection in Christ for God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect and perfect love casteth out fear.

But all these illustrations of the ways in which His people are made perfect in Him are the results of God's workmanship in the hearts of His

people. They permeate from the fact that the righteousness of Christ is imputed unto you, dear children of God, and your sins are imputed unto Him. And they are summed up in God's comforting words, "Come now, and let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Is. 1:18)

Now Paul comes to the heart of his text, for he says ye are come to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. Jesus continually makes intercession for us who were sometime afar off but now are brought nigh unto God through the shedding of His precious blood. In Revelation 12, when the child of the woman is caught up unto God and to his throne, we are told that Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, and prevailed against him and cast him out into the earth where he makes war with the woman in the wilderness. But the woman is given the wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness unto the place which is prepared for her there where she is nourished for a time, times and half a time from the face of the serpent. Now the child, of course, is Christ and the woman in the wilderness is the Church of the Living God in this age. And it is so revealing to note when the child was caught up unto God, Michael and his angels were able to overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. Then there was a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." (Rev. 12:10) Thus it is through the blood of the Lamb that Satan is subdued, that your conscience is sprinkled and purged from dead works to serve a living God, that your robes are washed and made white as snow and that you shall be presented,

someday, before His Father's throne without blemish in love that God might be all in all. Truly, the blood of Christ speaketh better things than that of Abel.

The majesty of Paul's text encouraging our hope that someday we might be raised to live in the eternal city, among the heavenly host with the elect of God and with Christ the Lamb in our midst lifts us to soaring heights far beyond our reach. Yet, I believe, Watts, somehow captures the wonder of these soaring heights in these words, "Eternal Power! whose high abode, Becomes the grandeur of a God; Infinite lengths, beyond the bounds, Where stars revolve their little rounds." And in like manner he also captures the feelings of our helpless yet yearning spirits when we peruse the marvel of eternal life and cry, "Lord, what shall earth and ashes do! We would adore our Maker, too; From sin and dust to thee we cry, The Great, the Holy and the High!"

Please pray for my wife, my family and myself while at a throne of grace.

In bonds of love,
Elder Stewart McColl

What coming and what returning sinner need despair of acceptance? No man can be worse than Paul was before his conversion; and no man can be worse than Peter was after his conversion.

Toplady

Christ is still crucified between two thieves; Antinomianism and Pharisaism.

Toplady

OBITUARIES

SISTER ERMA APPLE CLARK

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to call from our midst our beloved sister, Erma Apple Clark. Sister Clark was born to Eugene and Ross Apple on August 5, 1913,

and departed this life October 31, 1978, making her stay here sixty-five years. She was married to Orvin Clark in December 1928, who preceded her in death October 1972. To this union was born one daughter, Mrs. Robert McCoy, and two sons, Kenneth and Windall Clark.

Sister Clark united with Lickfork Church in August, 1967, and was a faithful member until her death. Her walk and conversation was manifestation of her hope through Christ. She was humble in manner and had a wonderful personality. Sister Clark desired not to be seen or heard but just to have a place with her people.

Sister Clark spoke of a cloud of loneliness since her husband's death, but there is coming a dawning of an uncloudy day when the Son of God and man shall come with healing in His wings and gather His children home; where there will be no loneliness or any such thing, but all will be like Him and be satisfied.

This was written by order of Lickfork Primitive Baptist Church. One copy to be sent to the family, one to the *Signs of the Times*, and one recorded in the church records.

Submitted in love,
David Underwood, Clerk
Elder Wallis Smith, Moderator

NANCY HALL MITCHELL

God in His infinite mercy saw fit to call Sister Nancy Hall Mitchell on July 18, 1978. She was the daughter of Joseph and Nancy Hall of Woodsdale, Person County, North Carolina, and the grand-daughter of Elder Andrew N. Hall, who was the founder of Shiloh Church, where she was a member. She was born and reared in a family of God fearing people who believed in the doctrine of Election. Her birthday was May 21, 1886, making her stay on earth 92 years.

She was married to Earl Mitchell of Person County and to this union was born two children; Fred Taylor, of Woodsdale, N.C., and Mrs. Evelyn Boone, of Amherst, Virginia, who survive her; also five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She had five brothers and one sister, one of the boys being her twin. They all preceded her in death and she was the last of her generation to go.

In her later years she lived with her son, Fred, who was very good to her. Although she became partially deaf, she still enjoyed attending church.

Her funeral was conducted at Shiloh Primitive Baptist Church at Woodsdale by her pastor, Elder C. B. Davis, Jr., and Mr. Fred Braswell of Bethel Hill Church. She was laid to rest in the church cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the coming of the Lord.

Clarisse Brooks, Church Clerk

PRISCILLA PARKER BROWN

The Lord saw fit to take from our midst our dear sister in Christ, Priscilla Brown on Aug. 12, 1978. She was born Feb. 12, 1902, making her stay on earth 76 years and 6 mos. She was married to the late Deacon Needham Brown and to that union was born one son, Cecil Brown.

She was received in Cypress Creek church by letter on Nov. 12, 1949 and remained a faithful member as long as her health permitted. She suffered severly for a long time. Christ said, unless you suffer with me, you shall not reign with me. We hope she suffered in Christ. We miss her presence very much.

Done by order of conference Nov. 11, 1978 and that three copies be made, one for the church records, one for the family, and one sent to *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Written by: Sister Anna Simpson
Elder Harmon Brown, Moderator

SISTER LENORA SKINNER WILLIAMS

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to call home our dear sister Williams; after an automobile wreck October 10, 1978. She was 82 years of age and enjoyed visiting and meeting with those of like Faith.

She joined The Falls of Tar River Primitive Baptist Church in July 1930, and was a faithful member. She was known from all parts of North Carolina and Virginia, as she visited the sister churches in all parts of the state, driving her car wherever she went. She was soft spoken and loved the doctrine of salvation by the grace of God. Visiting in the homes of the people she loved; talking of what Jesus had done for her; Her love for Him and her hope in Him for eternal life.

We, at the Falls of Tar River Primitive Baptist Church will miss her so very much; but we believe she is at long last resting in the arms of Jesus; asleep in Him, waiting for the grand and glorious day when He will come again to take His children home.

She is survived by three nieces and three nephews.

Her Funeral was conducted from the chapel of Gay Yost Funeral Home, by her Pastor Elder D. B. Stokes and Elder William L. Everett. The host of friends attending and the lovely array of flowers gave evidence of how much she was loved. She was laid to rest in Pineview Cemetery to await the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Resolved: A copy of these resolutions be sent to the family; one to *The Signs of the Times* and one for our church records.

Order of Conference, January 13, 1979.

Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator
Nina Pearson, Clerk

MARY "MOLLIE" YEATTS DALTON

As requested by Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church, the Lord willing I will write a few words in memory of our dear sister. In God's infinite wisdom and mercy He called to rest Sister Mollie Dalton November 20, 1978. She died at her home in Gretna, Va. Sister Mollie was born in Pittsylvania County, Va. to the late Jacob T. and Mary Dalton Yeatts. She is survived by one son, Carroll Dalton of Gretna, Va., six daughters, Mrs. Frances Marsh of Chatham, Va., Miss Vivian Dalton, Sister Irene Myers, Sister Gertrude Myers, and Sister Reba Myers all of Gretna, Va., Mrs. Pearl McCracken of Lynchburg; also ten grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Sister Dalton was received into the fellowship of Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church on July 23, 1944 and was baptized August 27, 1944. She was a faithful member although her health was not good for several years and was unable to attend regularly for quite some time.

She will be greatly missed by her church, family and friends. May we all be reconciled to the will of our Heavenly Father and may the family be blessed to think on what they have had more than what they have lost. Her funeral was conducted at Weatherford

Primitive Baptist Church by her beloved pastor Elder O. K. Tench. Her body was laid to rest in the Church Cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the glorious resurrection.

Written by: Marvin Brumfield

Moderator: Elder O. K. Tench

Clerk: L. H. Doss

BRO. GROVER EDWARDS

Brother Grover Edwards, 82 years of age, was called home by our Heavenly Father on December 14, 1978, after being hospitalized several weeks. Bro. Edwards was blessed by God to unite with The Falls of Tar River Primitive Baptist Church, May 1970. He was loved by all who knew him; a man of honesty and integrity; with a loving wife and children. He loved the doctrine of salvation by the grace of God, and always enjoyed meeting with the brethren talking about Jesus and singing the songs of Zion. We were blessed to meet at least once a week with him, his wife, and a few members to sing, talk and praise God (From Whom all Blessings Flow). We loved him and will miss him so very much; but feel and believe that he is now resting in the arms of Jesus. His hope is now real and his sufferings are gone.

Brother Edwards is survived by his wife, Mrs. Annie Lee Edwards; one son; Grover Edwards, Jr. of Nashville; three daughters; Mrs. Beatrice Winstead of Elm City; Mrs. Theresa Braswell, and Mrs. Patricia Daughtridge both of Rocky Mount. Three sisters; Mrs. Ida Sharp, Mrs. Gladys Pittman and Mrs. Morning Farmer, all of Sharpsburg; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; one bro. Jack Edwards of Sharpsburg.

His Funeral was conducted from Johnson Funeral Home Chapel, by his Pastor Elder D. B. Stokes and Elder W. L. Everett. He was laid to rest in Rocky Mount Memorial Park amid a host of friends and a large array of flowers giving evidence of how much he was loved. We believe he is asleep in Jesus, waiting for the second coming of our Lord.

Resolved: A copy of these resolutions be sent to the family, one to *The Signs of the Times*, and one for the church records.

Order of conference, January 14, 1979.

Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator
Nina Pearson, Clerk

Signs of the Times

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**IT IS TIME TO RENEW
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CRUCIFIXION

Break, my flinty heart, in pieces;
Run, my eyes, like rivers run;
See, his agony increases!
Man of sorrows, God's dear Son:
Mingled tears and blood are streaming
From his lovely head and eyes;
Now his bride he is redeeming.
Though the rabble him despise.

See his bosom swell with sorrows,
Cover'd o'er with clotted gore;
In his back are deep-made furrows,
Bow, my soul, thy God adore:
Stretched on the cross, and bleeding
At his head, back, hands, and feet;
For his murderers interceding,
Saints, his dying love repeat.

Now forsaken of his Father,
Overwhelm'd with grief and woe;
Very man, and yet Jehovah;
Reason cries, Can it be so?
Faith the glorious truth embraces,
As 'tis in the word reveal'd;
In his work the Godhead traces,
Owns him as her strength and shield.

Wounded, bruised, mangled Saviour,
Why, O why such love to me,
When my conduct and behaviour,
Calls for vengeance, Lord, from thee?
Hark! " 'Tis finished!" rocks are rending,
Hell and earth convulsed appear;
See, his head in death is bending,
Lovely Lamb, to me thou'rt dear.

O, what love and condescension,
In the Saviour's death I see;
Who the thousandth part can mention,
Or what he endured for me?
Now salvation work's completed,
And the dying Conqueror risen;
Death's destroyed, and hell defeated:
Saints, this Son to you is given.

1836

J.N.

MARKS OF A SHEEP

Dear Sirs,

To those of your readers who have felt in their hearts the law of God, quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and opening to their view the corrupt thoughts and intents of their hearts, whose ears have been circumcised by the Holy Ghost, and whose eyes have been anointed with spiritual eye-salve, I would give a little of the experimental exercises of my own soul; because I think if I am one of the Lord's people, there may be something in the remarks to suit some such like tossed-about being as myself. I often think my experience is peculiar to myself, which makes me sometimes judge it is devilish experience; and some, perhaps, in the household of faith, may think the same of themselves, and so by this means we may both be comforted together. If the Lord will, then, I shall give a little of the experience in which my soul has been, and often is exercised; and whether the marks cut me off from the Lord's quickened family, or they be a testimony that I am one, I shall endeavour to be faithful in this simple relation.

Some time back, I was under the rational, legal taskmasters of the day, those spiritual brick task-masters, who set me to work, but they themselves would not touch one particle of it, even with their little fingers. While I was under them, I endeavoured to perform the work, but, from real inability, always failed. Still I attempted, thinking the fault was my own, never questioning the truth of their Christ-dishonouring system. While in this state, I laboured hard for perfection and salvation, upon condition of my own judicious compliance with the means of grace, though I, like my taskmasters, in word, held not perfection in the flesh, nor salvation upon conditions. Here I set to work, and hard I toiled, assiduously applying myself to Baxter's, "Saint's

Rest," and other such duty-exalting and God-dishonouring works, striving hard for betterness in the flesh, yet finding myself no better. At length, having, I hope (though I often question it), been led by the Spirit to see the blasphemous fallacy of such a system, and that if I am saved it must be upon the ground of absolute redemption and unconditional grace, a change took place, and since that period my experience has been somewhat singular. Before, I could and did work hard, as I thought, for salvation; but now, I cannot be forced to believe that salvation is in any wise conditional. Before, I thought I had some good qualities about me; now, nothing earthly can persuade me that I am not one of the most subtle, crafty, and deep pharisaical professors: I really feel my heart a nest of every unclean bird. I do not imagine merely that I am wretched and detestable, but I actually feel myself so. The very presence of my body is a nuisance to me. At times I verily think I should be thankful to the Lord, if He would take me and dash me to pieces against the stones. I sometimes think I am a threefold spiritual hypocrite, that I am so subtle and crafty that what knowledge and experience I have, I have learned as a lesson from others. I think the Lord's people will one day find me out, and that it would be better for me to give up my profession at once than attempt to deceive the household of faith, and myself. When I hear the family of God converse, and look them in their countenances, I think I can see the very image and life of Jesus in them; but when I look into my own heart, I see and feel the very dregs of hell there; and it grieves me to hear God's people talking of my being a child of God, for I think they are deceived in me. Though I can see the glory and stability of the everlasting covenant, I cannot believe I have any interest in it. This makes me peevish and impatient, that I could quarrel with a straw. Then I conclude, what I feel is not the experience of

the Lord's family, but the work of Satan in my heart, ripening me for hell. I look back for an evidence that I am interested in the blood of Christ, but cannot find one; then I think that all those marks I aforesaid set down as evidences, were only my own carnal conceptions. As for praying, I might at seasons as well think of flying. I once thought I would get the better of this, but I get worse and worse. Very often all I can do is bend my knee, and come out with a few long sighs or straitened groans. Then I think it is my own fault, because I do not ask aright. Then I try again, but am mortified worse than before. For a moment I think this is the Spirit making intercession for me; but I no sooner think so, than it appear to be the devil groaning in me. O, I find it the hardest task possible to pray. Although I am more or less daily in this plight, I never for a moment question the God-glorifying, Christ-exalting, and Holy Ghost-magnifying doctrines of the blessed gospel in discriminating grace. Yea, I could freely venture every particle of my salvation on their truth; for though at one time I was sadly perplexed about their validity, my anxiety now is not, Are they true? but, Have I anything to do with them? To get rest to my soul, I sometimes try to squeeze myself in at this gate, "Come unto me all ye that labour", etc., and similar passages; but though I feel that I am weary, and heavy-laden, yet come I cannot. Then I try to take hold of this passage, "Look unto me, and be ye saved", etc.; but to look unto Jesus is to see Him by faith, and I cannot exercise faith, though it is just what I want. At last I am brought to where I started, "the wormwood and the gall"; then a little hope breaks in, that these feelings are the feelings of the Lord's family; but no sooner do I think this, than the devil hoists up doubting flag, and I am again involved in darkness and fretful anxiety. Sometimes I can truly say, "I am more brutish than any man"; "I am

a worm and no man"; "I abhor myself in dust and ashes"; I am "tossed with tempests, and not comforted"; I am "poor and needy, and seek water", and "hunger and thirst after righteousness"; then I am tempted to think these are all natural feelings and imaginations. I often feel as if I was neither spiritually dead nor alive, as if I was neither a child of God nor a child of Satan.

These, and many such things is my poor soul perplexed with; still my appetite can be satisfied no where but amongst the few despised outcasts, sarcastically called Antinomians.

Dear Sirs, if you, or any of your readers, can be made the means of giving me a dead lift, I shall feel very thankful.

Yours truly,
A Doubting Sinner

Preston, December 11, 1835

Everything that is suitable in the life of a child of God, everything that is desirable to the spiritual mind, and that is becoming the gospel of Christ, is made the subject of exhortations by the apostles. Exhortations, admonitions and reproofs do not imply conditions upon which the favor of God is offered; on the contrary, the love and favor of God are the cause of the exhortations. The exhortations of the apostles are inspired by the Spirit, and they touch the spiritual life, and reach and make manifest the desires of the spiritual mind; they stir up the pure minds of the saints by way of remembrance of those things which are first in our spiritual life, and which are contrary to our carnal minds. "Reproofs of instruction are the way of life", says the wise man; they are for our spiritual health and comfort; they feed the spiritual life. "Feed thy people with thy rod". The smittings of the righteous do not bruise and break, but are an excellent oil.

Minden, La. 71055
Dec. 5, 1978

Dear Brother Poole,

Just a few lines on second Thess. chapter 2, verse 13, 14. If there was such a thing as the plan of salvation it would be contained in those two verses. It reads. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and belief of the truth."

Without doubt there is more confusion and mystery in the experimental teaching of the Holy Spirit to each child of God than in any of the great works of salvation.

Salvation is made up of three parts. First, is God the author, His will and purpose in his choice of his elect people. The scriptures teach that we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, without blame before Him in Love. The only way we are involved in this choice is as a blessed recipient. This was set and fixed in the mind and purpose of God before any of us were.

Second, is the advent of Christ into the world, the miracles He performed, His teaching as set forth in the scriptures, His promises to His little ones. Even His name means God with us. These promises are the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. His taking upon Himself the sins of all His chosen. His death on the cruel tree of the cross. His burial and resurrection from the dead. He tells us that because I live, you may live also. He came that we might have life, Spiritually, and that we might have it more abundantly. This work of Christ in redeeming His people, justifying and atoning for their sins, was all done without any help from the sinner.

The third work of salvation is the teaching of Christ. In the 16th chapter of John, Christ tells us that it is expedient that He go away, "For if I go not

away the comforter will not come unto you; if I depart, I will send him unto you." He, the Holy Ghost, shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

My desire, if I know my desire, is to make a few comments on the work of the Spirit in sanctification. This Spirit, I think, is the quiet still voice that tells us to go this way or that way, that this way is right or this way is wrong. This is God's kingdom, set up and manifested in the heart of each child of God. Until this work is begun in him, the child of God is by nature a child of wrath, even as others. These others, this scripture speaks of, are the ones mentioned in the book of Proverbs. There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. This is the way we all travel, until touched by the Holy Spirit.

There are many scriptures that describe the work of the Spirit in the heart of a child of God. the first such work is bringing to the attention of the child of God, that he is a sinner, that within him dwells no good thing, that all or the best of his goodness is as filthy rags. When we are given the heart to examine ourselves and find that we have not one good thing to offer this just and Holy God, then do we cry with Paul, "Who can deliver me from the body of this death?" thus, we learn that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Then do we begin to search the scriptures.

In this search we find that the same Paul who considered himself the chief of sinners was the same one given as a pattern for those who come after him to believe unto life eternal. That David, a man after God's own heart, was an adulterer and murderer, causes one to hope that because God showed mercy on such as these, that we are not so far away that He could not reach even such as you find yourself to be, that he does not save someone because of what he is,

but in spite of what he is.

When, by the Spirit, this hope is set up in a child of God, he finds things much different than before. He has been turned from the love of the world and worldly things to those things that do not perish with the using. He longs for closer fellowship with people who believe as he does, to know more of the ways of Christ, a love for the truth that at one time he knew not. He becomes a seeking person.

In the Song of Solomon there is such a seeking person. "Tell me oh thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedeth, where thou maketh thou flock to rest at noon." Dear brethern, if this longing is sincere, He always answers. "If thou know not, oh thou fairest among women, go thou way forth by the footsteps of the flock, feed thy kids beside the Shepherd's tent." Is not this your desire?

He does not put the desire for Him in your heart and then withhold the way. He tells us in the 45th chapter of Isaiah, 19th verse, "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain."

So in conclusion, brethern, I believe that when the Spirit-and God is that Spirit- has taken up abode within your heart, you are ever being taught those things that are good for you, the things which are conforming you to the image of His darling Son, those things that are well pleasing in His sight. May it ever be thus with you.

Yours in hope,
Elder Graydon Smith

"And I will turn mine hand upon the little ones". (Zech. 13:7) I do not understand this to mean that when the Lord smites the Shepherd and scatters the sheep that He will protect the little ones from the stroke of justice. The phrase, "turn my hand upon", appears to me rather to imply antagonism,

punishment, the execution of judgment. The little ones are a part of the flock; they are all to know the just anger of a holy God on account of sin, the little as well as the great. This is the day of judgment; the Shepherd receives the stroke, and in that stroke that fell upon Him all the flock, to the least of the little ones, is included. Justice and judgment are thus executed for and upon every one of them. When Jesus died the flock all died in Him, in a legal and mystical sense. The sheep are all scattered, and left helpless and defenseless, and the Lord's hand is turned, in judgment, upon the little ones, when the Shepherd is stricken down. The condition of the Shepherd shows the condition of the whole flock. This condition of condemnation and death must be experienced in measure by every one of the little ones. But lo, to their glad surprise the Shepherd appears again, risen from the dead, having paid the debt of justice, and now with all power in His hands He gathers the sheep that were scattered, and carries the little ones in His bosom. The hand of the Lord is not turned upon them in anger any more, but is laid upon them in love and tenderness, to cover them in the day of judgment, and to uphold them in the time of trouble.

If this sentence, "And I will turn mine hand upon the little ones", had meant in protection from the judgment that fell upon the sheep, then it appears to me, it would have read, "But I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." The word "and", to my mind, includes them all in the judgment which turned the hand of the Lord upon the Shepherd and the sheep.

Fragments

Silas H. Durand

Some people can no more help cavilling at the doctrines of grace, than some dogs can help howling at the sound of a trumpet.

Toplady

Memphis, Tennessee

Dear Editors, and all who have a hand in making up and getting out the paper for the comfort and edification of God's children,

I most always feel a desire to pen a few lines when I send in for my renewal, but now I do it more fearfully than at one time. I have written when my heart was so full that I felt I would burst if I didn't, and then fear lest it was not from an unction from the Holy Spirit. But when I get the *Signs* and enjoy the travel of minds as they tell some of their experiences, believing they were the dealings of God in their lives, I feel drawn to them and am so thankful that I hope to have the same witness within me, and I am made to want to share mine. But when I take my pen I am made to ask myself - Will this be worth the space it takes up, if they see fit to print it?

I enjoyed the January *Signs* so very much and couldn't wait to talk with others about it. I went back and read the December issue again, and Elder McColl's editorial was so good. That is when I began to feel good that I felt to be with them when they rejoiced, and when they felt the cold blast of doubts and yes, even unbelief and fear, I could say, "That is my experience, too". I believe we have all been brought along and taught by the same teacher and that is what makes us understand each other, and causes us to bear with one another in each trial. It is indeed a wonderful thing to rejoice in the Lord. However, if one is not in the Spirit, nothing can enable one to truly "get" in the Spirit. I am like Elder Spangler once said, "If I can't feel to be one of the ones to whom this is written I can't feel comforted or uplifted. If I can feel a bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus, then I feel these things are for and to me, and nothing can hinder or keep me from reaching my eternal home which has been prepared for me".

I hope I am never allowed to underestimate the power and leadership of

God in any of the dealings with His children, or His sovereign right in everything He does with any of His creatures and the worlds He made. It is wonderful to believe that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Was Jacob seeking Him when God found him in a waste howling wilderness? I believe He finds one and then they are made aware of Him, and then they diligently seek His face and to please Him. They hunger for a resting place here in this world with a people who speak their language, speak the things they have been taught to believe in their hearts.

We have a sweet mother and daughter who came to us several years ago. She had been seeking a people who preached and talked as she felt for many years. She had corresponded with Elder Rhodes in Louisiana. He told her there was a church in Memphis. She asked and searched, and tried to find us, and finally the Lord led her to our meeting. They came into our fold, and I think I never knew anyone who is so completely at peace and satisfied and thankful to be among us. It is a pleasure to hear her tell of her long search for the church, and it is a pleasure to have them.

I always beg, "Please do not let this crowd out better material. I believe I love all of God's children, where ever they are, or what they belong to. I think all are where they are according to His purpose, and we do not always understand things, but He knows.

Please renew my subscription for one year and use the rest as you wish.

Lucille (Mrs. James E.) Young

AN ORIGINAL IDEA

Messrs. Editors, -- A few Sunday evenings ago, I went to hear a certain curate, who, at the close of his discourse, attempted to disprove believers' immersion, and to establish the Popish practice of sprinkling infants. He was, he said, rather unwilling to meddle with

the subject, but would let it lie in undisturbed repose, did not the Baptists agitate it.

Mingled with other incongruous remarks made by the preacher, was one on Rom. 6:5, "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." "This passage," said the preacher, "is by the Baptists made much of to prove immersion. Now," continued the Rev. Expositor, "everybody, who has a grain of common sense, knows what planted means. It means, putting a thing part in, and part out of, the ground, and leaving it there; so that, according to the figure, the Baptists should be put part in the water, and part out of the water, and remain there."

The Rev. Gentleman also told his auditory that the Baptists were "a sect who arose only about three or four, or four or five, hundreds of years ago; that they were actuated by a legal spirit, and might justly be called troublers in Israel."

Yours,

Tildesley, Nov. 1835

An Outcast

(With regard to the first part of the above, viz., the planting, we give the speaker full credit for the originality of his thought, for we do not think that any one, less wise than the curate of Sutton Courtney, could have been so exceedingly happy in invention. Nevertheless, we must ask him, which part he puts in, and which leaves out, when he sprinkles his pretty little babies, wherein, according to his own creed, they are made members of Christ, and children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, and when he thanks God for regenerating them?—As regards the statement, that the Baptists are a new sect, etc., we appeal to his conscience, as a professed believer in the discriminating truths of the gospel, whether he can solemnly bend his knee before God, and say, "The Lord is my witness, I do believe that believers' baptism by immersion has sprung up within the last few centuries, and that to maintain that ordinance is to trouble Israel? We ask him, as in the sight of an heart-searching God, whether it is not more likely to trouble God's spiritual Israel,

to maintain baptismal regeneration, and its awful appendages? God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, not a national one, and nothing short of the love and power of God, can make "children of God", etc., and to teach otherwise is to insult God, and trouble spiritual Israel. Eds.)

From "The Gospel Standard" 1836

2764 Clifton Ave. N.W.
Roanoke, Va. 24017

Dear Elder Smith,

Enclosed is a check to renew the *Signs of the Times* in my mother's name for two years. Please apply the remainder as you wish.

Also enclosed is a letter from a dear sister whom I assisted her pastor in baptizing this past July. I felt to ask her permission to send it to the *Signs* for publication if you consider it worthy of space.

Yours in hope,
(Elder) N. F. Conner

Route 2, Box 155A
Stuart, Va. 24171

Dear Brother and Mrs. Conner,

You are in my thoughts today, as I am thinking of the lovely meeting we had yesterday. It was a sweet feast to my soul to see such sweet fellowship with each other, and we hope we have sweet fellowship with God. The people that cheer me most on life's rugged road are the friends of my Master, the children of God.

I dreamed when I was just a little girl of the rough road that my sister and I would have to travel in this life. The road was so dark we would stumble and fall, and we would help each other up and go on our way feeling a little something in our hearts that surely the sun would shine again for us, and the way would be made smooth for just a little while. In real life it has been just that way, but I hope I have a sweet hope in Jesus, for I know that without Him I am nothing.

Back in the year of 1954, when my two oldest girls were about 2 and 3 years of age, I was out in the yard moving some brush. I got so tired I went in the house and lay down on the bed between my two little girls and fell asleep. In a dream I saw Satan come to me and he had a little scribbled piece of paper with my name on it. He told me I had only two years to live and hell would be my doom. When I awoke I was the most miserable creature that ever was in this world, for my sins rolled up before me like mountains.

I begged the good Lord for mercy both day and night, but no relief could I find, for my burden was so heavy. I wanted to talk to my Mama about this awful state that I was in, but I was afraid she wouldn't own me as a child, for I felt to be the black sheep of the family. I felt that I had sinned away my day of grace and that there was no hope for a sinner such as I. I went on this way, not telling anyone my condition until I got to where I could not eat nor sleep. I did not want to go to church or anywhere, for I could not talk without crying, and I could not tell anyone why I was crying. For about three weeks I was so sick that I could not care for my little children. I felt that I surely must die in this condition. I told my Mama that I felt like I was going to die and hell would be my lot, for I was such a sinner. She said she had felt this way, too, and then she told me her experience. That gave me some relief, but I felt that I was just the worst person there ever was. Mama was so kind, so loving, she just could not have ever been such a sinner as I felt to be. I went on in this state of mind for two years, and that was the longest two years of my life. I went to bed each night feeling that I would never live to see the light of another day. But God in His sweet mercy came to me in a sweet dream. I was in a hedge and I saw Jesus upon the cruel cross and His life-giving blood was running from His side. A voice said, "My people are hedged in and the devil can not destroy

them". I awoke with a heart so light and gay and I was singing, "Cast down but not destroyed". The sun shone so bright on that day. I do not remember just what month it was, but if it was December, "It was as pleasant as May".

Just as soon as I got my husband off to work I ran to tell Mama the good Lord had whispered sweet peace to my soul. We sang most of the day, and talked, and cried, together. "O, happy day, when the burden of my soul was rolled away."

But I did not stay happy very long. Soon I began to feel depressed, but It was never like it was before. Then I dreamed of talking to a dear brother. I told him of my dream, and my sweet hope, and he said, "Sister, go home to your friends and tell them what the Lord has done for your soul." But still I could not go until this past summer.

Please excuse all the mistakes my letter has. I have written much too long, but I wanted to tell you some of my experiences.

"Blessed be the ties that bind, Our hearts in Christian love." I look forward to the meeting days when I get to see you all. Hope all are well.

Your little unworthy Sister in hope,
Everine Chaney

Dallas, Texas

Dear Editors,

We have enjoyed another year of good reading from the *Signs*, for which we hope we are thankful. You have been so wonderfully blessed to carry on and our hope is that the same may continue in the future.

My subscription expires with the February issue. Enclosed is a check to cover same for another year.

Best wishes to the staff and may the great God of all righteousness be with us all now and in the future.

In bonds of love,
Pearl Lee

ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION

Elder Gilbert Beebe

In the January, 1979, issue of the *Signs of the Times* we published the last editorial on Predestination by Elder Gilbert Beebe, written originally on October 1, 1880. In the minds of many, nothing since the Apostles has been written on this subject that compares with this article.

We are happy to announce that this article has now been reprinted in pamphlet form and is obtainable from us at the price of four (4) for one dollar. We pay postage. We have no desire to make a profit on this and unless we sell our entire stock out, we won't even break even.

Brother Shannon Vaughn of Hazen, Arkansas, donated his time in printing this valuable article and only charged for materials.

This pamphlet will make an excellent gift to anyone who you may wish to show or tell what Old School Primitive Baptists believe on this subject. Please, no orders for less than four.

Order from:

**Signs of the Times
P.O. Box 1250
Salisbury, Maryland 21801**

Pastors, your help in distributing this pamphlet will be appreciated.

Editor

Price 4 each for \$1.00

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ORDINATION OF DEACONS

Jan. 7. 1979

Ordination of Bro. Clyde Debow and Bro. Odis Daughtridge, as Deacons of The Falls of Tar River Primitive Baptist Church.

A Presbytery was called composed of the following; Elders D. B. Stokes; W. L. Everett; W. B. Barnes: Deacons; George Williford; Tom Martin; Stedman Brown; Hassell Brown; Alvin Lancaster; John Williams; John Coker; Thelbert Hocutt; Carroll Williams and E. D. Ward.

The Presbytery was called into conference.

Conference was opened with Praise and Prayer by Elder W. B. Barnes.

A motion was made and carried for Elder D. B. Stokes to act as moderator.

It was moved and agreed to call Sister Nina Pearson as clerk.

The candidates were presented to the Presbytery by the Deacons of The Falls of Tar River Primitive Church.

Elder Stokes asked the Church if it was unanimously agreed to set Bro. Debow and Bro. Daughtridge apart as Deacons. It was unanimously agreed.

Elder Stokes asked the Presbytery if they had any questions or advice for the candidates. The Presbytery had no questions or advice, and were satisfied.

It was moved and agreed for Elder Stokes to deliver the charge to the candidates, and Elder Barnes to charge the Church. He spoke of this being a sacred matter; Paul was capable to give advice and charge the Church, and I feel that I am not. Having grown up in the Primitive Baptist Church, I have respect and love for the Falls Church, their Pastor and Deacons, and feel they are capable of making the right choice.

Elder Stokes gave the Charge to the candidates, reading from the 3rd Chapter of the book of Timothy, giving the qualifications of a Deacon. Listen and be not swift to answer. Read and study the scriptures, (The Word of God); show compassion: place yourselves in the life of

another. The Church is not to tie your hands. Take care of the needs of any member and report back to the Church.

The clerk read The Church Covenant.

The Elders laid hands on the candidates in Prayer.

Moved and agreed to return the candidates back to the Church as Ordained Deacons.

Moved and agreed to send a copy of these minutes to the *Signs of the Times*; a copy to the candidates and a copy for the Church records.

Moved and agreed to read the minutes; they were approved as read.

Moved and agreed to adjourn the Presbytery.

Elder D. B. Stokes, Moderator
Nina Pearson, Clerk

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

The 1979 session of the Staunton River Primitive Baptist Association will convene, according to appointment, at Malmaison Church, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, July 6, 7, 8, 1979, which is the second week-end in July.

Malmaison Church is located on State Road 726 in Pittsylvania County, about 6 miles N.E. of Danville, Va. Signs to the Association will be posted on U.S. 29 and U.S. 360 highways for directions to Rd. #726 and the church.

We invite our corresponding brethren and friends for this meeting.

Burnell B. Williams, Association Clerk

DIRECTIONS TO THE UPPER COUNTRY LINE ASSOCIATION 1979 SESSION

The seventy-third session of the Upper Country Line Primitive Baptist Association will be held at Moon's Creek Primitive Baptist Church, the Lord willing, with Moon's Creek as the host church.

Moon's Creek Church is located approximately one mile off Highway No. 86, midway between Danville, Virginia and Yanceyville, North Carolina, at Providence, Caswell County, North Carolina.

This session convenes at 11:00 A.M., Saturday before the third Sunday in July, 1979. (July 14, 15, 16)

Elder Donald E. Smith, Clerk

BLACK CREEK UNION

The next session of the Black Creek Union will be held, the Lord willing, with the church at Pittman's Grove the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in July, 1979.

All lovers of the truth are invited to come and worship with us.

Harold Pittman, Clerk
Box 4524
Rocky Mount, N.C. 27801

It was not in the hope of getting out of the lion's den, nor after he had been taken out, that Daniel had his greatest joy and comfort, but in the presence of the Lord while he was there, and in the knowledge that the angel of the Lord had shut the lions' mouths. It was not in the prospect of getting out of the fiery furnace, nor after they had come out, that the three Hebrew children experienced the chief blessing of their lives, but it was in the presence of the Son of God with them in the furnace, and that faith in Him which was given them in such measure that by it they quenched the violence of the fire, so that the flames could not kindle upon them.

It is in the tribulation that we are enabled most sensibly to rejoice, for there is our dear Saviour most clearly manifest to our souls. It is while bearing about His dying in our body that His life is manifest in our mortal flesh. It is in the fellowship of His sufferings that we know the fellowship of His joy. (II Cor. 4)

Fragments

Silas H. Durand

December 23, 1978

Route 5, Box 235
Carthage, Miss. 39051

Dear Elder Smith,

Enclosed you will find my personal check in the amount of ten dollars to pay for the past year's subscription and the coming one. I have not meant to be so slow, but I have had much to happen to me and much on my mind for the past year, and when I would think to do it I

was not where I could do so, and when it was where I could, I would not think of it. I trust that you can find it in your heart to forgive your fellow yokeman and be forbearing in my infirmity.

I trust that the past year has been good to you and yours. As a human I could find things that I could question but I know that our God is just and right and too wise to make a mistake and I just thank Him that I can truthfully and willingly say that He has been so much better to me than I deserve. May the coming year be the best ever to you. Remember us in your petitions when pleading for Zion. We who are contending for the faith that was once delivered to the saints (in the Primitive doctrine and practice) are getting thin here. The others, while a larger bunch in number, are not growing either. However, to really enjoy fellowship, love, and peace in the Spirit is worth more than numbers and human friendship. I am, I trust, a little brother.

In Christ Jesus,
Waddell Moore

December 31, 1978
33 Hillcrest Ave. N.E.
Roanoke, Va. 24012

Dear Ones in the Lord,

A few weeks ago I met a friendly lady who referred to their church building worship room as a sanctuary. Later I realized the word does appear somewhere in the Scriptures and it seems to me it does mean a place of worship, as a general definition.

But as for a spiritual definition, Jesus Christ is our only sanctuary and if His blessed presence is hid, the meeting house fails to be a sanctuary.

Doesn't the word also mean a place of rest, spiritually and naturally? Yes, Jesus Christ is the poor sinner's rest. Can the word be interpreted as home? The child of God is never really going to be home until he gets to heaven. That is his home and his eternal rest.

Recently one of our servants of God spoke on the scripture, "In my Father's house are many mansions", and expressed that the mansions spoken of there were God's people. Here also we are made to think of the stones that make up the Temple. Isn't it true that each little stone (each little child of God) is part of the sanctuary of Heaven? We recall Jesus said unto His people, "I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people". (Heb. 8:10)

Of course we know that the subject of God's praise is endless. I have pondered on a great subject with the one word, Sanctuary, which I hope to look up in the scriptures.

We would hope that one or more wise children of God will be given to write sweet comfort on this word, Sanctuary. There is nothing to do but wait upon the Lord, for all we receive, including the enlightened sermons to God's praise that He gives His servants, and though they may rarely mention the word, Sanctuary, in the gospel as it is given to them of God, isn't it true that the gospel, as God gives it to us, is the sanctuary - the height of happiness for the believing christian as they journey through this life? It seems to me that the word, Gospel, and the word, Sanctuary, come together with harmony and love in it through and through. Yes, God is love, and He is everywhere present and nowhere absent.

I am a poor weak worm of the dust. Anything that has been done for me has been by the mercies of our Lord. Oh, how I hope the word, our, applies to me.

Humbly,
Mamie Rose Ferguson

The same night I wrote the above concerning the Sanctuary, I promptly got a copy of the scriptures with a concordance in the back. It gave me the following information concerning this word. I feel I want to add the following scriptures to my thoughts on the Sanctuary.

Exodus 25:8 says, "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them."

In Leviticus 19:30 we find, "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord". Again, the same holy commandment from the Lord is found in Leviticus 26:2, "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord".

Psalms 63:1, 2 says, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."

Psalms 73:17, "Until I went in the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

Psalms 74:7, "They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground".

Psalms 77:13, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?"

Isaiah 8:13, 14, "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

Lamentations 2:7, "The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn feast."

Ezekiel 11:16, "Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God: Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come." Verse 17 of this chapter continues with much comfort.

Daniel 9:17, "Now therefore, O our

God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake."

Hebrews 9:1, 2 "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary."

The above references all came from the concordance that I have. Maybe these verses will help someone to think on the Sanctuary.

I enjoy reading the *Signs*, very much, especially the experiences of God's children, the dealings of God with them, the humbleness and love, and the love and fellowship to God and His quickened people.

If you wish to publish this you may. If it does not praise God or honor His precious people, I don't want it published. May God direct.

A poor small Sister,
Mrs. Mamie Rose Ferguson

ON CONTROVERSY

Dear Sir,

As you are likely to be engaged in controversy, and your love of truth is joined with a natural warmth of temper, my friendship makes me solicitous on your behalf. You are of the strongest side; for truth is great, and must prevail; so that a person of abilities, inferior to yours, might take the field with a confidence of victory. I am not therefore anxious for the event of the battle; but I would have you more than a conqueror, and to triumph not only over your adversary, but over yourself. If you cannot be vanquished, you may be wounded. To preserve you from such wounds as might give you cause of weeping over your conquests, I would present you with some considerations, which, if duly attended to, will do you the service of a coat of mail; such

armour, that you need not complain, as David did of Saul's, that it will be more cumbersome than useful; for you will easily perceive it is taken from that great magazine provided for the christian soldier, the word of God. I take it for granted, that you will not expect any apology for my freedom, and therefore I shall not offer one. For method's sake, I may reduce my advice to three heads--respecting your opponent, the public, and yourself.

As to your opponent, I wish, that before you set pen to paper against him, and during the whole time you are preparing your answer, you may commend him by earnest prayer to the Lord's teaching and blessing. This practice will have a direct tendency to conciliate your heart to love and pity him; and such a disposition will have a good influence upon every page you write. If you account him a believer, though greatly mistaken in the subject of debate between you, the words of David to Joab, concerning Absalom, are very applicable: "Deal gently with him for my sake". The Lord loves him and bears with him; therefore you must not despise him, or treat him harshly. The Lord bears with you likewise, and expects that you should show tenderness to others, from a sense of the much forgiveness you need yourself. In a little while you will meet in heaven; he will then be dearer to you than the nearest friend you have upon earth is to you now. Anticipate that period in your thoughts; and though you may find it necessary to oppose his errors, view him personally as a kindred soul, with whom you are to be happy in Christ for ever. But if you look upon him as an unconverted person, in a state of enmity against God and his grace (a supposition which, without good evidence, you should be very unwilling to admit), he is a more proper object of your compassion than of your anger. Alas! he knows not what he does: but you know

who has made you to differ. If God, in his sovereign pleasure, has so appointed, you might have been as he is now; and he, instead of you, might have been set for the defence of the gospel. You were both equally blind by nature. If you attend to this, you will not reproach or hate him, because the Lord has been pleased to open your eyes, and not his. Of all people who engage in controversy, we, who are called Calvinists, are most expressly bound by our own principles to the exercise of gentleness and moderation. If, indeed, they who differ from us have a power of changing themselves, if they can open their eyes, and soften their own hearts, then we might with less inconsistency be offended at their obstinacy; but if we believe the very contrary to this, our part is, not to strive, but in meekness to instruct those who oppose, "if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth." If you write with a desire of being an instrument of correcting mistakes, you will of course be cautious of laying stumbling-blocks in the way of the blind, or of using any expressions that may exasperate their passions, confirm them to their prejudices, and thereby make their conviction, humanly speaking, more impracticable.

By printing, you will appeal to the public, where your readers may be ranged under three divisions. First, such as differ from you in principle. Concerning these I may refer you to what I have already said. Though you have your eye upon one person chiefly, there are many like-minded with him; and the same reasoning will hold, whether as to one or to a million. There will be likewise many who pay too little regard to religion, to have any settled system of their own, and yet are pre-engaged in favour of those sentiments which are least repugnant to the good opinion men naturally have of themselves. These are very incompetent judges of doctrines, but they can form a

tolerable judgment of a writer's spirit. They know that meekness, humility, and love, are the characteristics of a christian temper; and though they affect to treat the doctrines of grace as mere notions and speculations, which, supposing they adopted them, would have no salutary influence upon their conduct; yet from us, who profess these principles, they always expect such dispositions as correspond with the precepts of the gospel. They are quick-sighted to discern when we deviate from such a spirit, and avail themselves of it to justify their contempt of our arguments. The scriptural maxim, that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God", is verified by daily observation. If our zeal is embittered by expressions of anger, invective, or scorn, we may think we are doing service to the cause of truth, when in reality we shall only bring it into discredit. The weapons of our warfare, and which alone are powerful to break down the strong holds of error, are not carnal, but spiritual; arguments fairly drawn from scripture and experience, and enforced by such a mild address, as may persuade our readers, that, whether we can convince them or not, we wish well to their souls, and contend only for the truth's sake: if we can satisfy them that we act up to these motives, our point is half gained; they will be more disposed to consider calmly what we offer; and if they should still dissent from our opinions, they will be constrained to approve of our intentions.

(Continued next month)

A truly enlightened believer (i.e. one who has a clear view of gospel privileges, and makes conscience of gospel duties), stands between two fires; the pharisees call him an Antinomian, and the real Antinomians call him a pharisee.

Toplady

EDITORIAL.

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." Proverbs 8:22-31.

If God would bless me, I would like in some measure to bring before you some picture of the glory of Christ. The scripture in the 22nd verse, to me, is Jesus speaking. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way...." The writer does not say, "In the beginning of his ways", but "in the beginning of his way". In this chapter Christ is presented first as being one with God in the creation; in the creation of all things. He is presented in the Oneness of God in all the realm of nature, and the latter verses speak to us of His eternal Sonship with the Father before the world was, in the covenant of grace. In the lives of those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, they often see the *way* of God before they see the *glory* of God. People, from the natural standpoint, can behold the wonders of God in creation and in providence, but how blessed are the people, wherever they are, who can behold One who is equal in

creation as He is in providence and in grace; when they can behold One whose work is as effectual in one realm as it is in another. The first request that Moses made of God after the manifestation of God to him that He was God, was, "Shew me thy way. If I have found grace in thy sight show me now thy way". In the same chapter Moses was led to say, "Show me thy glory". In our spiritual knowledge, if we have any, it is often first a picture of the way of God - not the ways of God, but the way of God. As a sinner beholds the way of God then the holiness of His law appears. As he beholds this holiness then the justice in condemnation of a sinner appears. How wonderful it is when God brings a sinner to inquire to show him His glory. God did show Moses His glory. First the request, "Show me thy way", and second, "Show me thy glory". If we haven't seen the glory of Christ before we leave here I question we will ever see it in the life to come. And I don't believe that a person can really, truly see the glory of Christ without believing that they are a particular people. The way that God showed Moses His glory was to place him where God had already prepared a place. The Scripture says, "Behold, there is a place by me". What a blessing, "A place by me". "And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen". (Exodus 33:22-23) I don't know in all the word of God where God could have more wonderfully brought to Moses' view His glory than just this way. Do you? He covered him with His hand. What a good covering that is, too. A safe place, while all His glory was passing and His works were being unfolded His hand covered him. Have you ever felt the need of the hand of the Lord covering you? Have you ever known the truth of that scripture, "The eternal God is thy

refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms:"? (Deut. 33:27) In our pilgrimage here we need help from above and we need help from beneath.

In Proverbs 8:23 it says, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." If there is a doctrine precious to me it is the eternal Sonship of Christ. Even before the world was made He was with the Father. The scripture clearly shows that He was the creator of the world and all things therein. The apostle tells us in Colossians 1:16, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:"

John, in the first chapter brings Christ to our view as the eternal Word of God - not as Matthew, Mark, or Luke does, but he soars away. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." I think probably if you or I had to write that scripture we would have passed on, and not have said any more about it, but the Lord layed an emphasis on that Word. He says, "The same was in the beginning with God". I know of no reason that last statement was made but to lay the emphasis on it. "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." Paul, in writing to the Hebrews said, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person". (A person cannot see the glorious work of Jesus and the salvation of His people without seeing that quality - the express image of God's image and the brightness of His glory).

“And upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Heb. 1:1-3) Proverbs 8:23-26 says, “I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world”. We know all these things that I have said are but a setting forth of the things that God’s word has proclaimed throughout the ages.

Now comes that relationship of the covenant of Grace. “Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him:” (Prov. 8:30) It is impossible to see the glory of God without seeing the glory of His Son. It is impossible to see the glory of the Son without seeing the glory of the Father. And when we think about this glory, and the wonders of God the Father and of God the Son and of God the Holy Spirit, in all this God glorifies His Son and His Son glorifies Him. It was a unison of work.

As Christ approached the hour of death He asked the Father, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” (John 17:5) Christ also thought that not only would His work be glorifying to His Father, but we are taught that certain things wrought in us glorify God as the Father glorified Him. Also the Holy Spirit in taking the things of Christ and bringing them to your heart, is the glorifying of Jesus always. Seldom do we stop and consider that there is not one moment of peace in our heart, not one moment of joy that lifts us above self, not one moment of true praise, but only as the work of the Holy Spirit opens to us and glorifies

Jesus in our hearts. So it is the glory that God is glorified with in Christ’s work. God glorified His Son and His Son glorified Him and the work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify that work of the Father and the Son. “Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;” (Prov. 8:30) We can only glimpse at that day, before the world was made, before the foundation of the world, before the highest crest of the hills was made, of that unity of the Godhead, of that pleasure that God had with His Son, in that eternal covenant that was ordered in all things and sure, whereby His Son would come and take upon Himself the form of a servant and be to you and I, if we are not deceived, all of the love of God. The first text of scripture I ever felt a burden roll off my heart from was the text, “God is love”. How little I knew about it then, if I know anything at all now, but some way that day a burden was removed.

Later, we are made to see that out of all the wonders of God in His creation, and all the wonders of God in providence, His love only shines in His Son whom He sent forth to be a propitiation for our sins. God is love, and this is the exaltation of the wisdom of God. Someone would say, well, how can you exalt love as wisdom? Christ was both. Paul said of Christ; “Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (I Cor. 1:30) So in all the realm of providence God’s wisdom shines forth only in the eternal will whereby He has determined through the work of Jesus to redeem His people, to purchase them back to satisfy the commands of God’s righteous law for them, and to show a wisdom that excells all other wisdom. In Job 28 we find the question, “Where shall wisdom be found?” One says, “It is not here.” Another says, “It is not in me”. The conclusion was, “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom”. So both the wisdom of God and the love of God was fully ex-

pressed in the sending of His Son. "God is love". The holy highway for sinners to enter heaven was called "*the Way*" in the Bible. Not *a* way. I can start to Maryland and I may go by the city of Washington, or I may go by the Bay Bridge. Those are both a way. But Jesus said, "I am *the way, the truth, and the life*: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) What does He mean? He means they come through His righteousness. They come through His redemption. They come through every merit that the sinner has or has had that was given him in our blessed Lord. "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight rejoicing always before him: Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men".

I notice in the New Testament almost every salutation at the beginning of a chapter the apostle mentions two things we need - grace and peace. He doesn't say we need peace and grace, because we can't have peace before grace. We have to have grace and then peace. And another thought I notice in the salutations of the epistles is, "From God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ". See the oneness! He brings His mercy, but most times He sends grace and peace. I like the way that Peter expresses it in II Peter 1:2, "Through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord". There cannot be a genuine true peace in our hearts unless we see the unity of the Godhead in the realm of salvation. When Christ entered the world many books were written of His life. Also many books could be written on His glory before He came into the world, and if God blesses me to live long enough I want to write about His glory before this world was: that there was a Oneness; that He was the Creator; that this was His creation, and I want to write about His glory while He was here and His glory now. It is an endless subject, isn't it? An endless subject. He brought His first begotten Son into the

world to let all the angels worship Him. The message goes out, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men". (God's will to men.) That is the way we could have put it. God's will to men. He veiled His glory while He was here. It is still veiled upon the minds. It will always be veiled to the carnal mind of men and natural man. But my friends, those of you who have tasted this are continually looking for His glory. You look for His glory in the way you read your Bible. First you will find His sufferings, and that will lead you to His glory. I like to think how God begins a work in the heart. First, the eyes are cast down; they go forth weeping. They are like the publican; they can't lift their eyes to heaven. There is a smiting of the breast, and then gradually, as God brings the forgiveness of our sins to our hearts, (whether it be a gradual load laid down, or whether it be suddenly) our eyes are lifted - lifted. No wonder David said, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" (the elevated realm that we are talking about) "from whence cometh my help". This is a holy hill that gradually I was raised to. Then I could cry with David, "O send out thy light and thy truth": (Light and truth are inseparable) "Let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill." (Psa. 43:3) That was a holy hill where Christ died, wasn't it? It was an exalted place.

His glory was veiled and yet it was such that a man who couldn't see naturally could see Christ's glory. (I mean from the standpoint of understanding all about Christ.) In John 9 the man who was born blind didn't know much of it. He couldn't explain lots of things; and I can't and you can't. He couldn't tell all about Christ. The people pressed him, but he could only tell them one thing. The people who were enemies of the great work of Christ, pressed him. They said, "Give God the praise; We know that this man is a sinner". They were saying, "That man is only a man.

He is a sinner". He answered and said, "I know not whether he be a sinner or no one thing that I know, whereas I was blind, now I see". (John 9:24-25) I know a night when I was blind and then I could see. Can you say that? Many of you can. Yes, blind, but now I see. Christ appeared and said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" (John 9:37) He said, "Yes, I believe, I believe". Don't tell me that God's work in the heart of a sinner doesn't do something for him. But the greatest work it can do in your heart is to give you a glimpse of the glory of Christ, the honor of Christ. That is the greatest. I remember in going to Canada many years ago, and Elder Ruston announced a hymn I had never heard before. "Lord let me see thy beautiful face. It yields a heaven below, And angels around the throne will say, 'Tis all the heaven they know." It had just the right ring in my soul - a glimpse of Christ. And you can't have a true glimpse without seeing His glory. I'm not surprised that Christ was concerned with two things while He was here on earth. One was the glorifying of His Father, and the other was that His people see His glory. He was concerned that they be where He was, because they couldn't see it unless they were there. I have little concern as I face eternity, and I want to find but one thing in the Bible while I live here on earth, and that is the glory of Christ and the glory of the Father.

I went to visit a dear sister this afternoon and she said, "Talk on the Bible". I picked up the Bible and read the scripture to her, "Thy shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee..." (Deut. 8:2) What a blessing it is that God has a way of humbling sinners like us. It is a true blessing that when God humbles us we are not going to do any living thing any harm. Love fills our breast. We can't describe it. And I said,

"God brings His people often through a way to prove them; not to prove to them how strong they are, but to prove how weak they are and that He is a covenant keeping God." "All the way which the Lord God has brought thee". Do you remember that? Many of you do. Can you look back over your journey? Can you realize part of it was to humble you? And to sum the whole thing up - to prove that "Man shall not live by bread alone..." Thank God for that. "But by every word" (One word of God applied to your heart is worth more than 10,000 worlds) "But by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God."

Something happens to me when I read that Scripture found in the last part of the 3rd chapter of II Cor. where it says, "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass" (That is when the veil of the Law has been removed.) "the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory". (If we behold things of the gospel it is like looking through a glass.) It is impossible for a person to really see the glory of Christ unless something has changed them into what they see and feel. They are taught by Him. They are enabled by Him to see part of His sufferings, part of His heavenly glory, and they are waiting (where ever they are, they are waiting) for His second coming when they shall see Him as He is. When we shall surround the throne of God, what a wonderful day that will be, and to forever be with the Lord. Paul concludes the chapter in the Thessalonians on the subject with this; "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." Amen and Amen.

(Elder) D. V. Spangler
(A sermon preached at Snow Hill Old School Baptist Church, Snow Hill, Maryland, December 30, 1978)

KNOWN DEPRAVITY

Take the whole range of God's children, interrogate them first and last, and say to them, one by one, "Did you merit the grace of God"? Was there any-

thing in your life, anything in your heart, anything in your lips, before you were called, so truly holy, so invariably pure, so pleasing in God's sight, as to merit His grace?" Every child of God, whose heart and conscience have been made tender in His fear, would answer in a moment, "No; for whatever I might have been in the sight of others as moral and religious, I certainly was in myself the farthest of all from God and godliness. If I was not an open sinner, I committed sin in secret; if my life was not outwardly vile, my mind was full of pride and worldliness, and my lips of vanity and folly; if I was not altogether abandoned to gross licentiousness, my heart was as a cage of unclean birds. I had no true fear of God, no real love to Him, no sure hope in His mercy. My religion was almost my worst feature, for I was a Pharisee, building up a Babel of good works, trying to climb to heaven on a ladder of duties, and reckoning God my debtor for the poorest acts of mere legal, external, and I now see hypocritical service."

J. C. Philpot

FREE GRACE

Must there not be always a proportion between what is bought and what is paid? If eternal life could be bought, what equivalent sum could be offered for it? What price could be paid at all adequate to an eternity of bliss? But when we put into the balance what man is as a sinner by nature and practice, then to presume to proffer a few paltry deeds, which men call good works, a few duly muttered prayers, a few shillings dropped into a charity plate, a regular observance of private and public worship, an unflinching sacramental attendance, a due keeping of feasts and fasts, when the heart is really absorbed in sin and folly,--to lay these poor miserable performances down before the throne of a holy God as so many meritorious acts, and say, "I have done

my duty, regularly attended church or chapel, and now I want to be paid: give me heaven; give me eternal life; give me bliss unspeakable; give me that which will ravish my heart through endless ages:"--common sense revolts at the idea of a poor fallen sinner using such language and attempting to drive such a bargain with God for heaven. I appeal to you if it is not insulting to God, mocking the Majesty of heaven, to tell Him in heart if not in lip that a few good works can merit eternal life. I have purposely used strong language to show you what human merit and what human presumption are in all their naked deformity. Heaven is not to be bought, eternal life is not to be earned. It is granted or is withheld; it is a free gift, or it is never received at all.

J. C. Philpot

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

ACTS 3:1-11

Of all the signs and wonders that the apostles did through the power of God, only those are recorded in the Scriptures that are needful for the instruction of the children of God in righteousness and the confirmation of their faith. The first eleven verses of the third chapter of Acts relate an incident in the apostolic ministry of Peter and John that occurred soon after the descent of the Holy Ghost and the establishment of the visible church on the day of Pentecost. Peter and John visited the temple at Jerusalem at the ninth hour of the day, a special time of prayer, and saw a lame man that had been carried daily and laid at the gate of the temple, that is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that came to the temple for worship, and who was about to ask alms of the two apostles. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth

rise up and walk". Peter then took the cripple by the right hand and lifted him up, and the bones of his ankles and feet received strength. The cured man leaping, stood and walked and entered with them into the temple praising God. Those who witnessed the miracle were filled with wonder and astonishment at that which had happened to the lame man, who held Peter and John, as they ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

Peter and John were witnesses of this demonstration of the mighty power of God. Out of the mouths of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. These two apostles were thought to be the oldest and the youngest of the apostles respectively. It seems appropriate that they should participate in this miracle, for it is by a miracle of grace that every child of God enters savingly into a knowledge of the truth, from the time that the first one of the family of the redeemed tasted that the Lord is gracious, until the last one finds a place in that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Peter and John went together into the temple, denoting that blessed fellowship that the children of God have together in spiritual companionship when they sit down in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Peter and John were together at the trial of Christ, they ran together to his sepulcher, and they came to the temple together, not to offer up the sacrifice of lamb or bullock on a Jewish altar, but to attend to prayer and to offer spiritual sacrifices, also to preach to the Jews who assembled in numbers at the ninth hour, which was three o'clock in the afternoon.

This was one of the hours observed for prayer and sacrifice by the Jews. It was the ninth hour when Jesus Christ on the cross commended his spirit to God as he gave up his life, saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Prayer is the christian's vital breath, his means of communication with God. A sigh, a

cry for mercy, a groan because of sin from a burdened soul in prayer, is indited in the heart by the spirit of God and is heard and registered in heaven. When the high priest under the law dispensation made intercession for Israel, he took a live coal of fire from the brazen altar of sacrifice and placed it upon the incense on the golden altar. As the fragrant incense vapor ascended, perfuming the place of worship, the high priest offered prayer. When a child of God, one of the priesthood of believers, prays, there is a work of the Holy Spirit in his heart, convicting him of sin and teaching him the justice of his condemnation and the righteousness of that fiery law that went forth from the hand of the Lord at Sinai. It shows him his ruin in nature, and in its application consumes all the combustible material of creature effort and legal works. The law burning in the bosom of the convicted sinner as holy fire shows him the vileness of his heart and causes him to groan within himself and to cry for mercy. The creature was born in sin, and to live unto God, must die to sin and realize his need of Christ.

As the ninth hour was observed as an hour of prayer in Jewish worship, there is in this a spiritual signification. It denotes judgment in the sense that when a sinner prays for mercy, he acknowledges the righteous judgment of God for his sins. It was not far from the ninth hour when the first passover lamb was offered up at the time of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt for the promised land. This lamb died typically in the place of and for the Israelites, and by the sprinkling of the blood of this passover lamb on the lintels of the door posts of the houses of the children of Israel, they escaped the wrath of God and became a nation. Jesus met the judgment of God for his bride, the church, at the ninth hour of the day. He suffered for her and in her stead all the penalty that she would have had to

endure if he had not been a propitiation for her sins. By his death and resurrection the church became a holy nation and a peculiar people of the Lord. At the very hour Jesus died, the high priest in the temple was about to slay the passover lamb when suddenly the earth shook, rocks were rent, many graves were opened, and the veil of the temple was rent asunder from top to the bottom, showing that the way into the holiest was now made open, that the type had ceased, as Christ the true passover lamb fulfilled the requirements of the law and made the observance of ceremonial rites no longer necessary. At the ninth hour Jesus died with a prayer upon his lips as he commended his spirit to the Father. When we enter the church, which is the true temple of God, it is through prayer and supplication; it is because of the merit of the sacrifice of Christ; it is through a sense of guilt having lain heavy on our conscience and our inability to lighten the burden. We can not stand or walk in our own strength before God. The man who was healed in the miracle under consideration could neither stand nor walk. He was lame from his mother's womb. All mankind is conceived in sin, born under its curse, unable to meet its just requirements and under its condemnation. This man had been carried daily to the temple that he might receive alms. This shows he could not stand or walk or live of himself, and that no man could relieve his infirmity. Vain is the help of man to relieve the sinner.

The word certain is used by the Holy Spirit to designate this man from all other individuals and shows him to be a representative character. A subject of grace is distinguished from all other individuals not receiving God's favor. This man represents a sinner who is convicted of sin and is slain by it. Such a character is separate from the world. This man had no strength or means by which he could relieve himself and was fully aware of his physical infirmity. He

had to be brought to the gate of the temple to which reference has been made. It is the law that brings a subject of God's redeeming love to a realization of his need, for the law is the schoolmaster of believers unto Christ that they might be justified by faith. The decalogue manifests the wound of sin and the ceremonial law points to the remedy, but is powerless to apply it. The law therefore is a ministration of death. Sacrifices under the law dispensation were offered daily, but could not take away sin. The repetition of these sacrifices day after day and year after year emphasized their impotency to purge the conscience or cleanse forever the foul stain of sin. The daily presence of this invalid at the temple to beg alms proved the gravity of his condition. He was incurable by any aid of man.

Peter and John bade this man to look upon them, not that they could of themselves effect a cure, but that through their ministration he might look to Jesus who is the fullness of grace and truth. Peter bade the afflicted one in the name of Jesus of Nazareth to rise up and walk, stating that he had neither silver nor gold to give him, gifts that perish with the using. Jesus had resided a considerable time as the word made flesh in his holy humanity in Nazareth. So the lame man was bidden to rise and walk in the name of Jesus Christ, the God-man, the holy one who had left the shining courts of heaven's effulgent glory to assume holy human flesh, that he might bring many sons to glory. When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman and made under the law to redeem his church, which was under the law. The children of God being partakers of flesh and blood, Jesus likewise partook of the same that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver them that all their lifetime are subject to bondage. The law of God required obedience in the flesh, therefore Jesus was manifest in the

flesh. In Christ dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily. In the matchless name of Jesus the lame man was bidden to rise up and walk. Peter then took the afflicted one by the right hand, which denotes acceptance, fellowship. Those that enter into fellowship with the son of God are placed at the right hand of Christ when the Lord shall come with his angels and sit upon the throne of his glory. Immediately the lame man was lifted up, his feet and ankle bones received strength and he was able to leap and walk and to praise God.

The poor child of God who has felt the plague of his own heart, and to be without hope in the world, leaps in a spiritual sense when his burden is removed, when peace is spoken to his soul, when he discerns Jesus as his great salvation, when he is lifted up from law into grace, when he enters into manifest life in Christ, and his soul magnifies the Lord and rejoices in his Savior. It is then that he walks, not after the flesh, but after the spirit. It is stated that the healed man entered into the temple. When the child of God is lifted up above the condemnation of the law, he enters into that rest prepared for the people of God and has his place in that antitypical temple of lively stones built up for a habitation of God through the spirit. The lame man, fully restored, resorted to Solomon's porch, one of the precincts of the temple that then was. Solomon typifies wisdom as well as peace. In the spiritual temple the subject of God's grace learns that wisdom that is from above, and which is pure and peaceable. Jesus Christ is made unto his people wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. By nature we learn wisdom from man, which is foolishness with God, but through the healing power of the Great Physician of our souls, we are taught the wisdom of God. The lame man did not enter the temple until he was healed, and the little ones in Zion do not learn the wisdom that is from above until they are made alive spiritually. It

was in the temple that the healed man praised God. It is in the true church that God's redeemed family praise him. Of such it is written: "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." The lame man was cured without the use of silver or gold, which emphasizes the truth that all the gold, that all the natural wealth of men poured into societies and organizations of men, whether at home or abroad, can not suffice to save a single soul from bondage to sin and death. Only from Jesus comes the priceless blessing of eternal life.

Arnold H. Bellows

March 1943

O B I T U A R I E S

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT FOR SISTER GERTRUDE ROYAL

We, the Church at Hickory Grove bow in humble submission to the will of God to take from our midst, our dear Sister Gertrude Wood Royal. She was born and reared in a family who believed in salvation by the Grace of God.

Sister Royal was born June 1, 1903, the eldest child of the late Brother Fernie and Sister Melia Johnson Wood of Johnston County, North Carolina. She along with her husband, Brother J. Luby Royal united with the church August 1966. Sister Royal served her position well as Clerk for several years prior to her illness.

She departed this life September 17, 1978. Her funeral was conducted at Rose Funeral Chapel in Benson, North Carolina by her Pastor, Elder W. D. Godwin and assisted by Minister Rossie Blackman. She was laid to rest in The Devotional Garden Cemetery near Dunn, North Carolina under a blanket of beautiful flowers from those who loved her.

She is survived by her husband, J. Luby Royal, one daughter, Mrs. Thomas F. Frix, three sons, James Earl, Fernie Lee and Jerry Bruce Royal, nine grandchildren, two sisters, Sister Kathleen W. McLamb and Sister Cleon Wood, one brother, Gary E. Wood.

The church at Hickory Grove miss her very much, but feel that our loss is her eternal gain and that she is resting with our Saviour awaiting the day of the Resurrection, when Our Heavenly Father will call His little children home to be at rest.

Therefore, we the Church at Hickory Grove, resolve that three copies be made; one to be sent to the family, one to the *Signs Of The Times* for publication and one kept for our church records - written by Order of Conference.

Elder W. D. Godwin, Moderator
Sister Kathleen McLamb, Clerk
Sister Cleon Wood, Committee

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT

Once more the Lord has called from our midst a dear beloved sister, Gracie S. Barbour on January 30, 1979. She was born in Pittsylvania County April 29, 1889 to James Edward Scearce and Mary Jennie D. Scearce making her stay here almost 90 years. Sister Gracie united with Strawberry Church in 1911, and was a faithful member, always interested in the welfare of the church. She loved her church and filled her seat as long as she was able to get there - many times with the help of a dear Sister in Christ.

She was married to Bruce J. Barbour and to this union was born four daughters, Mrs. Clara Meadows, Mrs. Ruth Finch of Danville; Mrs. Doris Shinn, Stroudsburg, Pa.; and Mrs. Marion Fredrick of San Antonio, Texas and two sons; James M. (Jack) Barbour of Danville and Charles S. Barbour of West Point; one sister, Mrs. Bertha Grogan of Danville and one brother, Bernard Scearce of Martinsville, Va. - ten grandchildren and two great-granchildren.

Her funeral was held at Townes Funeral Chapel by her Pastor, Elder R. S. Payne and Mr. K. H. Lashley and was laid to rest in Mountain View Cemetery beside her husband beneath a mound of beautiful flowers to await the coming of her blessed Savior to gather His jewels home.

She was a firm believer in Salvation by Grace, such a lovable Sister, her sweet smile, kind words and sweet fellowship, so many virtues too numerous to mention, will always be remembered at Strawberry

Church. We miss her so much, but feel our loss is her eternal gain.

This leaves a sad and lonesome feeling, as I try to write this memorial of our dear Sister in hope and spirit. For she asked me about two years ago to write this when she passed away. She talked often to me about how she enjoyed going to her church meetings, and thanked God for it all.

Be it resolved that we bow in humble submission to His holy will - He never makes a mistake - Blessed by His Holy name.

May the Lord comfort and give reconciling grace to her dear family.

Resolved that a copy be sent to the family, one put on church record and one sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Written as requested by
one that loved her,
Sister Gertie Holley

NANNIE CARNEY

Sister Nannie Carney came to this life on Nov. 25, 1893 to Franklin Melton and Margaret Jane Bailey at Poca, W. Va. She came to Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church on Tyler Mountain on Aug. 5, 1939 and was baptized by Elder J. C. Hammonds. Sister Carney served as church clerk from May 31, 1941 until the end of Dec. 1967, when failing health made it impossible for her to continue. She was a most faithful servant of the church.

She was a former school teacher of Mason County. She is survived by her husband Silas Edgar Carney and two daughters Mary Anne Withworth of Atlanta, Georgia and Margaret Gibson of Charleston, W. Va. One brother James of Gallipoles, W. Va. and one sister Edith Summers of Southside W. Va.

She fulfilled God's purpose on this earth on July 7, 1978 making her stay here on earth 84 years 7 months and 12 days. Her funeral service was conducted by Elder Randall Pennington at Keller Funeral Home, Dunbar, W. Va. and her body was laid to rest in the family cemetery at Ortin Heights, Nitro, W. Va. to await God's calling.

Elder J. J. Smith, Pastor
J. J. Bird, Clerk

Obituary prepared by Bro. Charles Gott by special request.

MEMORIAL TO

BROTHER OKEY W. McCLANAHAN

Okey W. McClanahan was born Feb. 4, 1900 to Vrig Fleet (Tobe) McClanahan and Adelia Melton on Poca River. He was married to Gertrude Fisher on April 17, 1938, at Hometown W. Va. To this family was given one daughter, Mrs. Earlene Bailey, who along with his wife also survives. Also surviving is one brother Boyd McClanahan of Nitro, W. Va.

He was united with Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church of Tyler Mountain on April 2, 1950, and was baptized by Elder J. C. Hammond. He was made deacon and trustee of the church on Nov. 5, 1950.

Brother Okey was a most faithful servant to his church and served the above offices until he answered God's call on Feb. 20, 1974, which made his stay on this earth 74 years 16 days. His funeral service was at Gaten Funeral Home Poca, W. Va. with Elder V. B. Linn and his body was laid to rest in the family cemetery on Poca River.

Brother Okey believed that the chosen children of God was from before the foundation of the world.

Elder J. J. Smith, Pastor
J. J. Bird, Clerk

Memorial prepared by Bro. Charles Gott by special request.

SISTER BELLE COBB PAGE

Sister Belle Page, passed away December 9, 1978, at the home of her daughter, after several years of declining health, at the age of 94.

A native of Caswell County, she was the daughter of John K. and Lucy Ann Massey Cobb, (deceased) and the widow of Monroe Calvin Page, who died Dec. 28, 1964.

She is survived by their three children: Lonnie Claude Page, Edna Page Minor, and Monroe Howard Page. She was a devoted wife and Mother, and highly esteemed by all who knew her. After her health failed she lived with her daughter and son-in-law. They (with the help of the other children and in-laws) gave her the very best of care: it seemed to be a labor of love for them. She was a very cheerful and pleasant person and is greatly missed by her family and friends. May God bless them to feel that she is asleep in Jesus, to arise in His likeness, and praise

Him forever.

All her life, she believed in God and His power and at a called meeting, at the home of her son Lonnie, she united with Bush Arbor Church, and was baptized by her Pastor, in June 1972.

Her funeral was conducted by her Pastor, Elder Wallis Smith and Elder Donald Smith, at Bush Arbor Church, where she was buried beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Resolved, that this be recorded on the church records, a copy sent to the *Signs of the Times*, and a copy sent to the family. Written by request of Bush Arbor Church, by Gladys Page.

Elder Wallis Smith, Moderator
Brother Earl S. Rudd, Clerk

HOWARD FRANKLIN McCLANAHAN

Howard Franklin McClanahan was born to Eldridge McClanahan and Helen Turner on Aug. 5, 1898 on Poca River where Brother Howard spent his lifetime. He worked at American Viscose and was a farmer. He was united in marriage to Mary Whittington and to this union was born one son and one daughter. The daughter preceeded him in death. This union was ended at the death of his wife Aug. 10, 1935.

On April 12, 1938, Brother McClanahan was united in marriage to Jewell Fern McCallister in Kentucky. To this union was born one son and three daughters who along with his wife also survive. Also nine grandchildren.

Brother Howard came to Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church on Aug. 21, 1966 and was baptized by Elders H. J. Bird and Howard Murphy. He was a trustee of the church.

He departed this life April 19, 1978 making his stay on earth 79 years 8 months and 14 days. The funeral service was at Gaten's Funeral Home with Elder V. B. Linn. His body was laid to rest under a mound of flowers in the family cemetery on Poca River to await the call of our most high God.

Elder J. J. Smith, Pastor
J. J. Bird, Clerk

Obituary prepared by Brother Charles Gott by special request.

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IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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THE CONTRAST

O Death! O Death! terrific foe to him
Whose hope of happiness to earth's confined;
His portion great, takes his whole wishes in,
And fills the narrow compass of his mind.

When health decays, and life ebbs out apace,
And all beyond is wrapt in dark despair;
His eye in vain seeks for a resting place,
To buoy his hopes, and chase away his fear.

He turns to earth, but there, alas! the ties,
The slender ties, that hold him here expire;
To Heaven he casts his sad and anxious eyes,
But justice threatens with eternal fire.

Anon he turns his troubled thoughts within,
Tho' yet to look within he hardly dare;
But conscience, wak'ning to a sense of sin,
Thunders aloud, "There is no refuge here".

Dismay'd, he bows his head, gives up his
hopes,
On worlds above and worlds below doth
frown;
Deprived of all his vain, though boasted
props,
Headlong he plunges in a world unknown.

O Death! O Death! where is thy dreaded
sting?

The dying saint aloud exulting cries;
His hopes being fixed above the world he's in
Far, Far, beyond these transitory skies.

This life decays, but what is mortal life
When life immortal opens to his view?
Death draweth near, but what a phantom's
death,

When faith can pierce the gloomy shadow
through.

He turns to earth, but earth, with all her
cares,

Is closing fast to his declining sight;
With joy he bids adieu, her hopes and fears,
And seeks the mansions of eternal light.

Anon he turns his busy thoughts within
Yet sees nought else but vile corruption there,
His sin he owns, yet full deliverance sings,
The blood of Jesus banishes his fear.

Living, he dies! dying, behold! he lives!
A life eternal he receives for this;
A mortal, immortality receives,
A life of sorrow ends in endless bliss.

C.H.

Watford, November 12, 1835

CONTROVERSY
by John Newton
Continued From June

You will have a third class of readers, who, being of your own sentiments, will readily approve of what you advance, and may be further established and confirmed in their views of scripture doctrines, by a clear and masterly elucidation of your subject. You may be instrumental to their edification, if the law of kindness, as well as of truth, regulates your pen, otherwise you may do them harm. There is a principle of self, which disposes us to despise those who differ from us; and we are often under its influence, when we think we are only shewing a becoming zeal in the cause of God. I readily believe, that the leading points of Arminianism spring from, and are nourished by, the pride of the human heart; but I should be glad if the reverse was always true; and that to embrace what are called the Calvinistic doctrines was an infallible token of an humble mind. I think I have known some Arminians, that is, persons who, for want of clearer light, have been afraid of receiving the doctrines of free grace, who yet have given evidence that their hearts were in a degree humbled

before the Lord. And, I am afraid, there are Calvinists, who, while they account it a proof of their humility, that they are willing, in words, to debase the creature, and to give all the glory of salvation to the Lord, yet know not what manner of spirit they are of. Whatever it be that makes us trust in ourselves that we are comparatively wise or good, so as to treat those with contempt who do not subscribe to our doctrines, or follow our party, is a proof and fruit of a self-righteous spirit. Self-righteousness can feed upon doctrines, as well as upon works; and a man may have the heart of a Pharisee, while his head is stored with orthodox notions of the unworthiness of the creature, and the riches of free grace. Yea, I would add, the best of men are not wholly free from this leaven; and therefore are too apt to be pleased with such representations as hold up our adversaries to ridicule, and, by consequence flatter our own superior judgments. Controversies, for the most part, are so managed as to indulge, rather than to repress this wrong disposition; and, therefore, generally speaking, they are productive of little good. They provoke those whom they should convince, and puff up those whom they should edify. I hope your performance will savour of a spirit of true humility, and be a means of promoting it in others.

This leads me, in the last place, to consider your own concern in your present undertaking. It seems a laudable service to defend the faith once delivered to the saints; we are commanded to contend earnestly for it, and to convince gainsayers. If ever such defences were seasonable and expedient, they appear to be so in our day, when errors abound on all sides, and every truth of the gospel is either directly denied, or grossly misrepresented. And yet we find but very few writers of controversy who have not been manifestly hurt by it. Either they grow in a sense of their own importance,

or imbibe an angry, contentious spirit, or they insensibly withdraw their attention from those things which are the food, and immediate support of the life of faith, and spend their time and strength upon matters, which at most, are but of a secondary value. This shews, that if the service is honourable, it is dangerous. What will it profit a man, if he gain his cause, and silence his adversary, if, at the same time, he loses that humble, tender frame of spirit in which the Lord delights, and to which the promise of His presence is made? Your aim, I doubt not, is good; but you have need to watch and pray, for you will find Satan at your right hand, to resist you. He will try to debase your views; and though you set out in defence of the cause of God, if you are not continually looking to the Lord to keep you, it may become your own cause, and awaken in you those tempers which are inconsistent with true peace of mind, and will surely obstruct communion with God. Be upon your guard against admitting any thing personal into the debate. If you think you have been ill treated, you will have an opportunity of shewing that you are a disciple of Jesus, who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not." This is our pattern, thus we are to speak and write for God, "not rendering railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that hereunto we are called". The wisdom that is from above is not only pure, but peaceable and gentle; and the want of these qualifications, like the dead fly in the pot of ointment, will spoil the savour and efficacy of our labours. If we act in a wrong spirit, we shall bring little glory to God, do little good to our fellow creatures, and procure neither honour nor comfort to ourselves. If you can be content with shewing your wit, and gaining the laugh on your side, you have an easy task; but I hope you have a far nobler aim, and that, sensibly of the solemn

importance of gospel-truths, and the compassion due to the souls of men, you would rather be a means of removing prejudices in a single instance, than obtain the empty applause of thousands. Go forth, therefore, in the name and strength of the Lord of Hosts, speaking the truth in love; and may he give you a witness in many hearts, that you are taught of God, and favoured with the unction of his Holy Spirit.

I am,
John Newton

Eustace, Texas

Dear Editors,

It is time for me to renew my subscription for the *Signs of the Times*, and I am enclosing a short piece for your consideration for printing. If you feel that it is of no value, just discard it.

"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? (John 21:22)

The apostle Peter, after being asked by Jesus Christ, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" for the third time was somewhat aggrieved that the Lord found it necessary to ask him the same question so many times. In his own mind and heart Peter remembered that he had previously denied Him thrice, and his own conduct was grievous to him. Upon the third appearance of Jesus to His disciples before His ascension, the scriptures record; "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" (John 21:15) What He was asking was, did Simon Peter love Him more than the other apostles loved Him. Peter answered and said, "Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs." On the next two occasions Peter was told to "feed my sheep"; there being a difference in the feeding of the lambs or babes in Christ with the milk of the word, and the feeding of the sheep with a

stronger meat of the word. Christ also, at this time, reminded Peter of what he had done in the past according to Peter's own will, and what he would do in the future according to the will of God. (John 13:36) "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me." (John 21:18, 19) In this the Lord told Peter by what suffering and death he would have to endure in order to glorify God, and He also commanded Peter to follow Him.

Now when Peter saw that John whom Jesus loved, (the one who leaned on Jesus' breast at supper and asked, "Lord which is he that betrayed thee?") was following he asked, "Lord what shall this man do?" Jesus saith unto him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" Brethren, the Lord is rebuking Peter and telling him that if it be His will, His desire, His purpose, that it is of no concern of Peter's. Not only was it no concern to Peter, but the question was also improper. Wherefore it behooves the saints to mind their duty in following Christ, and not to concern themselves in matters that do not belong to them. Christ is the Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, the Leader of His flock and has left an example to be followed by His people. As according to the 23rd verse, error emerged from this and went forth unto many of the disciples and brethren that declared that John would not see death and would be among those that were here alive at the second coming of Christ. This was only clarified by John, himself, as he bore witness to Christ, the appearing of Christ to John coming in the spirit according to Rev. 1:1, 2. It therefore becomes every saint to attend

to the ordinances established and set forth as examples by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and concern not ourselves with what others are to do or not to do. Peter, knowing his own conduct, and realizing that Jesus knows our hearts (yea, even before we ourselves know) answered and said, "Yea Lord, Thou knowest I love Thee." Here he set an example by not saying himself that he loved the Lord more than the other disciples. He was showing brotherly love and meekness toward his brethren. Just as surely as it come to pass that Peter would suffer and die a horrible death (just as did the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ), so shall it be with the saints of God. While here in this life if we are made to suffer the agony of realizing the sin and sorrow that our own deeds of the flesh have brought upon our Lord and Saviour and are made to feel the burden of sin in our hearts, then the precious hope spoken of by the apostle Paul brings comfort to our souls. It is not being justified by any action or deed on our part, but truly is by the grace of God. Thanks be unto God that He is our all in all and that He is able to keep and care for all that are His and raise them up in the last day.

Your Brother in Hope,
(Elder) B. J. McLaughlin

LETTER FROM SISTER RUSTON

Dutton, Ontario
April 30, 1933

Dear Sister Gillis,

It is quite a long time since you first asked me to write some of my experience to you. Each time you have mentioned in your letters that you would like me to write you, I have felt ashamed, and the postscript to your last letter seemed to rebuke me for neglecting your request for so long, so I will make the attempt, hoping the Lord will guide my pen. I think the real reason that I have delayed so long is that I have felt afraid of writing something I should not. From

my earliest childhood I believe I can say I had a love for the people of God, and although I often did and said wrong things, I always felt condemned in them and would try to do better, only to find that my natural disposition conquered again and again, in spite of all my efforts. I felt so ignorant of the things of God and would often beg the Lord to show me what I ought to know.

My parents were not members of the church, but attendance at the meetings and Bible reading in our home seemed to have consideration above everything else. My dear grandfather lived with us, and as I look back, I think he was one of the saintliest men I ever knew. He was a deacon in the church, and when ministers and friends visited him I would linger in the room that I might have the privilege of listening to their sweet conversation. I felt to be separated from those dear people by a veil, which I feared would never be removed.

There were seven children younger than I, so mother and I took turns Sunday nights in going to meetings, although we all went in the morning. After I had put the little ones to bed one Sunday night I was reading in Phillipians, when I came to the words, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." They seemed to stand out and impress me so, that for many years after, my constant cry to the Lord was that He would make me to believe on Him, even if it had to be through suffering. I remember one day very distinctly that when I was house cleaning, I dropped on my knees by a chair, feeling so deeply that I must beg of the Lord to reveal His truth to me. I cannot say that in all this time I was in any trouble of mind; I had a lovely home, the kindest of parents and brothers and sisters, and sheltered childhood and girlhood. It was simply that the things of God seemed so worthwhile to me, and I knew I was so ignorant of them. Especially did I desire to know the

meaning of "Jesus", and His part in the redemption of His people. I would listen to the ministers, hoping and hoping I might be able to follow them, but I felt all the while that they were preaching over my head to those who had already experienced what I so earnestly desired. There was much that I enjoyed in the meetings, but I felt I was lacking in the one thing needful.

At one time while still a girl at home in England, I received a lot of encouragement from a sermon preached by an old minister named Mr. Wady, from the words, "Wait, I say, on the Lord". It gave me fresh courage to keep hoping and praying that the Lord would show me what I should know in His own time.

After I was married, we lived for a short time in Zanesville, Ohio, but we did not find anyone there who believed as we did, and we missed the meetings very much. We soon returned to England, and stayed there for a while until it seemed advisable to return to the States. We had so much enjoyed the meetings again in England, and it was a great trial to leave our friends. However, the Lord was better to us than our fears, for we found a company of our own people in New York City. The members and friends received us most kindly and we felt "the lines had fallen to us in pleasant places". My husband seemed more and more attached to the people, and his mind was frequently exercised about joining the church. He would talk to me about it, but said he wished I could go with him. I felt horrified at the idea of it, for I felt he had so much to tell, and I had nothing. All I felt in my mind was "Lord, thou canst if thou wilt", but that was the great question. Would He ever notice me? I told my husband to go on and not wait for me, and often he would go to the meetings feeling he must speak, but was unable to do so. After our second child was born, I became very weak and nervous. I kept getting lower and lower until for months I thought my

mind would snap. I slept very little and lost all interest in life. I had always had such a happy life, both before and after marriage, had enjoyed nature to a wonderful degree, so much so that the sight of green trees and grass against a blue summer sky would fill me with a pleasure indescribable, but now I was oppressed with a feeling of gloom almost amounting to horror which enveloped me all the time. I did not feel any interest in my husband or children whom I had loved so dearly. The only thing that roused me at all was if they were not well, and then I became frightened for fear the Lord would take them from me. I went on in this way for many weary months. I did not know what was the matter with me. I had always had a happy bouyant disposition, but the terrible burden now upon me seemed to crush me to the very earth. The beauties of nature, once so sweet to me, did not appeal to me in the least. I felt my only hope was that God might appear for me. My constant cry day and night was "Lord help me". I felt that the only pleasure I had in life was the Sunday meeting where I could be with the Lord's people. Dear Elder McConnell was the pastor, and once when we were invited to his home, he was much concerned at my altered looks, and evident distress of mind, for my burden was so crushing I could not conceal the misery in which I lived. He said very gently to me, "Don't you think you would be happier if you were in the church?" Although I thought so much of him, I felt very annoyed at him for saying such a thing to me. I thought if he were willing to have such a wretched one as I in his church, he was like the ministers of the worldly churches, who only think of adding to their numbers whether the members are worthy are not, and I could not understand it, as I had never though he was that kind.

I searched the Bible and the only comfort I could get was from Job or David. I remember saying once to my husband

that David must have known what it was to be where I was or he could never have written some of his Psalms, especially the 5th Psalm, but I could not get any further than the 7th verse. Although I did feel a nearness to the Lord in prayer more than I ever had before, I had no assurance that He would appear for me.

Life seemed a fearful dread of everything, and yet I felt I had no hope for the future if I should die. I missed my mother so much, as she had always been able to smooth out all my little troubles when I was with her, but she was three thousand miles away, and with no likelihood of her being any nearer. Then I thought that if only my husband could be with me instead of being away all day, that I should feel better, but one day when he had a holiday, and he was home, I felt worse than I ever had before, and dropped down on my knees by the bed, and all I could do was groan in the bitterness of my soul, "Lord help me". I felt all my earthly props had been taken from me, and if the Lord did not appear for me, I should be lost both mind and body. The very atmosphere seemed gloom, and I lived in a darkness that could be felt. One day I noticed the room seemed a little brighter, so that I spoke of it to my husband.

At the same time I felt a desire to write to my grandfather of the trouble I was in. I knew he was such a good man and I thought he might understand me. I felt a little lightening of the burden as I wrote, but only a little. The evening passed on until I noticed it was nearly ten o'clock, so I asked my husband to read a chapter before we went to bed. He had been tempted to think that he had talked religion to me until he was driving me crazy and was feeling a hardening rebellious condition of mind over the wretched state I was in, and he did not want to read. He said we should do better to go to bed, as we had to get up early on Sunday morning as it was a long journey to the meeting house, but I

told him I did not want to miss it, and he commenced reading Isaiah 55. "Ho every one that thirsteth, etc." While I was listening to it, my mind seemed entirely taken from what he was reading, and I saw in my mind Jesus hanging on the cross bowed and crushed by the burden which I had been carrying for so long, and suddenly instead of being crushed to the earth, I could stand upright, my burden was gone. In an instant, all the prayers and hopes of many years were answered. I knew at last the meaning "Jesus the Saviour of sinners". I knew what it was to have a hope that He had died for me, for my sins He was afflicted. In my letter to my grandfather I had mentioned the following hymn and told him that was where I felt myself to be:

"O love divine, how sweet thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up by thee?
I thirst, and faint, and die to prove
The greatness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ to me.

Stronger his love than death or hell,
Its riches are unsearchable;
The first-born sons of light
Desire in vain its depth to see;
They cannot reach the mystery,
The length, the breadth, and height.

God only knows the love of God;
O that it now were shed abroad
In this poor stony heart!
For this I sigh, for this I pine;
This only portion, Lord, be mine;
Be mine this better part."

Now I felt that prayer had been answered. My very being seemed filled with love to the One who had saved me from that lost condition I was in for so long. I felt like the woman of whom it is said that she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself, and Jesus laid hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. That was just what I wanted to do, to praise God for His wonderful goodness to one so unworthy.

I tried to tell my husband, but he had

been troubled so long by my depression that he feared my joy was just another phase of it. The change was so great, he could not believe it really was so. However, when morning came I was up early, dressing the babies, and urging him to get started early, all I could think of was getting to meeting to tell Elder McConnell and the other dear ones of the Lord's goodness to me. I have often wondered since how I could have forgotten to even think of my unworthiness. All I could think of was the Lord's goodness. My husband spoke to the church at the same time and Elder McConnell baptized us the following Sunday in the Hudson River. It was one of the happiest days in our lives. When speaking in prayer in our home, my dear husband has often asked the Lord that we might grow up together as "calves of the stall", and it seemed wonderful that He should have brought us to the church together. I knew what the words meant, "Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new".

The very Scripture seemed illuminated when viewed in the face of Jesus Christ. The epistles had always seemed to me so deep, and difficult to understand, now so much of them seemed opened to my understanding. The preaching seemed all for me. Like the good Samaritan, it came just where I was. My heart overflowed with gratitude to the God of my salvation.

Over nineteen years have passed since that time, but the sweetness of those experiences still remain, and I hope the Lord will never suffer them to be effaced from my memory. My physical weakness still continued for some time, but with such a difference. Before, I had a dread of the future, whether life or death, and afterwards I felt if the Lord saw fit to take me to Himself, I should be only too glad to go.

My health, relieved of the trouble of mind, gradually improved, so that I again felt fit to carry on the burdens of life and raising a family, and I have

always felt since that the Lord "has been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall". Many a time have I found that "a man" (the man Christ Jesus) "has been an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land".

I could write much more of His goodness to me, but have already made this letter too lengthy, so will close for this time. Forgive what you see amiss in it, for I am a poor frail creature, so fearful that pride may creep in, and make "even the grace of God a snare". George is in Toronto today, but I am sure he would join me in love. Write when you feel to do so. We are so glad to know that once again the Lord has given you the oil of joy for mourning.

Your sister in a precious hope,

Esther Ruston

(Sister Ruston was the wife of the late Elder George Ruston, who was the former pastor of the Covenanted Baptist Churches of Canada. Their memory is still fresh among the subscribers to the *Signs of the Times*. Editor)

CASTING ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM

My dear Sister in the Lord,—I was very sorry to hear that you were laid by, and that your master and mistress were so much tried. But the Lord knows best what to do with both you and them; He is never disconcerted; His ancient thoughts stand fast for ever. All that He does is well done. No affliction comes by chance; and though it may be painful, yet it is needful, and always ends in our profit. Our Lord does everything for our profit, for His love will not allow Him to do otherwise; and though our ignorance may disapprove of His wise decrees, and our enmity rebel against His love, yet He, being full of compassion, forgives us

all, and still pursues our good. True heaven-born faith can trust Him when reason fails to do so. We should remember that our Lord Jesus Christ was a mourner all His days, and that they who, mourning, follow Him, are blessed. The Master and the scholar must have the same fare. It is enough that the disciple be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. The joy that is prepared for suffering saints will make amends for all their troubles here. What is our life? It is a vapour, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. Both our worldly joy and our fleshly woe will soon have an end; but the righteousness, salvation, peace, joy, love, kingdom, and glory of Christ are for ever. Holy Ghost, inspire our hearts with the love of Christ and heaven; for here we have no continuing city, but seek one out of sight, a city which is the perfection of beauty, built on the sure foundation-stone, by the great Omnipotent Himself, for His own delight and everlasting rest, of which He is the entire light, purity, joy, security, beauty, and glory for ever and ever.

My dear sister, entreat the Lord that your faith and patience may hold out a little longer, for He "will come, and will not tarry". "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." "Casting all your care upon him" is very blessed work; it is the work of God; and the encouragement to do so is a most precious truth; "for he careth for you". What greater care could be manifested than the shedding of His own blood for us, and to be for evermore interceding for us? In what could greater care be shown than in making all things work together for our good, and in watching over and keeping us day and night, lest any evil should befall us? What greater care could He take of us than to provide for us an eternal rest, made us meet for

it, give us an earnest of it, preserve us unto it, and give both body and soul the everlasting enjoyment of it? Surely He who thus careth for us may well be trusted with all our care; and but for our wicked hearts, we should find no difficulty in trusting Him. O may the dear Lord give us to know more of Him as our own God and portion, as our joy and eternal inheritance! and this will raise our hearts and thoughts above and cause us to forget our troubles by the way.

I hope that by this time you are better, and able to resume your employment. My wife sends her love and gratitude to you.

I remain, yours very affectionately,
J. S.

August 16, 1842

REWARDS

Route 4, Box 57
Rocky Mount, Virginia 24151

Dear Brethren everywhere,

My mind seems to indict a matter and I cannot tell if it is penworthy or not. There is a Bible doctrine, found in the New Testament, called "Reward", which, if the Lord above would be pleased to guide my pen, I should love to exploit briefly.

First, there is a dual application of the same word, one as pertains to the wicked or such as stand on street corners and holler, "Lord, Lord", and these have their reward. As it is used here the reward is meant in terms of secular esteem, reputation amongst one's peers, secular religion, promoting good works like accepting Jesus as your Saviour, etc. All these are the rewards which Jesus says the hypocrites have and undoubtedly this is the solid truth.

Now, there is another reward which requires much more careful consideration to understand and be sure to keep separate from that of the hypocrite. Now, we see Jesus doing many good works and commanding of His children

to likewise do-works of righteousness they are called, like singing praise to God and submitting to water baptism and living righteous, and it is in doing (by God's grace)-let's don't have a controversy about it-these things that a good feeling, called in the Bible "answer of good conscience" or reward comes to us. This reward we find is totally beyond our control but in God's time it comes. Some say the blessing is not in the doing but because we were chosen in Christ before the world was. To this I answer that it is a certain truth that all spiritual blessings all of God's people ever shall have were treasured up in Christ before the world began but not one subject of grace ever has felt an acquitted conscience toward God without submitting (doing it) to water baptism. I have never heard young or old say they got that reward without obedience and indeed it is not possible. God has not changed. What He required two thousand years ago He still requires. Men constantly change their doctrine and order but God has not. When Jesus prescribes the way and order of the government of His house I'm quite sure that must be held to or we shall wonder where the glory went. He will not bless another and He will not accept anything but His own. Our mercy is that He consider us His own and grant us to behave ourselves, all praise and glory to Him.

A sinner Brother,
James R. Holley

3625 Stancrest Drive
Glendale, Calif. 91208
February 20, 1979

Dear Elder and Sister Spangler,

Please forgive me for the long delay in sending the enclosed account of my beautiful experience while visiting Associations and all the beautiful people last summer. I enjoyed writing it and humbly hope that it is acceptable

and that I was guided by the Holy Spirit.

Since Christmas I have had the flu and a relapse and it has been very difficult to get over the weakness which seems to be the after affect, consequently the illness drags on and on. I'm sure everyone will feel better when the weather becomes stable.

Now concerning you and Sister Spangler-how are you? I hope you are well. Sister Sarah Barker wrote me about your trip to Snow Hill, Md., and the nice meeting you had with the precious Baptists there--also you spent one night with Elder Poole and family, which was a real treat. I am remembering the wonderful day we spend driving the Blue Ridge Parkway, having buckwheat cakes at the historic Mabry Mill, visiting the area of your homeland as a boy and finally stopping for dinner at the lovely early American home of your daughter, Mildred and her family. It was also very special to sit at your table in your home and discuss spiritual things and the mercy and loving kindness of our dear Saviour.

I was so happy to receive your poem which you sent during the Holidays. Not only does it cover our beloved doctrine, but it is instructive and embraces the full purpose of the advent of our Lord Jesus into this world and also His abounding grace and redeeming love.

"His birth, His life, His blood, His cross
Makes all things also appear as dross,
He is Alpha and Omega, too;

The beginning and ending, Oh how true."
This is only a portion of the beauty of this poem--your experience of grace and the 22nd chapter of Revelations has given me so much to meditate upon. My experience, if I have one, is so different. However, I get consolation when I think of the scripture, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

Your Editorial in the February issue of the *Signs* entitled, The Lamb, is a profound subject and the Lord has blessed you to portray our Lord as the

Lamb of God from before the foundation of the world through time and into eternity. How beautiful and how deep! May the Lord give me grace to understand the sweetness and the depth of it more fully. What a joy you must feel when the Lord reveals these truths and enables you to teach and feed the sheep and the little lambs.

I did not intend to write such a lengthy letter. May the Lord continue to bless you "that you might finish your course with joy, and the ministry which you received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God". I love this scripture and I know that it has been in your heart during all of your long years of faithful service in the ministry. God bless you and your dear wife.

I love you and our fellowship is in Christ.

Your sister in the Lord, I trust,
Ruby Gilbert
(Another letter next month)

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The time of love, in the experience of some Christians, is much more sweet, conspicuous, and lasting, than it is in others. Whether that time lasts a week, a month, a whole year, or even a much longer season, depends entirely upon the sovereign pleasure of almighty God, who gives His people neither too little nor too much comfort. In that pleasant season, the believer often enjoys the gracious, sensible presence of Jesus, and walks in the light of God's countenance. His meditation on Christ is sweet; he has pleasant frames and feelings; and the invitations and the promises are frequently applied to his heart. Zion furnishes him with many a dish of milk; secret prayer is very pleasant; and the public means are very delightful, because whilst under them, he finds the house of God and the gate of heaven. He is dead to the world, alive to heavenly things, and runs well, so long

as he enjoys the power and the Saviour. At length, men, devils, and his own heart flatter him. Self predominates—he thinks too much of his faith, prayers, gifts, revelations, frames, feelings, and graces.

“The heart uplifts with God’s own gifts;” and his spirit seems to be, “Come and see my zeal for God”. The spouse of Christ now sits as a queen, and flatters herself she shall see sorrow no more. At present, she would not much mind the Bridegroom’s absence, if she could have the jewels and the ornaments without Him. The heart joins itself to some idol; but a shyness is growing up between the soul and Christ, whose visits are now short and “far between”. Every day brings the believer farther from his proper objects. Darkness over-spreads his mind, dejection enters his spirit, and faithful warnings from the word reach his soul, as, “Pride goeth before destruction”; “Be not high-minded, but fear;” “Beloved, think it not strange at the fiery trial which is to try you.” Then the enemy violently assaults the believer, and a horror of great darkness falls upon him, that fills him with terror and confusion. In this man’s breast, every part of divine truth is assailed, as the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the fall of man, election, the work of the Holy Spirit, redemption, justification, perseverance. In these conflicts, the believer is hard put to it. He is wounded, and falls; but his Captain lifts him up, and heals him, puts his sword into his hand, and gives him strength to resist the devil, who seems to flee away. The young soldier, full of false valour, dares the adversary again to the combat, and loudly blows the trumpet of victory over his retreating foe. The devil now assumes the serpent, comes by stealth, gets to the believer’s weak and blind side, puffs him up with vanity and conceit, bloats him with pride, tells him he has done wonders, and that God has certainly raised him up for some great work. The

hellish poison takes; pride and self are now nearly all in all. Dark clouds come on again, a dreary night commences, and sad desertion is bitterly experienced. For a time, the believer cries amain for the sweet presence of Christ, for another love-token, another glance, another crumb: but no; his prayers are now to be answered by crosses. Apparently, an inward spiritual decay is begun, and the man falls by little and little. Light, vain, trifling thoughts find a harbour in the breast, one troop succeeding another, until the soul feels it to be as difficult to raise its thoughts to heaven, as it was easy during the time of love. Now the heart begins to open, there are all manner of evil thoughts, desires, and affections. Every sinful principle is seen and felt within, as unbelief, pride, self-righteousness, envy, discontent, distrust, doubts, fears, hard thoughts of God, hardness of heart, self-will, obstinacy, murmurings, and apparently, even enmity to God. Daniel is now in the den of lions, and each roaring lust seems ready to devour him. Satan stirs up the offensive puddle of the man’s heart, and its deadly stench makes the poor pilgrim sick. The tried soul descends into the chambers of imagery, and is greatly alarmed at the ugly pictures he sees on the walls. Does God indeed dwell here? says he; how can it be? At length, he is favoured with a breathing time—cries to God for pardon, peace, and holiness. Hope rises again, and the Christian thinks he must have seen the worst of it; but he soon hears a voice saying, “Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do”. (Ezek. 8:13) He is again plunged in the deep. Every hour there are new turnings up, more fearful discoveries of indwelling sin, until the dungeon opens fouler than hell, and the man’s breast is seen and felt to contain the principle of every sin that ever was committed under the sun. It is well when the Holy Ghost graciously overrules

these frightful discoveries, and excites the man to sigh and groan under this heavy body of sin and death, maintaining in the breast the fear of God, and tenderness of conscience, and filling the soul with self-loathings and abasement. The believer is now ashamed to sit amongst the saints, and views himself as being a moving pesthouse. He can hardly find a suitable companion, thinks he has got quite out of the path, cannot make a judgment of his case, and scarcely knows which way to look. His best companions are Job, David, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Paul, etc. Now the priest and the Levite pass by on the other side. Modern professors suspect him; they do not understand his bitter complaint. He is a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls, and appears like the solitary pelican of the wilderness, the picture of bondage and misery. O! says the poor child of God, can any good come out of experience like this? I answer, Yes, and great good, too. Hereby you will learn to distinguish between those two opposite principles that dwell in you, the new man and the old, or, grace and sin; you will obtain a much deeper knowledge of your fallen state than you had before, and you will sink deeper in self-abasement. Hereby you will obtain a blessed understanding of many scriptures that you were previously unacquainted with, such, for example, as the 7th chapter to the Romans. Hereby you will learn more than ever of the preciousness of Christ's blood, for now, as a filthy leper, what can you plead but the blood of Christ? What can cleanse you but this? Here, under the power of the Holy Spirit, foul and loathsome as you can be, you will plunge into the atonement, and bless God that there is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. The precious blood of Jesus, applied by the Spirit's influences, shall thoroughly purge your conscience from guilt, speak pardon and peace to your souls, and make you cheerfully obedient to the gospel

precept. Thanks be to God that there is balm in Gilead, and that we have a Physician of great value. May we ever and anon be under His healing hand. But O, believer, beware of making light of sin, or of discoursing about these things in a vain and unprofitable manner, for that would be dishonourable to your profession, and injurious to yourself and others. May you and I be preserved in the fear of God, and be kept from that deadly snare of being lifted up with pride on account of the deep discoveries we have had, or suppose we have had, of our own corruptions, seeing that is devil-like, for his scales are his pride.

May the good Lord keep our corruptions from breaking out, our feet from falling, and us from poring too much upon ourselves.

"The Gospel Standard", 1836

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

The 1979 session of the Staunton River Primitive Baptist Association will convene, according to appointment, at Malmaison Church, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, July 6, 7, 8, 1979, which is the second week-end in July.

Malmaison Church is located on State Road 726 in Pittsylvania County, about 6 miles N.E. of Danville Va. Signs to the Association will be posted on U.S. 29 and U.S. 360 highways for directions to Rd. #726 and the church.

We invite our corresponding brethren and friends for this meeting.

Burnell B. Williams, Asso. Clerk

PLEASANT VALLEY ASSOCIATION

The thirty-third annual session of the Pleasant Valley Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Shepherd Fold Church, Houston, Texas, commencing on Friday before, and continuing through the first Sunday in August, 1979. (August 3, 4, 5)

For additional information contact Elder G. D. Shipman, Route 2, Box 128, Von Ormy, Texas 78073. (Telephone 512-624-2148)

Elder D. G. Shipman, Clerk

PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Fifty-fourth annual session of the Pigg River District Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Riverview Church, Bassett, Va., commencing on Friday before and continuing thru the first Sunday in August, 1979. (August 3, 4, 5)

Riverview Church is located in Bassett, Va., approximately 200 yards off Route 57 on Bassett Height Road. The meeting house is next to a New School Baptist Church on the right coming from Route 57.

The brethren suggest that visitors bring folding chairs with them, as the meeting house will not hold all the congregation. Public address speakers will be in use.

For further information contact Elder J. R. Hollandsworth, Route 5, Box 104, Bassett, Va. 24055. (Phone 1-703-642-3030)

Elder John D. Wood, Clerk
8902 Cherry Tree Lane
Manassas, Virginia 22110

BLACK CREEK UNION

The next session of the Black Creek Union will be held, the Lord willing, with the church at Pittman's Grove the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in July, 1979.

All lovers of the truth are invited to come and worship with us.

Harold Pittman, Clerk
Box 4524
Rocky Mount, N.C. 27801

DIRECTIONS TO THE UPPER COUNTRY
LINE ASSOCIATION 1979 SESSION

The seventy-third session of the Upper Country Line Primitive Baptist Association will be held at Moon's Creek Primitive Baptist Church, the Lord willing, with Moon's Creek as the host church.

Moon's Creek Church is located approximately one mile off Highway No. 86, midway between Danville, Virginia and Yancyville, North Carolina, at Providence, Caswell County, North Carolina.

This session convenes at 11:00 A.M., Saturday before the third Sunday in July, 1979. (July 14, 15, 16)

Elder Donald E. Smith, Clerk

SMITH RIVER ASSOCIATION

The 1979 session of the Smith River Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, August 31st, Sept. 1st, and 2nd, at Salem Church (Head of the River.) Laurell Creek is host church.

Salem Church is located in Floyd County on Highway 221, between Check and Copper Hill, Va. For additional information contact Elder Amos Hash, R.R. 2, Box 36, Ferrum, Va. 24088.

All lovers of the truth are invited.

Elder Amos Hash, Clerk

Route 1, Box 83
Tennessee Ridge, Tenn.

Dear Editors,

As my subscription to the *Signs of the Times* will be due after the April issue, I am sending a check for one year somewhat in advance for I do not want to miss even one issue.

I am now past 84 years of age and I know I can't be here much longer and this is the only way that I can get crumbs from the Master's table.

Our little church has not had a pastor or moderator since the third Sunday in November, 1967. Since that time most of our old members have passed away, leaving only a very few members.

We have had quite a number of trials, troubles, and tribulations since that last meeting in 1967.

On October 19, 1976 we re-organized the church and were going on in peace until a few outsiders began to interfere. We, the Church, had a small bank account and we did some repairs on the church. The outsiders, including the bank, told us we would have to have a court order before we could use any of our finances to pay for our repairs.

We did not intend to go to law in this matter, so we had to pay for our repairs out of our personal finances.

Paul says in First Corinthians the 6th chapter, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before

the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" So we refused to go to law and these outsiders, including the bank, brought suit against us, asking for the church property to be sold and, along with our bank account, be divided among them. They already had a sale for the church property. The property was to go to some club house so they could have bingo parties or any other worldly party. They claimed the building was rotting down, so they might as well get something out of it. But we thought if it was good enough for the club, it was good enough for us to serve and to worship the Lord.

So we were brought before Chancery Court and the judge was good enough to say he would not allow the church to be sold and that our bank account was still to go for the benefit of the church. And he gave us the authority to re-organize and to continue on in worshipping of the Lord.

This building was built for a house of prayer, but they wanted to make it a den of thieves. "It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." (Matt. 21:13)

This old church was originally organized back in the year 1810, and has fought its way up to the present with many obstructions and obstacles.

It reminds me somewhat of the incident that happened to a church in North Carolina (I think it was), that was written about in the *Signs of the Times* some time back. The opposition had taken the church building, and used it for themselves, but the State Supreme Court turned it back to the original owners after many years.

I believe we do get natural blessings from the Lord as well as spiritual. It is all of the Lord.

Yours in Hope,
Harvey Vick

EDITORIAL

EATING

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)" (Phil. 3:17-19)

There are several points of matter to be considered in this article. Chiefly in verse 19, observe the expression, "Whose god is their belly". My subject is in regard to eating. We will consider later on, not natural eating, but eating in regard to the spiritual or renewed man. You may ask, "What kind of a subject is that for the gospel of Jesus Christ?" If the Lord wills, we will discover what kind of a subject it is and its importance to us today as well as those to whom the Apostle Paul wrote.

The Apostle Paul obviously had something in mind when he spoke of the character of individuals whose god was their belly. He begins in a beautiful way, "Brethren". He is not addressing his enemies. He is addressing a people he dearly loves; a people who he has served among; a people who he has preached the gospel to; a people who have been exposed to enemies on the right hand and on the left. His heart goes out to them and in this warning he sets before them a certain class of people whose god was their belly. He has already introduced his letter with a suitable heading, but he interjects once again the expression of union. "Brethren," he says, "be followers". If God has called you to leadership, then you must lead. Otherwise, be followers. The sheep of His pasture are followers, and indeed they have no desire to lead. They follow the Shepherd. They long to hear His voice. The voice of a stranger they will not follow. Following is a way of life to

them. When the Apostle Paul says, "Brethren, be followers", they long to do exactly that. There is a wrong way to follow. He says, "Be followers together." We don't want divisions. We don't want some sheep going one way and others going a different way. Be followers together is the admonition of the Apostle. There is a true joy in togetherness. May we together follow him who submitted that to the church of God.

And he said, "Mark them". There is someone to put a mark on. Why? Because they walk, "so as ye have us for an ensample." Their walk is different. You cannot follow two courses. Romans 16:17 says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them". You see the similarity here with our text in Philippians 3, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." We certainly do not see too much avoiding in this day, do we? There is a great deal more mingling with the world going on than should be admissible among the people of God. "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly;". Is there not a relationship in these two scriptures? The words are almost identical. "They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." So the Apostle is identifying two classes of people. One - those who follow the apostolic doctrine and listen to the voice of the Shepherd. Two - those who follow after deceivers. Those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they have learned are many. In fact, we may say that they are legion. Our text says, "Many walk". If it was an exception, or there were only a few along we might not be much alarmed. But he says, "Many walk of whom I have told you often." Now if Paul has talked about this subject often then certainly it should give us encour-

agement to talk about it occasionally, shouldn't it? "Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now even tell you weeping." There must have been a very troubled feeling in the heart of the Apostle to have to tell them something like this with weeping. Bitter tears, that such things occur; yes, even weeping. He saw them as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end was destruction. There is no question; they will be destroyed.

This brings us now to examine the scriptures for several illustrations where eating caused divisions among the church. In one instance we find recorded in the book of Galatians where Peter was preaching among the Galatian brethren, and as he was preaching the gospel he was also eating with the Gentiles. At this time some of the Jews from Jerusalem came and when they discovered him so eating, and they had apparently rebuked him for it, he ceased his eating with the Gentiles and at that period Paul accused him of hypocrisy and rebuked him to his face because of his inconsistency in his eating habits. A division had now arisen between these two apostles over the simple matter of whether he could eat with the Gentiles or not.

Another illustration - In the very first church at Jerusalem there arose a division. Was it over doctrine? No, it was over the daily ministrations. The Greek widows were being neglected at the meal time when the daily food was being served. So bad was the dispute that it became necessary for the apostles to appoint seven to look out over these matters. The first division occurring in the church of Christ after its establishment then, came over eating. When reading the word of God this could easily be overlooked. We feel, however, that it is vital that we see these points in regard to eating as something of a warning for us at this time. There are many instances as these. Please do not misunderstand; this is not a suggestion that everyone immediately stop eating

because of these illustrations from the word of God. Rather, "Having food and raiment", Paul said, "let us therewith be content." While we can be contented with food we should be very aware that there is a spiritual lesson involved in all of this. The reason is seen when we trace our subject of eating from its origin in the very beginning of the Bible.

Let us go back to the Old Testament. First, we find in the Book of Exodus when Moses was on the mount receiving the tablets of stone, the Israelites determined, "As for this Moses,.....we wot not what is become of him." (Exodus 32:1) "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us;". So they gave their gold and silver and other precious metals to Aaron, and he manufactured a golden calf for them. As soon as Aaron had made the calf, what did the Israelites declare? They saw their idol god before them, and "Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the Lord." (We are going to have a dinner on the ground to celebrate our new god.") This is hardly an exaggeration. This is basically what took place. These are the simple facts, and they regard, as we have noted from the beginning, the subject of eating.

The mixed multitude who went along with Israel in the wilderness also created problems regarding eating. "And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic; but now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, besides this manna before our eyes." (Numbers 11:4-6) What was their complaint? The same as Israel's in Numbers 21:5. They said, "Our souls loatheth this light bread." The manna God had given Israel from heaven was a wonderful symbol of our holy Lord and Saviour, and yet it had become a loathsome

thing to them. "Our souls loatheth this light bread." They thought they were better off back in Egypt with the melons, the garlicks, the cucumbers, the onions and leeks, and the flesh pots where they did eat to their full. However, they were lying! They never had eaten to their full while they were back in Egypt. They were in bondage. They decided, however, that the Egyptian food was better than heavenly food. How we should fall before our gracious God, and praise His holy Name if it is otherwise with us. If we are blessed to see that this manna is rich food indeed to our souls may He receive the praise, the honor, and the glory.

Another case in this regard is found in II Kings 4:38-41, "And Elisha came again in Gilgal; and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof. But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot." Elisha had come to the sons of the prophets and requested that they set on the great pot. They were soon making a mess of pottage of some sort. One unnamed prophet went out and gathered wild gourds. These wild gourds were shredded up so they wouldn't be noticeable, and he poured them into the pot. When they begin to eat they cried out to Elisha and said, "There is death in the pot". Somebody had added poison food. Even so today much that passes for the gospel is polluted with wild

gourds of free will, works, Arminianism, and other Babylonian foods; wild gourds, if you will. It is beautiful to see however, that the remedy for the bad food, is found in the meal. The meal which Elisha brought and poured into the pot that they may eat and have no harm, is a beautiful picture of Christ, the Bread of Life.

Next, in Genesis 2:15, "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying," (this is the first commandment given by God to the human race.) "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." At our beginning we stated that our theme was eating. Can you begin now to see this a little clearer? In each instance we have brought from the Bible it has regarded eating in some manner or another. Does it now appear more like something of importance? "Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat." God has here licensed man to partake of every tree in the garden and use it to eat from. It is interesting to observe now this is the very first act of permission God gives man. That of eating. But now we come to the very first prohibition in the Bible. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." The first thing God tells man that he cannot do is eat of this one particular tree. Again we would point out the importance attached to this subject. "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The first warning in the Bible was that to eat of the forbidden fruit would bring the calamity of death upon them. In the same day that they were to eat they were to die. There are a number of firsts in the Bible, and it is interesting to observe them. May the Lord bless us in the seeing of these things.

Now in Genesis chapter 3 we find the introduction of the serpent, Lucifer, the old dragon called Satan. "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had

made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat....?" The very first question in the Bible concerns eating. Is that interesting to you? Does it mean anything to you? The first question was, "Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" This, incidently, is the devils first work recorded in the Bible. He asked a question, planted a seed, and introduced doubt concerning the subject of Adam and Eve eating of the tree.

We have here, too, the very first words of the human race. The very first. "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat." Is that worth observing? The first statement is "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said ye shall not eat of it. Neither shall ye touch it lest ye die." And let it be noted that here Eve misquoted God. God did not say, "Neither shall ye touch it." That was her speaking. "And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof that your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." This was the first lie ever recorded in the Bible. The father of lies, Satan, lied to Eve to destroy the human race, but God in His mercy over-ruled.

Now this next verse gives us the first sin recorded in the Bible. And what was the first sin? Was it murder? Was it stealing? Was it idolatry? Was it eating? No, it was none of these; it was the thought to eat. Concupisence! Evil thought! But what was the evil thought about? When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, then it was pleasant to her eyes and a tree to be desired to make one wise. It was when she saw it. John speaks of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (I John 2:16) In the sin in the garden we find all these lusts present. The lust of the flesh; the craving after forbidden fruit. The lust of the eyes; she saw that it

was good; and the pride of life; the desired result - we shall be as gods. She took of the fruit thereof and did eat. Also note the first action recorded in the Bible by the human race is taking forbidden fruit and eating it. Now we have named a number of firsts, so far and they all have dealt with the subject of eating. Have we overstepped the bounds of the Bible to write about this subject? We think not. "She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (Gen. 3:6) The very first gift recorded in the Bible is the gift of forbidden fruit from Eve to Adam, and he ate. We might point out to you the word eat is found 15 times in this one chapter, and the word eaten is found two times, making a total of 17 times that it is recorded in the 3rd chapter of Genesis alone.

"And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." (Gen. 3:14) This is the first recorded curse in the Bible. What is the penalty in the first curse? The serpent must eat of the dust the remainder of his life. In the very first curse of the Bible, God pronounced a curse of eating dust.

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hath eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: Cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." (Gen. 3:17) The first curse placed upon the human race was that of eating in sorrow. "Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,....." (Gen. 3:18)

Sufficient has been said to establish the fact that the subject of eating in its proper prospective plays an important part in the early recording of the word of God. Now, what does all this mean to

us? Satan introduced sin originally in the garden, and the fall of man resulted. In every state of activity the subject, eating, is involved.

The first sin, that of eating the forbidden fruit, was in violation of God's plain command. And since that time man is described thus: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Every breath we take is sinful. Every deed we perform is sinful. Our very being is emnity and sin against our God. Our human make-up is one mass of sin. Our old nature craves after every forbidden fruit, and seeks to take of the tree of knowledge of good and evil whenever it may. One may ask, "What is forbidden?" Put simply, everything outside of Christ's imparted righteousness is as forbidden fruit. Anything not cleansed by the blood of our Redeemer Jesus Christ is forbidden fruit.

Now on a more positive note, in turning to the things more edifying, let us consider the following occasion. "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." (John 6:26) Here there are two foods described, one a meat which perisheth, the other a meat which endureth unto everlasting life. Eating of one bringeth life. Eating of the other endeth in death. When our Saviour was speaking to Peter in the Gospel of John, chapter 2, verses 15-17, two times He says, "Feed my sheep." Once He says, "Feed my lambs." How comforting it is to know that in the final hours our Lord was with His disciples, He would remind them their chief duty. Their chief mission was to see that the sheep were fed, and that the lambs had sufficient to eat. (Gospel food.)

The Apostle Paul in speaking to the elders at the church of Ephesus had the following to say to them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased

with his own blood." (Acts 20:28) How comforting again it is to see that the Apostle, like his Lord before, was mindful that the church be sufficiently and properly fed after his departure. (Again, gospel food.)

But we come to the matter then, what is appropriate food for the family of God? Going back again to the book of Exodus 16:14, "And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." They went out daily and gathered it. What was it? It was manna. Our Saviour described this manna in John 6:48-49, "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." God sent down in a miraculous way food for them and provided them for the 40 yrs. they wandered in the wilderness; *day after day, provision was made for them, and they never so much as had to offer a prayer or lift a finger to receive it, and God never failed them.* They had sufficient to eat. Notice, too, where the manna fell. It was only among the Israelites. No one but Israelites were allowed to eat this food. Not a drop of manna fell back in Egypt. None fell in Canaan. It only fell where the people of God were gathered together. This speaks of how God sends His children bread in gospel form today. It doesn't fall yonder somewhere among the goats. It doesn't fall among the heathen. It falls, rather, where His children have been gathered by the Holy Spirit.

"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: and they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread: and with bitter herbs shall they eat it." (Exodus 12:5, 8) In a figure we find the lamb as food for the whole house of Israel. However, they must eat it with bitter herbs, showing that in much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom.

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and break it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." (Matt. 26:26) The Lord's final hours before His death were taken up with preparing His disciples to come before that table of remembrance and eat those emblems of His body and blood. Even so in the church today we still have His table spread and we hear His lovely voice saying to us, "Come and dine".

"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (John 6:57) It should be in our minds a simple thing to observe that if anyone is not eating of their Saviour and worshipping Him as Lord then their god is their belly. Our Saviour is at the right hand of the Throne on high, and we eat and drink of Him spiritually, and partake of His nature by virtue of the Holy Spirit of God infusing in us life, bringing glory and light and immortality. "Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst for they shall be filled". And on what shall they be filled? The bread of life. The blood of life. Is it any wonder then that David could say, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good;" (Psalm 34:8). Or that Peter joins in David's theme by saying, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." (I Peter 2:3)

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Rev. 22:1, 2) In this closing scene of the Bible we are brought back to the tree of life. We may freely eat, for our Jesus has taken away the curse. Eating with Adam under that terrible curse was in bitterness and sorrow. But now, in this heavenly scene, all tears are wiped away, and eternal bliss awaits those

being brought by grace to the ever-yielding tree of life. We may freely eat and live, and live in Him. Oh, brethren, it is good that God has provided us natural food, and when we gather with God's people or set by ourselves and eat, may we be thankful that He has given us our daily bread. But ever keep in mind the word of God, where it says, "Man shall not live by bread alone." It is not life simply to eat and to live. Life is to eat of the Lamb of God and to live in Him. Life is to have the Spirit of God reveal unto us His glories as we see Him here in the Tree of Life. We may eat and partake of everlasting joy and happiness, that was, for all appearance, gone forever by the act of Adam and Eve in the garden. But where sin abounded grace does much more abound. That is the gospel story. Sin reared its head in the beginning when our first parents took of the forbidden fruit and ate. But God has provided a table for His chosen ones and brings them into His banqueting house. This is no slaughter house, nor judgment house, nor jail house. But He brings his bride into a banqueting house, and there spread above the table is the banner of love. God's love to His people provided a food that overcame the curse.

How sobering to think, then, that but for free grace we would be with those whose god is their belly. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly and they glory in their shame. In other words they are happy in sin, and they mind earthly things. We fear being identified with those whose god is their belly. They love the things we hate. They hate the things we love. This earth is their life. They expect to live off it and eat from it. We know we cannot live by bread alone, and how we long more and more to taste the graciousness of our dear Redeemer as our Bread of Life because we cannot mind these earthly things any more. They cannot hold us in bondage as they once did. The longer we go along, the more we are drawn away

from them, and we more and more mind heavenly things. Our citizenship is in heaven. We need not fear belonging to that category of people Paul says has a belly for a god. When we, like the Prodigal, have spent all, and wasted our substance in riotous living, and have been sent out to feed swine, we will soon discover that we cannot eat of the husks. Soon the Father's house will be our desire. We are going home. Home to the robe of righteousness; home to the ring of love; and home to the gospel shoes that our feet will be shod with. But most of all we are going home to partake of the fatted calf which our Heavenly Father has provided for us. (Luke 15:22, 23) Let the world say, "Eat, drink, be merry". They have their portion in this life, but ours is in the world to come. Amen.

(Elder) James F. Poole

Danville, Arkansas

Dear Editors;

My subscription is over-due for the *Signs*. Enclosed is a check for two years, and your may use the extra where it is needed.

I thank you for sending the *Signs* to my home. I enjoy reading the sermons, experiences, and Voices of the Past. In the August issue "Fatalism and Predestination" by Elder F. A. Chick was good. He explained it so well. Also, "The Common Salvation" by Elder H. H. Lefferts was good, too.

So many of our loved ones have passed on. In our Church at Rehobeth, Eldorado, Ark., we have lost two sisters and one brother in the last few months, but we feel it is their eternal gain.

In hope,
Jane Carroll

Dear Editors,

I am enclosing a check for another year's subscription for the *Signs of the Times*, the remainder to be used as needed.

I thoroughly enjoy every article that is written, but especially the one published in the January, 1979, *Signs* written by the late Elder Gilbert Beebe on the Absolute Predestination of all things. The more I read it the more I believe it to be the absolute truth.

May God bless the editors and writers to continue sending the good news through the dear old periodical.

A sister in Christ, I hope,
Mrs. Lester Haning
So. Charleston, W. Va. 25303

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

TIME SALVATION

BELOVED:—The Old Baptist people have long been troubled with the confusing doctrines of "means of salvation," "means of grace," and such like; but not until the present young generation rose up, who assume to be wise above all the fathers, has the confusing and uncertain sound of "conditional time salvation" been trumpeted forth in almost all the camps of Israel. The last ten years this strange and startling blast of trumpets has echoed and reechoed with exciting and bewildering effect, and great has been the widespread confusion and division, where peace and good will prevailed before. This dividing of salvation, and subdividing it into fragments and parts, partly eternal salvation, and partly time salvation, (as the teachers of this yea and nay gospel call it,) they boastfully claim, is "rightly dividing the word." It certainly has a dividing quality, for it has scattered the flock. Yea, it has brought bitter strife and alienation into the rank and file of the conditional Baptists themselves. Thus has God confounded their language, and they cannot understand one another. And, as did the confused Midianites, they are now

falling upon one another in deadly strife. But the remnant according to the election of grace, the little band with their spiritual Gideon, break their earthen pitchers that the light may shine out, and shout, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." By this they conquer, for the Lord fights for them and gives them the victory.

Let us now consider salvation in the light of the Lord as revealed in the word. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." "Salvation" is a Bible term, and it runs all through the divine book, being used very many times, yet it is always the one single, simple word, never plural, complex or compounded. "Salvation." The plural word, "salvations," is not in the holy Bible. This term, "salvations," so common and popular now, belongs to the literature of a yea and nay gospel, but it is not in the gospel of Christ. This late word, "salvations," is incomplete without another word, "conditional," joined to it. For the recent salvations, so much talked of, which depend upon creature obedience, are necessarily conditional. Any conditional salvation is necessarily of works, and entitled to a reward, therefore all conditional salvation is legal, yea and nay, and most uncertain. There is no grace at all in any conditional salvation, because the grace of God is free, unconditional, never sold and never bought. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." "And if by grace, then is it no more of works." All conditional salvation calls for works to obtain it, for something must be done. So grace is entirely excluded from the yea and nay doctrine of conditional salvations. The teachers of conditional salvation have not yet presumed to say the grace of God is conditional, and so all conditionalism is a denial of salvation by grace.

Conditional Baptists, however, seem to think that they take away the objectionable feature of Arminianism or

conditional salvation, by confining it to time, and so they qualify this legal doctrine of salvation by works by inserting the word "time" between the two words, conditional salvation, and make it read, "Conditional time salvation;" that is to say, salvation in time is conditional. If so, then salvation in time is not by grace, nor of the Lord.

Now it behooves us to know what salvation is, when it is, and who it is to. Salvation is redemption, deliverance; it is always in time, and it is always to the lost. No one who is not lost can be saved. The one who knows what to do, and can do it, is not lost. So doing conditions is not salvation at all, but merely working for a reward. We never go to salvation, because salvation is righteousness and justification, and we are sinful; but salvation must and does always come to us as lost. Salvation has no meaning to the one who is not lost, but claims ability to do and obtain the desired good. It is hypocritical to call that which is within our own power salvation. So long as Peter stood on the water, he did not pray, "Lord save me." Such a cry would have been false then; but when he had no power left, then the prayer was one of need, and salvation came to him.

When is salvation? Does it take place in eternity? or in time? It is important that we understand when salvation is. While the Bible clearly shows that God's purpose to save his chosen and predestinated people in Christ is eternal, the divine testimony is abundant and clear, that all the work of their full and glorious salvation unto holiness and a blissful immortality is begun and ended in time. This triple work of the Father, Son and Spirit, three in One, consists in redemption, regeneration and resurrection. The resurrection of all the redeemed and heaven-born people of God shall take place at the last day of time. And so Christ said of all the church, that the Father's will is that "I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." And of every

believer in him he says, "And I will raise him up at the last day." The last day is a part of time. The resurrection of all the dead, who sleep in Christ, is the completion and crowning glory of their salvation. This is in time. Redemption from the law of sin and death, by the death of the Son of God, is in time. So is salvation by his risen life in time. Paul says, "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." This salvation by his life includes being born again, and passing from death unto life. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." All this is wrought in time. Paul therefore says, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." That is, until the full revelation of Christ in you in his resurrection, power and glory. Until that glorious day, God will perform the good work of salvation in you. O this is assuring and blessed, my beloved! In this faith Paul said, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." This is the full glory of our ascended Lord Jesus Christ. God, who exalted him at his own right hand of power, will perform his blessed work of salvation in us until the redemption of the purchased possession. "Then we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

All the work of salvation is fulfilled in time. But the adjective, the long and dangerous handle, "conditional," is not found in the Bible as belonging to our time salvation. But this is true: "Salvation is of the Lord," and salvation is in time. All the redeemed of the Lord shall be saved in time. "Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!"

All legal teachers, who strive to burden the salvation of the Lord's people with conditions, are putting a yoke upon their necks which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear, but which is a curse and snare to the people, and a reproach upon salvation. But when they think that they have improved upon Arminian conditional salvation by inserting the word "time" in it, they are deceiving and being deceived, for this is the day of salvation. "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" So any one who is not saved in time has no salvation. Therefore, the modern term, "conditional time salvation," means no more nor less than conditional salvation. To prove this, they must first prove that Jesus is a conditional Savior. This they dare not attempt to do. Salvation is of the Lord and in Christ. Yea, he himself is Salvation. "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." "Neither is there salvation in any other." Then there is no salvation in conditions nor in man. "For by grace are ye saved: * * * not of works." "Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation. * * * My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God." David here personified the man Christ and every member of Christ. As this was true of David and Christ under the law, is it not equally true of us under the gospel of grace? Since God only was the rock and salvation of his people under the old covenant, which was conditional, is he any the less their only rock and salvation under the new covenant in Christ Jesus, which is free from all conditions?

The Lord said, "For my people have

committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." This is a perfect description of conditional salvation; for it can hold no water of salvation.

But blessed be the Lord of salvation, Jesus saves his people from their sins, gives them the water of life, and says, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This is all my salvation and all my desire.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

(Elder) D. Bartley

April 1, 1905

OBITUARIES

MISS SALLIE BUNN

Sister Sallie Bunn was born January 20, 1897, and died September 5, 1978, making her stay here 81 years, four months, and 13 days. I feel she fell asleep to wake with Jesus. She united with the Primitive Baptist Church at Sandy Grove, Nash County, North Carolina, June 2, 1927.

She was faithful to her church during this time. She never married, but as Paul said, "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord and how to please the Lord."

Before she passed away, she said she was ready and wanted to go to dwell with the Lord.

There are many relatives and loved ones left to miss her, but I would say as the hymn writer said, "Grieve not for she would say, my soul would leave this heavy clay at that transporting word, run up with joy the shining way, to embrace my dearest Lord." Written by request,

Sister Rachel (Murray) Wiggs, Clerk

By Request

I, the sister of the deceased, Sallie Bunn, want to add these words, which are a part of

her experience.

After I was married in 1934, Sallie lived alone until her death. Being fearful and lonely at first, these words were given as a promise, Job 5:23: "For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee."

It was shown to her that these words meant that no one would harm her in any way, and with that promise, knowing that God is faithful to His promise, she lived at ease the remainder of her life.

She did not live a rich life in temporal things, but was content to live simply. She read her Bible and books pertaining to the Scriptures, and going to hear preaching were her chief joy.

She died of cancer of the colon, but did not suffer intense pain. The Lord supplied her every need her entire life.

Bruce (Bunn) Coleman

Sims, N.C.

SISTER BETTY HOWARD

It is with a feeling of much unworthiness that I attempt to comply with the church's request at Northeast to write the Obituary of a dear one in Israel, Sister Betty May Howard who was born September 2, 1900 and departed this life September 2, 1978, making her stay on this earth 78 years.

She was married to Rufus Howard, November 20, 1918; to this union was born four children, one daughter Mrs. Marjorie Nelmes, three sons, Leland, William, and Elbert.

She is survived by her husband and their 4 children, 2 brothers, 1 sister, 9 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

Sister Betty was a member of Northeast Church for over 40 years. She was a faithful and devoted member to her church as long as her health would permit her to attend.

We the church feel that our loss is her eternal gain although we have to be submissive to our Heavenly Father's will. Blessed be the Lord that giveth life and blessed be Him that taketh for He does all things according to His will in His own good time. We feel that He called this sister from this world to be with Him and be forever satisfied.

Her funeral was conducted by her pastor, the Elder J. T. Prescott. She was laid to rest in Jacksonville Cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers.

Written by Lewis Sammons, Clerk
Elder J. T. Prescott, Moderator

OBITUARY OF SISTER EDNA AMBROSE

Whereas it has pleased our Heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom and love to remove from our midst our dearly beloved and highly esteemed Sister Edna Ambrose.

The subject of this notice was born February 20, 1914, and departed this life July 14, 1978, making her stay on this earth sixty-four years, four months, and twenty four days.

At the age of thirteen she was married to Phillip Ambrose. They lived together over fifty years, and into this union was born six children, all living except one who preceded her to the grave by several years. Sister Edna was a devoted wife and a fine mother.

Sister Edna had a wonderful experience of Grace that manifested the work of God in her heart. She united with the Primitive Baptist Church at Concord on the fourth Sunday in August, 1940, and remained a true and faithful member until her death. She was loved by all who knew her.

Later, she was given a mind to write her experience for publication and sent it to Zion's Landmark. It was so rich and full of grace and love that Elder T. F. Adams chose it to print in the book of his autobiography.

Her funeral was conducted on Sunday, July 16, at Walker Funeral Home in Columbia, N.C. by her pastor, Elder N. L. Ambrose, assisted by David Sykes. Her body rests in Azalea Gardens Cemetery.

Therefore, be it resolved that a copy of this obituary be spread on our Church records, a copy sent to her family, and one to the *Signs of the Times*, and Zion's Landmark for publication.

This was written by one who loved her very much, Elder N. L. Ambrose.

This was done by order of the Church at Concord in conference on the fourth Sunday in January, 1979.

Elder N. L. Ambrose, Mod.
Sudie A. Ambrose, C.C.

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 8/79
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.**

IN JESUS IS ETERNAL LIFE

My Saviour is the Treasure,
Which I have found at last.
And now that I have found Him,
I want to hold Him fast.
For He is far more precious
Than anything I know;
And with me He is walking,
As on this earth I go.

His love, His grace, and mercy,
By money is not bought.
It only comes from heaven
And by Him it is wrought.
His mercy is forever,
For every soul he chose.
His love and grace eternal,
To His now freely flows.

How very sweet the knowledge,
That my Redeemer lives;
And from the Throne in Heaven
Eternal life He gives.
He died but now He's living
Within my humble heart:
The precious peace He gives me,
None other can impart.

In Him I know there's nothing
Unholy or impure:
In Him there is perfection,
And in Him I'm secure.
He took away the sorrow,
My lonely heart had known,
And gave me grace and beauty
Which comes from Him alone.

In Him there is compassion,
 For sinners such as I:
 And though I've naught to offer,
 On Him I can rely.
 I know I am a sinner,
 But by His grace I'm saved;
 Upon His hands so precious
 My soul is now engraved.

The nail prints are eternal,
 And they are there for me:
 And when I get to Heaven
 The nail prints I will see.
 I'll sing and shout His praises,
 With others gone before:
 I'll glorify my Saviour
 On Heaven's happy shore.

Ethel Gilland

GENESIS 2:16-17

"And the Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and everything therein. He spake it into existence by the word of his power. "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." (Gen. 1:31). And he said, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." (Isa. 46:8-11). "For of him, and thru him and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." (Rom. 11:30). "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11).

This is the God in whom I hope I trust; the one who hath loved me with an everlasting love, and hath taught me thru the Holy Ghost all things that I may know of him; if indeed I know anything. And if I do know anything, I am sure that it was not taught me by the wisdom of man; for it is the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." (I Cor. 2:7-9).

God has at least one purpose for everything in the world; and they show forth his glory and praise him, and are for his pleasure; even the wrath of man praises him and the remainder he restrains. (Ps. 76:10). By this we know that God is the first cause of all causes; but that does not remove the second causes. When God formed man from the dust of the ground, he was a creature made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. (Rom. 8:20). For one to be subject to anyone or anything, one must of necessity be under the power or authority of someone or something. If Adam, the creature, could have successfully resisted vanity, it could not be said that he was ever under its power; but we know he fell and all his posterity with him. Some will say, "Since He has made us subject to vanity, why doth he yet find fault? for we have not resisted His will." Paul answers, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay; of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another to dishonor?" (Rom. 9:20-21). In other words, does He not have the right to do with His

own as it pleases Him? Who would deny Him this right?

Adam ate of the forbidden fruit willingly, and therefore transgressed the only law God had given. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (I John 3:4). "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12). By this we see the entering of sin into the world, and it was by man. As I said before, God has a purpose in all things, even sin and the devil. If God had no purpose of sin or the devil, surely he would not have created the devil, and surely He had the power to keep sin out. If He did not have such power to keep sin out of the world, then how can He keep it out of heaven? But God overrules sin to the good of His children. A good example of this was the selling of Joseph by his brothers into Egypt. "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." (Gen. 50:20).

"For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Although the Arminian says that Adam had a choice of eating or not eating, God did not say, if thou eatest, but, in the day thou eatest: for God knew that He would; else God did not know and was ignorant of something that would come to pass. (I shudder at the thought.) And, the Arminian says, Adam did not die in that day; but, as I heard one say, he was only made very sick. In so saying, they declare God a liar. But it is impossible for God to lie, (Heb. 6:8), therefore they died in that selfsame day. No, they did not die a corporal death; but a spiritual death. Death means to be separated from; therefore they were separated or cut off spiritually from their creator and driven from the garden of Eden.

Had Adam never sinned he would yet be in the garden of Eden; because it is sin that brings forth death, (Jas. 1:15),

and he still would not be a fit subject for heaven and immortal glory; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. (I Cor. 15:50). And Jesus said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24). Therefore I conclude that it was necessary for Adam to die; that the world might be populated, and that he might be born again.

Brethern, there is no end to this great text, but I feel to stop here. "Knowing this first, that no prophesy of the scriptures is of any private interpretation," (II Peter 1:20), and knowing the weakness of my flesh, I cannot declare with any certainty, as have some, that this writing is in perfect harmony with the holy scriptures; but I would exhort each and every one of you to search the scriptures to see if these things be so; and may God grant you wisdom and knowledge to discern between truth and error, and also rightly divide the word of truth.

Clifford Wilbanks
217 Bastrop Drive
Monroe, La. 71203

702 Ranier Drive
Longview, Texas

Dear Editors,

I must tell you that I enjoy the *Signs* every month more than words can express. I hope and trust that you will be blessed of the Lord to keep the good news coming my way.

Many of the good writings are worth more than the price of the paper. Some are so uplifting.

I trust this will be another year filled with such good reading as has been in the years gone by. I am renewing my subscription for two years. Use the rest as you see fit.

In His Name,
Mrs. G. W. McDuff

Eden, N.C.

Dear Elder Poole and Family,

As I write to you this morning I am deeply grateful for my brethren, sisters, and friends. It is when God slows us down that we meditate on the sweeter things of life.

As I awakened today to a calm and peaceful morning, my thoughts went back to 11 P.M. last evening when a thunderstorm was raging. I was made thankful for the mercy He has shown this sinner through the years of my life. I felt blessed to be brought through the night, to see the light after such a darkened night. It is like the storm of our life - dark - until God sheds light to our sin-sick souls and our hope is revived.

I've never had a smooth way with words, but if I know my heart, I love the brethren.

We have had some precious meetings since we last saw you. Elder Spangler has been preaching on the Resurrection. So thankful are we to have such able ministers with a gift only God can give.

Again I would like to say that I am thankful for all the telephone calls, cards, and acts of kindness shown me during my recuperation from a broken foot. Come to see us when you have a mind to; you are always welcome.

May God's richest blessings be upon you and your family.

A sister in Hope,
Bea French

Elgin, Oregon, Jan. 18, 1905

Elder F. A. Chick — Dear Brother: — I have always believed that it would be in harmony with the teachings of Christ and the apostles, and with their practice, for a minister who should be traveling and preaching where there was no church organization, should he meet with any who could give a reason of their hope in Christ, and who desired to be baptized, that that minister should baptize them. And should a minister receive a letter from those who live far

from any church, who desire him to visit them and preach for them, and such ones wish to be baptized, and he deems them worthy, it would be right for him to baptize them. Now am I right in my view? Again, would it be in harmony with the teaching of the Scriptures and the practice of the apostles, and of those who labored with them, for a minister who in his travels should find persons so situated, and who desire to be baptized, to advise them to wait until they could go before the church; and if there was no opportunity for them to do that, then the ordinance was not required of them, as the ordinance belonged to the church, and could not be performed outside of a church organization?

Again, would the baptism performed under the condition which I have named, by a minister where there is no church, be valid, or would such persons, should opportunity be given afterward to unite with some church, be required to be rebaptized?

Now, Brother Chick, I would be glad to have your views upon these questions, for if I am wrong in my position I want to know it. There are others who would like to see your views on this subject. In this country churches are few and far apart, and the ministers often find one here and there, far from any church organization, who knows and loves the truth; and sometimes our ministers receive letters from such isolated ones, desiring that they visit them and baptize them. Now, I am anxious to know whether it would be good order, or not, to do so.

Please publish what I have written, and reply if you think it best.

In gospel bonds,

G. E. Mayfield

REPLY TO BROTHER MAYFIELD

As we grow older, we come to realize more and more the need of carefulness in responding to requests for our views upon the order that ought to prevail among the churches; it is so easy to say

too much or too little.

Speaking generally, our understanding of the matter is in harmony with that of our brother. We believe that a minister under the circumstances named has a right, and that it is his duty also to baptize such as give evidence that they know the Lord, when they come to him desiring it under the circumstances named. If he meets them in his traveling and preaching, or if he receives a letter from some one to the same effect, in either case it is his right and duty to respond. It would not be right to say to them that they should wait until they could come into the bounds of some organized church, when no prospect of such a thing was in sight, and neither is it true that the Lord does not require this at their hands, unless there should be some church organization to receive them. Still further, such an one when coming to live in the bounds of some church should not be required to be baptized again.

Having said this much, we desire to add some reflections to the above, in the way of caution. First, it is to be supposed that when a church has called for the ordination of a man to the work of the ministry, and when that church bids him Godspeed, as he goes about his labors in that ministry, she has confidence in his experience, in his call to the work, and in his judgment to act wisely, to some extent at least. If such a minister goes about his Master's business it will be with humility, carefulness and an anxious desire to honor God, and for the good of the cause. It is not likely that such a man (and none others ought to be set apart to this work) will be found admitting to the ordinance of baptism any who would not also be acceptable to the church. We know members in the churches whose judgment we would be willing to abide by in all such cases, and the churches everywhere no doubt feel willing to abide by the judgment of their pastors, if indeed their pastors are truly pastors.

But on the other hand, it should be borne in mind that ministers thus alone, and thrown on their own responsibility in such a case, should be exceeding careful, and be fully satisfied that the candidate is a fit subject for the ordinance, and that he or she would be likely to prove a faithful member of some church, if that should ever be their privilege. We think that when it is possible, in all such cases, some of the members of some church should accompany the minister and hear the testimony of the candidate. It seems to us that in this no hard and fast rule can be laid down, however, each one ought to move forward carefully, and in the fear of God. We have known instances in this part of the land where the churches have appointed some one or more of their members to accompany the minister and act for the church in hearing the confession of the candidate, and if satisfied, they were authorized to receive the candidate in behalf of the church; and when they reported the baptism of such distant ones to the church, the church at once had their names entered upon the church book as members with them. In the circumstances named by Brother Mayfield, it is our judgment that the minister should give a statement in writing to the candidate, telling the circumstances under which the baptism was performed, so that the candidate might be received anywhere among the churches, if in Providence it was his privilege to visit them afterward. We also think that the minister ought to report what he had done, to his own church, and that his church could cause the name of the person baptized to be entered upon their church book as a member with them; we could see nothing out of order in such a course. In such a case the one thus baptized would be assured of having a home, and of being held in remembrance by brethren where his name might be.

So far as the teaching of the

Scriptures of the New Testament are concerned, (and to this we must all be subject) we do not recall any instance where any person is recorded as having narrated an experience to the church before baptism was administered, and we do have instances recorded where evangelists baptized believers alone. Witness the instance of Philip and the eunuch. Confession of faith was made in all instances, but we do not in any instance read that it was done in a formal manner before the church. We do not mean by this to say that this is not now right and wise, and that it ought not to be continued. We do think that it is wise and conducive to good feeling and order, and to that oneness in fellowship, without which church membership is but a mockery and a mere form. They that gladly received the word were at the first baptized at Jerusalem, and all such have a right to baptism now.

We wish to also say that where those desiring baptism can possibly come to some church and there tell of the dealings of God with them, it is always best. It comforts the church to hear such testimony, and it will comfort the candidate to find that the Lord's dear children cordially receive him to their number. One who was received at one of the churches which we were serving many years ago, as the brethren and sisters came to her afterwards and gave her such cordial welcome, turned to ourself, as we were standing near at hand, and said, as though she could hardly believe it, "O how cordially they all receive me, don't they?" In all such cases pastors will desire that the church shall rejoice with them, and churches will rejoice also in the joy of the candidate, and in the gladness which is felt by their pastor. For these, and for other reasons, it seems to us best that candidates should come to some gospel church for the narration of experience, and for reception, when it is at all possible; but still, when not possible, we are in agreement with Brother Mayfield.

Elder F. A. Chick

Roanoke, Va.

My dear Brother Donald,

I see my subscription is running out. I am sending a check to renew it. Do as you think best with the rest.

Sometimes I feel I do not belong with these precious people - that I am pretending. But I hope by faith I keep pushing on. (Hebrews 11) By faith I want this paper in my home. By faith I hope I love the beautiful fellowship these people have one with another. By faith we assemble ourselves together to hear the Word preached. By faith we love the brethren. How beautiful this faith is when felt.

By faith I hope you and the brethren who work with you will be given strength to carry on. By faith I hope I love my brethren one and all. Come again to see us.

Mrs. D. A. Law

February 6, 1979

Dear Elder Spangler,

It has been on my mind to write you a few lines. First, I will ask if you are feeling better? I truly hope you are.

Now in regards to your remarks about the Lamb. I have read and reread what you said about it. I also heard the tape recording you sent to Brother Wylie W. Fulton and I am very much impressed with what you said. These are some of the things that I have been looking for for over 50 years, I hope. I have read and reread over and over again many quotations about the Lamb, and I will say that it is the truth all of the way, and I am glad that there are some left who are not afraid to tell the truth. I know that there is a lot of "bars" of non-fellowship set up all about, but we are a little church with no bars against the truth.

I am going to close for now.

A brother in Christ, I hope,
(Elder) Clyde Caudle
Huntersville, N.C. 20878

P.S. Please excuse the mistakes. I am enclosing a copy of some of the things I have written about.

BARS OF NON-FELLOWSHIP

What is this and what is it for? Is it for people, or what? Does it mean to put up a fence to keep something out or in? What is the bars of non-fellowship against, or for? Where in the Bible do you find room to put up bars of non-fellowship? Are they children of God or the children of wrath? If they are children of God, then who are we to put up bars of non-fellowship against one another? "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female. For ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28) This being true, then where is the room for non-fellowship? "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29) "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ". (Gal. 4:7) "That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." (Eph. 3:7) That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:7) Then how can bars of non-fellowship be put up against heirs of promise? "For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be a firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. 8:29) Are there any room in this for bars of non-fellowship? If we be conformed to the image of His Son, then who is supposed to put bars of non-fellowship up, and for what? Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law. So then, if this is so, and if we love one another as we ought, then where is there any room for bars of non-fellowship?

Written by Elder Clyde Caudle

SCRAPS FROM LIVING WITNESSES

What does a man know of the Spirit's help, who never felt he could not help

himself? What does he know of Christ's righteousness, if he has not felt he has none of his own? What can he know of eternal happiness, if he never had forebodings of eternal misery? There is no man so afraid of being deceived as a spiritual man. He is jealous of being deceived with fair show, fair words, and fine speeches; and, above all, he is afraid of being deceived with his own heart. He does not receive doctrines at random, but goes on very jealously, and will assent to no truth but what does him good. He tries all by the word of God and his own necessities. The child of God begins at the bottom, and goes up hill, judging as he goes on; and when he gets to the top, being taught the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ in his soul, and feeling his own awful depravity and absolute dependence upon the Lord, he stands firm in the knowledge of the truth; while those who began at the top have tumbled head over heels, and are again rolling in the filth of the flesh, as they were before they made a profession of religion.

Standing in union to Christ, his whole family were alike objects of redemption, and every spiritual blessing they enjoy is the result of his everlasting love. Every particle of spiritual obedience that God required of his people was performed by Christ; therefore, he is called, "The Lord our righteousness". The law requires of us, as creatures, that we shall love the Lord with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves; and this requirement Christ has fulfilled, for he says, "Thy law was in my heart". Indeed, whatever the law requires was perfected by Christ, on behalf of his family, practically and passively.

The Scriptures have always a character in view, and when they speak to one, they speak to all in a like state; and as the sure mercies of David are promised to those who are made spiritually to cry for mercy, let me ask, how many of you are here? For however high or great may be your profession,

your religion is worth nothing, if you have not been made to groan and cry under a sense of your sins and vileness, in heart, lip, and life. According to apprehension and comprehension, if a poor child of God wants to find the greatest sinner in existence, he must look at home, for he cannot find a greater than himself. If God give us a martyr's faith, we can meet a martyr's fate, as cheerfully as those who have gone before. Whoever the gospel suits, there is an adaptation suited for its reception. Therefore, where there is a wounded conscience, there is the balm of Gilead to heal it. Until the law has entered into the heart of a sinner, making him cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" it is impossible for him to enjoy real gospel liberty. Today we may be with one groaning, and sighing, and nearly broken down under the weight of sin, and tomorrow God has broken into his heart, and shows him his glorious standing, his perfection in Christ; and here both law and gospel are glorified, God honoured, and the sinner justified.

November 29, 1835

J.H.

(From "The Gospel Standard")

3625 D Stancrest Dr.
Glendale, CA 91208
February 5, 1979

Dear Elder and Sister Spangler,

As I contemplate writing this-long overdue letter, I am overwhelmed with so many beautiful memories and experiences of my trip to Virginia that I hardly know where to begin.

I do know that it was certainly a joy and a privilege to meet you and Sister Spangler, in person, for the first time. I am so thankful for that day on July 5th, 1978 when you two came to the Airport in Greensboro, N.C, to meet Sister Ruby Reldtman, Sister Marguerite Simpson and myself, and so graciously drove us to your home in Danville, Virginia. We were delighted with your Colonial type home which proved to be a

lovely example of the lifestyle we were to become acquainted with during our visit-also when we learned of all the arrangements the beloved church members and friends had planned for our stay. Words cannot express my gratitude and I'm sure I can speak for Sister Ruby and Sister Marguerite, all of the homes and loving people where we visited will never be forgotten. Such hospitality and Christian fellowship made us feel so welcome.

Now, in regard to the Associations-I recall mentioning to you that I had not had the privilege of attending Associations. For years I had read announcements and circular letters from the different Associations published in *The Signs of the Times*. How my heart longed to be able to attend these meetings. Here, I wish to relate that I firmly believe that my Heavenly Father led me, in a way I knew not, which resulted in my being able to attend the Staunton River and the Upper Country Line Primitive Baptist Associations.

For this I want to give thanks to my Heavenly Father and to Sisters Ruby Feldtman and Marguerite Simpson whom I met when I visited Bethel Primitive Baptist Church in Mossyrock, Washington. They informed me that they were planning to attend a special Fiftieth Anniversary in honor of Elder D. V. Spangler and Dan River Primitive Baptist Church, constituted in the year 1884. The purpose of the occasion was "to acknowledge God's mercies in bringing both church and pastor through fifty years of united fellowship and love, and the sharing of the many joys and sorrows along the way." Dan River Church was to act as the Host Church for the Upper Country Line Primitive Baptist Association on July 15, 16, and 17, 1978. Sisters Ruby and Marguerite invited me to join them--thus the Lord provided the way and in loving kindness bestowed countless blessings upon us during the meetings.

As the time arrived for the

Association meetings to begin, a large number of members from corresponding churches as well as friends and visitors from various states and Canada began to assemble for the service.

How beautiful were the Lord's people as they convened, with their chairs, to a grove of evergreen trees where they seated themselves around an altar which had been placed on a large covered platform. The platform was located in the midst of tall trees reflecting many shades of green as the sun shone through. What a peaceful, restful place! This scene brought to mind Isaac Watt's Hymn--

"Lord, how delightful 'tis to see, a whole assembly worship Thee.

At once they sing, at once they pray;
They learn of Heav'n, and learn the way."

When the congregation was seated, the ministers walked onto the platform and were seated in a semicircle around the altar. As is the custom at Association meetings, the speakers are each appointed a day and a time to preach. There were a large number of ministers from Canada and different states. I was very impressed as these men approached the platform in quiet dignity and humility--trusting alone in Jesus to give them strength and utterance by the Holy Spirit. There are the Lord's servants, called and ordained of Him to preach His everlasting gospel. What a solemn and sacred place--yet a joy unspeakable!

The services began by the singing of hymns and prayer. How lovely is the singing when the heart has been tuned by the Holy Spirit to sing His praise and to exalt His Holy Name. Three hymns stand out in my memory--"Rejoice, The Lord is King," was sung in such beautiful harmony that we were lifted up and our hearts were made to rejoice in the Lord, our King!

Secondly: "Oh How Happy Are They Who Their Saviour Obey"--As I observed these precious Saints as they sang this hymn, I was made to feel that

these--a portion of the Children of the Heavenly King, were walking in obedience and bearing the fruit of the Spirit--love, faith, joy and peace. What a fellowship, and what a love Divine!

Thirdly: "Father, We Rest in Thy Love." This hymn was often sung at the close of the services. How reluctant we are to leave the place where the Lord shows His smiling face--and how blessed to receive that Rest the Lord, alone, gives to those He loves. "We rest, we rest in Thy Love!"

Following the singing, prayer and supplication was made, giving thanks and beseeching the Heavenly Father, in the name of His precious Son, to bless the waiting congregation and the speakers with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

As each minister approached the altar to preach from the Word, it became evident that the Lord had heard our prayers. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." In His great mercy and redeeming love, He had prepared a table before us - a table laded with every manner of spiritual food and drink. Oh, how our hungry and thirsty souls did partake of the sumptuous feast! A feast of Holy manna brought to us from the word of God spoken from the mouth of His servants -- extolling a Sovereign God and His beloved Son Christ Jesus. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," Eph. 1:3.

There were so many beautiful scriptures chosen for texts that I have a desire to record some of them.

I Tim. 2:5 "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

I Peter 1:6 "Whom having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Rom. 8:1 "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after

the Spirit."

Eph. 2:1 "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins."

I Cor. 10:1-4 "Brethren I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that our fathers were under the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Ps. 33:12 "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance."

Ps. 40:7-11 "Then said I, Lo, I come: In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: Yea, the law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation."

I am thankful to my Heavenly Father for His ministers. What a privilege it was to meet so many of them while I was attending the Associations. Some of the Elders, I felt I already knew, having read (over the years) many of their comforting and edifying sermons and experiences in *The Signs of the Times*. What a pleasure it was to meet them face to face!

Isaac Watt's Hymn expresses my thoughts about these noble men--

"How beauteous are their feet who stand on Zion's hill;
Proclaim salvation with their tongues,
and words of peace reveal!

How charming is their voice, how sweet the tidings are!
Zion, behold thy Saviour King, He reigns and triumphs here!

How happy are our ears that hear the joyful sound
Which kings and prophets waited for, and sought but never found!

"How blessed are our eyes that see this Heavenly light;

Prophets and kings desired it long but died without the sight.

The watchmen join their voice and tuneful notes employ;
Jerusalem breaks forth in song, and deserts learn the joy!

The Lord makes bare His arm through all the earth abroad:

Let every nation now behold their Saviour and their God."

Elder Spangler, I am thankful to you and your gracious wife for inviting me along with our beloved sisters Ruby Feldtman and Marguerite Simpson to be guests in your home. It was a joy to be a part of the "Year of Jubilee" celebration held in your honor, and to witness the love and high esteem manifested by the Lord's people (and fellow ministers) for you. As a tribute to you and all of the true ministers of God, I want to quote the words of the Apostle Paul in Acts 20:24, 27 and II Tim. 4:8.

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

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."

With love until we meet again, our dear Lord willing,

Ruby Gilbert

March 7, 1979
Route 9, Box 395
Paducah, Ky. 42001

Dear Editor,

I am the youngest of six sons of Effie Blagg Bowden and would like to write a little about her for the *Signs*. She was a subscriber of the *Signs*, and through her subscription I also became a reader

and a subscriber. Enclosed is my check for \$10.00, \$9.00 for two years subscription and \$1.00 for the fund.

Effie Blagg Bowden was a member of Salider Creek Primitive Baptist Church for about 80 years. She became a member at age 10 or 12, and was passed 90 years old when she died on April 7, 1978. She had 2 or 3 light strokes and often repeated herself, but it seemed that her memories of the scriptures was unusually good. She would repeat Romans 8:2, more and more; "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." I had this verse written on her tombstone. At first this verse didn't have much of an impact on me, but since she died and her memories seem sweeter at time goes on it begins to have a stronger meaning. I guess you could liken the letter Paul wrote to the Hebrews telling them that in Christ they had something better. That is what this verse of scripture has begun meaning to me. When we read the generations of Adam the emphasis is on death. But when we turn to Matthew's gospel and read the generations of Jesus Christ there is no mention of death, although we know that we do die in this body.

My mother was especially fond of Brother Griffin and he wanted to preach her funeral but was unable to do so.

I thank you for the many years of enjoyment that you gave to my mother through your paper. I believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ she now has something far better that we could ever have in this life.

Yours truly,
Billy Blagg

ORDINATION

The second Saturday in March, 1979, North Creek Primitive Baptist Church met in conference for the purpose of ordaining Brother Reeves Smith to the full service of the ministry. Conference was opened with

hymn and prayer by Elder N. L. Ambrose. Agreed Elder J. T. Prescott be chosen moderator. Agreed Brother Hassel Allen serve as clerk of this conference. Agreed on move by Elder Henry Jones that Brother Ernest Marslender and Brother A. F. Rowe be appointed spokesmen for the church.

The candidate, Brother Reeves Smith, was presented to the presbytery by Brother Marslender and Brother Rowe. Agreed there be no spokesman appointed on questioning the candidate. Agreed Elder J. T. Prescott be appointed to lead in the charges to the brother being ordained. All Elders of the presbytery were asked if they had any questions to ask the candidate. None of the Elders had any questions, but all spoke comforting words of encouragement to him and his companion. Elder J. T. Prescott gave the charges to the candidate in very comforting words and read from First Timothy, Chapter 3, Verses 1-7, and Chapter 4, 14th Verse. Agreed all ministers present take part in the laying on of the hands on the candidate being ordained. The Elders of the presbytery were Elder Henry Jones, Elder N. L. Ambrose, Elder J. T. Prescott, Elder M. E. Garner, Elder Lane Carter, Elder W. E. Everett, Elder Joseph Leggett, Elder Hale Terry, and Elder Sam Jones. After the completion of the laying on of the hands with prayer by the presbytery, Elder Smith was presented back to the church as a full Elder in the ministry. Agreed the minutes of the conference be read. Agreed the minutes stand approved after certain corrections were made. Agreed the clerk be given permission to rewrite the minutes to a legible status. Agreed to adjourn.

Elder J. T. Prescott, Moderator
Hassel Allen, Clerk

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AUGUST ASSOCIATIONS

PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Fifty-fourth annual session of the Pigg River District Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Riverview Church, Bassett, Va., commencing on Friday before and continuing thru the first Sunday in August, 1979. (August 3, 4, 5)

Riverview Church is located in Bassett, Va., approximately 200 yards off Route 57 on Bassett Height Road. The meeting house is next to a New School Baptist Church on the right coming from Route 57.

The brethren suggest that visitors bring folding chairs with them, as the meeting house will not hold all the congregation. Public address speakers will be in use.

For further information contact Elder J. R. Hollandsworth, Route 5, Box 104, Bassett, Va. 24055. (Phone 1-703-642-3030)

Elder John D. Wood, Clerk
8902 Cherry Tree Lane
Manassas, Virginia 22110

PLEASANT VALLEY ASSOCIATION

The thirty-third annual session of the Pleasant Valley Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Shepherd Fold Church, Houston, Texas, commencing on Friday before, and continuing through the first Sunday in August, 1979. (August 3, 4, 5)

For additional information contact Elder G. D. Shipman, Route 2, Box 128, Von Ormy, Texas 78073. (Telephone 512-624-2148)

Elder D. G. Shipman, Clerk

SMITH RIVER ASSOCIATION

The 1979 session of the Smith River Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, August 31st, Sept. 1st, and 2nd, at Salem Church, (Head of the River). Laurell Creek is host church.

Salem Church is located in Floyd County on Highway 221, between Check and Copper Hill, Va. For additional information contact Elder Amos Hash, R.R. 2, Box 36, Ferrum, Va. 24088.

All lovers of the truth are invited.

Elder Amos Hash, Clerk

SEPTEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

SOUTH OUACHITA ASSOCIATION

(Wash-i-taw)

The eighty-ninth annual session of the South Ouachita Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Bethel Church, Friday before the 4th Sunday in September, continuing Saturday

and Sunday. (September 21, 22, 23)

Bethel Church is located six miles north of El Dorado, Arkansas, one-half mile west off U.S. Highway 167.

For further information contact Clifford Wilbanks, 217 Bastrop Drive, Monroe, La. 71203.

C. C. Wilbanks, Association Clerk

SEVEN MILE ASSOCIATION

The next session of the Seven Mile Association will be held, the Lord willing, at Hickory Grove meeting house, Johnston County, North Carolina. The meeting is to begin on Friday before the third Sunday in September, 1979, and continue through Sunday. (September 14, 15, 16) The church is located about 7 miles east of Benson on Highway 50 near Meadow School.

We invite the Elders, brethren, sisters, and friends to meet with us.

Elder W. D. Godwin, Moderator
James G. Young, Clerk
Route 2, Dunn, N.C. 28334

THE ORIGINAL

SOUTH ARKANSAS ASSOCIATION

The original South Arkansas Association of Primitive Baptists hold their next session, the Lord willing, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, September 14, 15, 16, with Antioch Church.

Antioch Church is located on Highway 4, from Camden to Locust Bayou. Turn at Butler store, and church is located behind store.

For further information contact Elder Clovis Townley, Route 2, Box 245, Fordyce, Arkansas.

Sister Francis Townley, Association Clerk

FIVE MILE CREEK ASSOCIATION

The One hundred Twelfth annual session of the Five Mile Creek Old School Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Dorsey Creek Church, Cullman County, Alabama, on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, September 14, 15, 16.

Dorsey Creek Church is located at Breman on Alabama Highway #69, about halfway between Jasper and Cullman. All lovers of the truth are invited.

For any further information contact Elder H. C. Moon, Route 1, Box 167-A, Breman, Alabama. (Phone 1-205-287-1603).

Elder H. C. Moon, Moderator
R. L. Jacks, Clerk

EDITORIAL

GOVERNMENT

“Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, for this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. 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 9:1-7)

I would beg for grace, even the grace that saves from sin, that I might be blessed of God to preach and write to you about the Lord Jesus Christ that was crucified and arose the third day, (I Cor. 1:2; Acts 10:40) and that each of you have been, and are now being brought

into perfection in Him. (Psa. 138:8; Col. 1:28)

We will never read a book with the advancing forward of the subject as is found in the Bible. If our eyes have been opened, and our heart is enlightened in the things of Christ, then it has become unto us as a moving picture from the morning of creation, and it will continue to move toward perfection until every child of God is brought unto the presence of God forevermore - never more to need or desire anything.

Please read the last verse and then notice the opening of the sixth verse. All that has been before in this wonderful chapter has been leading up to this verse. All of it was necessary, yea, not a step could have been left out. There is not a man living that can get Joseph into Egypt when they leave out the most minute detail of that journey. Not one step, not one moment of suffering, but what was in God's meaning it for good. Every single through and deed of the brethren were included in their meaning in the matter, for one left our will keep Joseph out of Egypt, and keeping him out of Egypt will cause starvation, and thus the loss of every Israelite. Anyone that desires such a weak doctrine as that can have all of it. From the very outset, their intention was evil, and from the outset God's intention was good. From the very outset in the morning of time, we acted evil, for I assure you that we were all in the loins of our first parents. Our ways were the ways of death, the ways of evil, but God's purpose in it all was that sinners might be saved. This chapter is telling about some of our ways, and some of God's ways. The balance of the Bible both from its beginning in Genesis to the amen in Revelation, composes all of our travels here and God's mercies here and hereafter.

The warfare in our experience is one that comports with one main characteristic of the One that we now

desire to expound to you. He was seen of John on the Isle of Patmos with eyes as a flame of fire, and feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace. (Rev. 1:14, 15)

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder." Now each poor sinner desires to have a portion or allotment in every portion of scripture. The "us" under consideration is the same one found in Matthew 1:21. By faith Isaiah was looking with fond anticipation on this child and Son, as was Joseph as the angel talked with him as he slept. It is the same us found in the language of our Saviour when He declared that, "all that His Father gave Him would come unto Him"; (John 6:23) this is the same people that love God (definitely not that will love Him-Rom. 9:16); and that He conforms to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29); this is the same people, the same us that must be saved; (Acts 4:12) this is the same us that God is not slack towards, and whose long-suffering will not allow us to perish. (II Peter 3:9)

Not one of Adam's sons and daughters can interpret the prophecies of the prophets so as to align one individual of all nations into this us. All prophecy owns Israel, and only Israel. Of those that were embraced in Isaiah's gospel, and all of those included in Matthew 1:21 receive the benefit of this birth and gift of the child and son. Involved in this birth and gift is God, and His being made flesh and dwelling among us. At God's time and way every one of them will receive all of the benefits of this birth and gift.

Our text embraces the government of the kingdom of heaven. This is the one and only kingdom that the Lord God Almighty has established. To be sure, He gave us a legal covenant or government to show us our weakness and the utter futility of building a tower to heaven, but it was only given to last long enough to convince us that because

of our weakness it could never save a sinner. (Romans 8:3) In the days of limited and carnal weaklings for kings the God of heaven set up this kingdom. (Dan. 2:44) In the mind and purpose of God the kingdom and the King were from everlasting, (Prov. 8:23, 30, 31; Psalms 139:15, 16) and are made manifest right early in the morning of creation. (Genesis 3:21)

The government, as well as those governed, was made manifest early because of the need for government. Adam is a figure of this government, as well as a figure of the Governor. God put Adam over what was presented to him, (Genesis 2:15) and dealt with him in such a manner that he acted towards that which had been given into his care in precisely the same manner as One would later deal with that Kingdom that He had been given into His hands. It must be remembered that Adam did not maintain his integrity or uprightness, but in losing it and in losing control over that which had been given him to dress and to keep, that he was in God's hands to the end that he set forth one that would also fall into the earth in death and that in His death He would be with His bride forevermore.

Adam was not deceived. He knew better than to do what he did do. But if God's purpose in Adam had failed, this writing, as poor as it is, yea, my preaching, as poor as it is, would never have gone forth from my lips and my pen. There is not a man on the globe that can prove that God use coercion or even influence on Adam. God did make him a helpmeet out of one of his ribs, but the government was at that time on the shoulder of this child and Son. I am not accusing anyone of saying that this government was not on His shoulder then, but I am made to wonder about what is often published as gospel truth. This is the solid and sure deliverance for everyone that the us embraces. Not only was the child born unto us, and the Son

given unto us, but likewise and at precisely the same time the government rested on His shoulder it was given to us as the perfect gift. (James 1:17) In this work, and its manifestation to poor sin-smitten wretches, was the work of God. It is that way now, or else it is not God that begins the good work in us. (Phil. 1:6) Both the beginning and the ending, and all in between, the government rested on the shoulder of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the names of this child and Son is Wonderful. Oh, that divine revelation would capture my mind and enrapture my spirit to draw out for your consideration the beauties of such a Being to poor sinners as is this. As we contemplate the various qualities of this King let us humbly ask the Lord for a fruitful mind that we might lay hold on eternal life and the Giver and Governor of it to see in a small measure this child and Son whose name is the Lord our Righteousness. (Jer. 23:6) All of the inhabitants of this kingdom shall be taught of the Lord, and out of that teaching peace shall be granted them, and they shall all be established in the righteousness of this King. In the ushering in of this spiritual kingdom, that which has been a hindrance or that was against us, was removed out of the way. We were under a conditional covenant, and in His governing it was moved out of the way, Is it possible that any one would say that He did not move it out of the way? I doubt it, yea, if He is their Governor, I am sure that they will not. Now I am equally sure that none would say that this faulty covenant (always remembering that the fault was in us) was removed by us. He that governed in taking the faulty one out of the way is equally the Governor in establishing the second. (Heb. 10:9)

"His name shall be called Wonderful". What a name, and what a boon it is to the bankrupt sinners that corrupted our standing in the first Adam to have a

King who is wonderful in saving them. He was wonderfully made, and certainly He would be a wonder to those that He came in contact with who knew Him not as Jesus of Nazareth. This wonder by those that know Him not is merely a curiosity, but to those that do know Him, He is indeed wonderful.

A strange and mysterious phenomenon is brought to bear when it is declared that a virgin shall conceive and bear a son. As the mystery deepens and the wonder grows in intensity, blind unbelief staggers at such a thought, and not only rebels at such a thought, but hatred sets in on such an one. Strange as it seems, God inspired the prophets to write about this wonder and then they did not recognize Him when He arrived among them. The Jews, who had the promise of His coming, rejected Him on arrival, and the Gentiles, who did not have a promise of Him, did believe on Him.

What a wonder He is to us. But the wonder is not to a believer what it is to an unbeliever. He is wonderful to poor sinners in that while He was rich He became poor that they through His poverty might be made rich, and it is a wonder that a man should attempt to palm himself off as God.

"His name shall be called Counsellor". Here the wonder becomes more Wonderful. To think that He would become a counsellor to one that nailed Him to a tree is indeed meat and drink and righteousness in the Lord to the feeble lambs of His fold. Have you, dear reader, given it any examination as to what would have become of us had the doctrine of men prevailed? If it had been true, do you know what Joseph would have said when he saw his brethren coming for corn? Let us bring it a little closer home. If the doctrine of works had been true, how long do you think that it would have been before Jesus Christ had said to you, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest?" Isn't it wonderful to have a Counsellor that counsels you to come even though you sold Him into

slavery? This counselling has never been to entice us into sin, but it has been to counsel us that if we do sin, that we have an Advocate with the Father. If you have the mind, read the many precious counsellings of this exceedingly wonderful Saviour.

"His name shall be called the mighty God". Now that verifies what an apostle told us about this Being. Look a long time, dear reader, at the unity between the prophet Isaiah and the apostle John. Inspiration linked them together in the building of the temple of the Lord. (Eph. 2:20) One tells us that this Son was a child, and the other tells us that God was made flesh and dwelt among us. I have no desire whatever to explain what I mean when I say that He was Mary's son, and I have no hesitancy whatever in saying that He was the son of God—that He was God in the flesh; His name—the mighty God. For one, I believe just that, no more, and praise God, no less. And I enjoy immensely the poet,

"So guilty, so helpless am I,
I durst not confide in his blood,
Nor on his protection rely,
Unless I were sure he is God."

and the uniting of the child and the Son, and the giving of them both to the running and maintenance of the government on which my hopes are based gives me the spirit to further sing,

"If asked, what of Jesus I think,
Though still my best thoughts are but poor,

I say, He's my meat and my drink,
My life, and my strength, and my store,

My Shepherd, my Husband, my Friend,
My Saviour from sin and from thrall
My hope from beginning to end.

My portion, my Lord, and my all".

and here under the shadow of His everlasting arms of love is the best resting place a poor sinful wretch will ever find in this vale of woe.

"His name shall be called the everlasting Father". No man has been gifted with talent to explore the grandeur and majesty of such a superb Being as this Ruler and Governor. When we survey

the fulness of Jesus Christ, the Holy One in Israel, it is indeed a mercy to have had Him born unto us a child and given unto us as the Son of this everlasting Father. As I write, my mind is drawn in rapture to His bleeding side, and the poet again breaks out in heavenly refrain,

“Alas and did my Saviour bleed,
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?”

and faith takes hold of His royal Highness, and listens in holy ecstasy as He whispers in divine language, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love and with loving kindness have I drawn thee”. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and they are inseparable in age, in governing, and co-equal in honor and power and glory.

“His name is the Prince of peace”. This language forever sounds the death-knell to all that ever come from the sons of Adam promising us peace. The language is so full of grace and truth, and the government is on the shoulder of the Prince of Peace. This is the promise full and free that the commands and promises and assertions and declarations of this Prince will all be carried out and delivered to all the chosen ones.

In addressing his letters to the churches and brethren, the apostle Paul ascribes peace as coming from God and the Lord Jesus Christ to the brethren. In the most of these salutations and endings to his letters he ascribes grace to them as coming from the same divine source, and likewise commands them to the grace of God as coming from Him. But that is not all about peace. There is a full provision made about this peace. He forever separates this peace from the works of men, and from their way of giving peace. He gives and leaves peace with His people, but it is not as the world gives peace. All that worldly princes give will be worldly and the fashion in which they give passes away, (I Cor.

7:31) but His peace is left with those under His divine government.

This Prince of Peace sends His Spirit into His chosen ones and they are born again by that Spirit. This Spirit comes before the fruit; it makes the tree good, (Isa. 61:3) and the fruits are good, and this The Lord our Righteousness brings to them by the government that is laid on His shoulder.

God willing, more later on the same text.

Elder W. D. Griffin

Loganville, Georgia

Dear Elder Smith,

Enclosed you will find a check for \$10.00. Please use it for the renewal of the *Signs of the Times* for Mrs. Ada B. Watson and myself.

Even though my eyesight grows dim I do not want to miss a copy. Oh, I have so much enjoyed the wonderful writings in the April issue. I have been reading the *Signs* for around 60 years, and it is contending for the same precious truth in Christ Jesus, if this poor sinner knows anything of the truth.

May God richly bless each of you Editors, and all who write. I would thank Him for His great love and mercy all through my many years.

Unworthily, in bonds of love,
Ela Watson

How is it that one who has led a good and innocent life in the sight of men should, when made alive spiritually, feel as much trouble and sorrow on account of a sinful heart as one who has been guilty of outbreking sins? We know that naturally there is a great difference of feeling between one of a delicate taste and a refined disposition, and one who is of a coarse and depraved habit of mind, so that what the one would shrink from with disgust and abhorrence, the other would not dislike at all. But we know that only divine life

in the soul can cause one to see sinfulness within himself, and to hate and loathe it. It is the sinfulness more than the sin which fills him with self-abhorrence. By the Holy Spirit of God the capability of wickedness in our fallen nature is made known to us, and under this experience the one who has led a moral life abhors himself, and sees no one more vile than he. So Benjamin, with whom Joseph's divining cup was found, was made in that wonderful transaction to appear as having stolen the cup, and therefore the greatest sinner among them. Yet all of them were viler than he, having committed a terrible crime in which he had no part. When the divining cup of our spiritual Joseph is found with any one, then he feels in his own heart all the sin of the one man by whose "disobedience many were made sinners."

Fragments

Silas H. Durand

The elect were betrothed to Christ from everlasting in the covenant of grace; they are actually married to Him, and join hands with Him, in conversion; but they are not taken home to the bridegroom's house until death dismisses them from the body.

Toplady

Danville, Virginia

Dear Editors,

Enclosed you will find a check for \$12.00 for two years renewal of the *Signs of the Times*. Use the balance for the distribution of the *Signs of the Times*.

Since my husband has been sick now for about three years I don't get to go to any of the meetings, and I really do enjoy reading your paper. May the Lord bless you to keep publishing the *Signs* as it is "good tidings of great joy" to all those who love the doctrine.

My love and best wishes to all who love these truths.

Mrs. Elma Griffin

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

THE LONDON CONFESSION
OF FAITH

Dear Brethren in the Faith of God:—
As the plea has been made that the meaning of English words, though plain and clear when used, yet becomes dark and obscure in later times, so it is with the declaration of the religious belief of the Baptists of the seventeenth century, in the year of our Lord, 1689, and published in the London Confession. And as this doubtful meaning of this ancient declaration of what the holy Scriptures teach was made the plea for holding what was called a "National Convention" of "leading Baptists" of the United States, last November, at Fulton, Ky., for the purpose of adding a supplement to the London Confession, to make plain and clear the meaning of some of its obscure parts, therefore it is well that we read for ourselves the words of our faithful brethren of more than two hundred years ago, upon some of the chief points said to be obscure and uncertain in meaning. So the following correct extracts from the Confession are given. In their address to the reader they say, "In those things wherein we differ from others, we have expressed ourselves with all candor and plainness. * * * We have also taken care to affix texts of Scripture for the confirmation of each article in our confession, in which work we have studiously endeavored to select such as are most clear and pertinent for the proof of what is asserted by us." How does this agree with the recent pretext that those devout servants of God failed to make their meaning plain to the intelligence of Baptists this time? This is casting reproach upon those faithful men of God, as well as charging ignorance and stupidity to the Baptists of our time, for it is virtually saying that the

common reader now cannot understand the real meaning of candid and plain words. It is a vaunting assumption on the part of a few self-styled "leading Baptists," and it betrays a lack of "candor and plainness" before God and men.

In chapter two, speaking of God, the Confession says, "Who is immutable, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, every way infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory. * * * He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom and to whom are all things; and he hath most sovereign dominion over all creatures, to do by them, for them or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest. His knowledge is infinite, infallible and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works and in all his commands." All these statements are very candid and plain, and they need no master to explain them.

In chapter three those candid and plain men of God speak of God's decree, saying, "God hath decreed in himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin, nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established, in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree." The simple meaning of this sentence is so frank, candid and plain to the mind of every reader, that it will stand against the efforts of every modern convention of "leading Baptists" to doctor and obscure it to suit

modern theology. Every child in the kingdom of God's grace as well knows the clear sense of this declaration of faith in the sovereign power and wisdom and holiness of the omnipotent and unchangeable God as does any teacher in Israel, so that no recent footnotes added to it can explain it away or disguise the plain meaning of those solemn words of wisdom. They are based upon Scripture proofs, which are omitted here for brevity; and in this one sentence on the holy decree of God is most plainly declared just the candid belief of all who humbly and devoutly revere God as at once almighty and holy.

These simple words of those godly men of old do most clearly repel the false accusation, that this solemn and scriptural belief in the complete sovereignty of the Holy One makes him the author of sin, and his holy decree the cause of the wicked acts of ungodly men. Arminian opposers of God's sovereignty have ever made this slanderous charge, which is nothing but replying against God and condemning the Almighty, but not till recently have professed Predestinarian Baptists joined in this slanderous report against the unlimited decree of God, that it makes him the author of and responsible for all the things he has embraced in his changeless counsel, purpose and decree.

Faithful Paul has met all such false inferences when he says, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" He refutes the slander and rebukes the false accuser when he adds, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" This is just what all such "things" do say when they speak thus against God. Who are men who thus rail against the Most High? Hear the answer of God: "All nations before him

are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity."

In chapter five of the London Confession, upon Divine Providence, it says, "God, the Creator of all things, in his infinite power and wisdom, doth hold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for which they were created, according unto his infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of his own will; to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, infinite goodness and mercy.

"Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, so that there is not anything befalls any by chance or without his providence; yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely or contingently.

"The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in his providence, that his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of angels and men (and that not by a bare permission); which also he most wisely and powerfully boundeth, and otherwise ordereth and governeth, in a manifold dispensation to his most holy ends; yet so as the sinfulness of their acts proceedeth only from the creatures, and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is or can be the author or approver of sin."

These candid and plain words are easy to be understood, and their simple meaning is so clear and open to every fair and candid reader, that it would require several conventions to so doctor their evident teaching as to make them seem to mean something else. So far from any of the words quoted from this old Confession being obsolete or out of use, or their meaning then being different from what the same words mean

now, no writer of this time could use plainer of easier words to express what he believes in regard to God. But we suspect that the real objection to these simple and strong words is not that their meaning is dark or obscure to any fair and candid mind, but that the doctrine thus clearly declared by those ancient Baptists is too strong for the appetite of some modern Baptists, who yet are not ready to come out candidly and plainly and say they do not accept the doctrine of the London Confession, but they will therefore labor to place a meaning on it to suit themselves, like doctors will sugarcoat their bitter pills to deceive the weak stomach of the patient.

But why would some Baptists, who profess to accept the London Confession upon the sovereignty of God, as quoted above, yet persist in charging upon other Baptists, who do sincerely accept and believe it, that therefore they represent the Holy One as at once the author and cause and doer of all wickedness, and that all sin is the result of his decree? For in charging this result upon all who truly believe this doctrine set forth so carefully and plainly in the London Confession relative to the attributes of the omnipotent and immutable God, they likewise cast the same reproach upon all the Baptists who wrote and believed that Confession. Is this honest and just and of good report? Is it brotherly and kind and the way of "Peace on earth and good will toward men?" Our brethren all along the passing generations, ever since Paul said, "(As we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come," have been thus slanderously reported, because, with Paul, they have believed in the Lord God Omnipotent, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." It was to meet and refute this "slanderous report" of them, and to show that their adoring belief in the Holy One did not make him the author of sin, that his humble and true servants of old put

forth their true belief in the London Confession.

Until latterly such uncharitable and reproachful accusations have come from the multiform hosts of Arminian will-worshipers, who limit the Almighty in his attributes and power, and it was not so strange that they would thus slander the doctrine of God as proclaimed by his true servants; but now, alas, Baptists themselves join in this "railing accusation" against the servants of the Most High, and flaunt forth the unblushing outcry, that to believe he predestinated all things, makes him the author of all sin, and that all wickedness is the "result" of God's unlimited decree. Yet they say they stand on the London Confession! That Confession honors God in his "eternal power and Godhead," as having "Decreed in himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, *all things whatsoever come to pass*; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin, nor hath fellowship with any therein." But such most unfair criticisms and slanderous reports against the unlimited decree of God do dishonor him and falsely accuse his worthy servants of old. The Lord will rebuke those who "speak evil of dignities," and despise the dominion of God, bringing railing accusation against his true and faithful servants of old, among whom was Elder Gilbert Beebe, a valiant man of God in Israel, who gave his long life in defense of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, yet he is assailed and his doctrine aspersed, long after the Lord, whom he loved and served, took him to himself, and he is charged with having proclaimed a doctrine so abominable that it made our Holy God the author and doer of all the abhorrent crimes of all wicked men, because he believed just what is declared above by those holy men of old, who adopted the London Confession. When it comes to this, dear brethren, it may well be asked, "Is there not a

cause?"

O, how deplorable, when Baptists will profess to publicly adopt and stand on the London Confession of Faith, then publicly reproach and denounce the very doctrine that it most solemnly and plainly sets forth pertaining to God and his holy counsel and decree. That Confession is not binding on the consciences of any, as it is only a synopsis of what the Baptists then believed the Scriptures to teach, while they accepted the Bible alone as the standard of their faith; but why should any claim to accept this Confession, when they are at war against its teaching on the Decree and Providence of God, and cruelly reproach the brethren who do honestly believe it, with making God the author and responsible cause of all wickedness and crime? Is this "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?"

For one, I do most truly believe every word here copied from that good Confession, and I accept it as a clear, just and full refutation of the untrue charge that the Baptists who thus believe make God the author of any sin, for we revere him as most holy, and believe he will judge all liars, who reproach his holy name and slander his sovereignty and truth with righteous judgment.

In the filial fear of God and love of his truth, yours to serve,

(Elder) D. Bartley

August 1901

The house that is built partly on a rock, and partly on the sand, will fall; and the sinner who rests his hope of salvation partly on Christ and partly on his own works, will be damned.

Toplady

I am resolved, in the strength of grace, to preach all the truths of the gospel so far as I know them; and leave God to take care of consequences.

Toplady

OBITUARIES

COLIN CAMERON

Brother Colin Cameron passed away August 11, 1978 in Seattle, Washington where he lived approximately 38 years. He was born February 20, 1909, the son of Elder John W. Cameron and Mary A. Cameron in Pemberton Wigan, England. He came with his parents to the United States in 1915 where he grew up and received his education. He married Miss Ruth Hart June 25, 1944.

Brother Cameron leaves to mourn his passing, his widow, Ruth Cameron and a son, James who is not married and lives with his mother in the home at Seattle. A daughter Janice, (Mrs. William Currier) lives with her family in Burlington, Vermont. They have a son Reid, who is the only grandchild. A brother, William B. Cameron and a sister, Margaret E. Taylor, both of Seattle, Washington. Also two other sisters, Hannah Bates of Corvallis, Oregon and Rhoda Hamilton, Chehalis, Washington.

Brother Cameron united with Bethel Primitive Baptist Church of Riffe, Washington in 1952 and was baptized by Elder I. F. Coleman, who was then the pastor. The Church and its membership was later moved to Mossyrock, Washington. Though the Church feels a great loss by his passing, yet we are made to feel that our loss is his eternal gain, for to depart and be with Christ is far better. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

The funeral was held August 14, 1978 in Seattle, Washington with Mr. Tom Atkinson officiating at the service. The body was laid to rest in Washelli Cemetery to await the resurrection.

Written by request of members of the family.

(Elder) Ben F. Preston

SUSAN ETHEL WILSON

Our dear sister, Susan Ethel Wilson of Bullard, Texas, was called home on February 9, 1979 at the age of 84. She was born April 19, 1894 in Como, Texas to the union of Isaac Humphrey and Martha J. Kennemer. She was married to Clarence L. Wilson in 1909 who preceded her in death May 25, 1968. She is survived by two sons C.

L. Wilson of Kilgore, Tx. and Don Wilson of Hobbs, N.M., one daughter Mrs. Boyd Weeks of Lake Palestine, TX, two brothers, one sister, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. All her children and many friends mourn her passing but we believe our loss to be her eternal gain.

She was a very dear, sweet, gentle, and kind person greatly loved by all who knew her. She believed and loved the doctrine of salvation by grace and went to hear it preached as often as she was able. Having been led by the teaching of the blessed Spirit to know and feel something of the preciousness of Jesus and God's way of salvation, she was made willing to follow Jesus as one of his found sheep. Having a desire to follow Him in that blessed ordinance of baptism, she asked for a home with Hopewell Church, was received and baptized in 1938. After she and her husband moved to Hawkins, TX in 1958, she asked that her letter be put with Paran Primitive Baptist Church where it remained until her death.

Even though she suffered in body as well as in Spirit and was unable to attend church for some time, a blessed hope remained with her that after she had suffered all His will below, she would inherit an eternal home with Christ through His blessed blood. She wrote in her Bible that when the veil is gone, I want to see my name written in the Lamb's book of life.

Funeral services were conducted in McCrary-Edwards Funeral Home, Winnsboro, TX by the writer. She was laid to rest in Hopewell Cemetery. "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away: Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Written by request of Paran Church while in conference -- one copy to be sent to the *Signs of the Times* and three to her children.

Elder Joe L. Hamrick

FLORENCE I. SIMPSON

It being in God's divine plan of love that reunites His children with their heavenly Father, Florence I. Simpson was called from our earthly midst on October 25, 1978.

Sister Florence was born in Onslow County on July 17, 1892, to Elizabeth (Lizzie) Horne and Asa Simpson. She is survived by one sister Eva Simpson, having had three

brothers and five sisters to precede her in death.

Sister Florence was a dear, quiet, faithful servant and walked among the Primitive Baptist for many years. She united with New Bay Primitive Baptist Church on April 21, 1972, and was baptized on the following fourth Sunday in May.

Sister Florence developed a rare blood disease and was confined to the hospital or home since May 17, 1978. Though her family and church members miss her, there is a certain blessing we feel in total submission to the will of God. Sister Florence was made to suffer, as all mortal man will know suffering, and in what man calls death, there is a complete yielding of the body, and those who believe, witness again the Spirit reigning supreme. Sister Florence's finite body became a very real burden to her, and she was made willing to shed the weight that had encumbered her Spirit, and in rendering unto God what is God's, the imprisoned splendor of her soul was freed. Her thoughts, right up through her last consciousness were of God; and once in all her pain and frustration she was understood to mumble "hallowed be Thy name." Those of us who remain here for a short while can find comfort in the perfection of the way of the cross, as ordained by God from the beginning. In recognition of the sisterhood with the church which Sister Florence loved, we believe her to be a Son of God, and we accept and feel to know the Spirit always rises above the illusion of this material realm and crowns Itself as the only Reality of God.

Sister Florence's funeral was conducted on October 26, 1978 by Elder D. B. Stokes. She was buried in the family plot in the Jacksonville Cemetery. Many flowers, cards, and other expressions of love evidenced the high esteem and love of her family, church members, and friends.

The membership of New Bay Primitive Baptist Church voted in conference on March 3, 1979 that a copy of the obituary become a part of the church record, a copy be sent to the *Signs of the Times*, and a copy be given to the family.

S. Catherine Aman
Norman Jenkins, Clerk
D. B. Stokes, Moderator

SISTER MARY LOUISA HELLINGS

Sister Mary Louisa Hellings, 78, of Pennington, N.J., passed away on April 6, 1979, at Helene Fuld Hospital. She was born September 1, 1900, the youngest in the family of the late Augustus M. Hellings and Olivia N. Tyndale. Her older sister, Lydia West Hellings, of Spokane, Washington, is the surviving member of the family.

Sister Hellings became a member of the Old School Baptist Church in Hopewell, New Jersey, in 1937, and was the last remaining member when the church was closed for services in April, 1974, after the death of her brother, Charles Hellings, who was the last male member and deacon in the church. She will be remembered for the church letters she wrote at meetings comprising the Delaware River Association.

Funeral services were private and under the direction of the Blackwell Memorial Home, Pennington, N.J. Interment was in the family plot at Ewing Church Cemetery.

In her last will and testimony Sister Hellings stated that the *Signs of the Times* had come into the home of each generation of the family since its publication in 1832.

J.F.P.

ELLA BENNETT GRIFFITH

By request I write a word in memorial to our precious sister, Ella, who was a faithful and highly esteemed member of the church at Charity, Patrick County, Virginia, for over 57 years. She entered into her eternal rest on November 30, 1978, at the age of 88. She was the widow of Deacon James J. Griffith. Both joined the church in 1921.

A work of grace showed forth in all her pilgrimage; a humble member and servant of God in the church; in her home, a devoted companion, helpmeet, and mother; in the community, an ensample to all who knew her. She was a precious sister to all acquainted with her. Both her walk and conversation manifested she had a part in the first resurrection. The presence of this dear Mother in Israel will be missed by all, but we that have known her do not sorrow as for one that has no hope, but rather give thanks to God for lending this precious gift to His church and people for our comfort and

His honor and praise in the church.

Surviving are 1 daughter, Mrs. Orea G. Rakes; 2 sons, Mr. T. H. Griffith, and Mr. Clifford Griffith, all of Stuart, Va.; 1 sister, Mrs. Alice B. Lackey; 1 brother, Mr. Rush Bennett; 5 grandchildren, and 8 great grandchildren.

Services were conducted by Elders Amos Hash, Randall Saunders, and the writer at Moody Funeral Home Chapel, Stuart, Va., on Sunday, December 3, 1978, with interment by her companion in the Bennett family cemetery, in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection to be like and in the presence of her dear Redeemer.

May the Lord bless the bereaved family with the true Spirit of reconciliation to God's holy will and make them diligent in every good word and work to the praise of His glorious grace, wherein He has made each of His humble poor acceptable in the Beloved.

(Elder) Noel F. Conner

SISTER MYRTLE TURNER WOOD

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord". Our dear sister, Myrtle Turner Wood entered her eternal rest on January 7, 1978, at the age of 78, after over a year of declining health. The last several days of her life were spent in Roanoke Hospital where all help of human skills and hands failed, and she was taken to behold her Redeemer's face in righteousness. For over fifty years she was a faithful member of the church at Charity, Patrick County, Virginia; a sweet singer of the hymns of Zion; and Church Clerk most of that time. She treasured her membership with the Primitive Baptist, spoke and wrote often of her hope in Jesus. She was a strong believer in salvation by the grace of God, and that a true conviction for and deliverance from the consequence of sin was an evidence of being "born again". She was a most devoted companion and mother, and a faithful servant in the church and in the community, always feeling her life was not her own. I was most favored to have met this dear saint of God in the church, in the home, and to correspond by letter of the wonderful works of God to poor sinners. In one letter she wrote, "I have a different view of death than I once had. It once seemed a terrible

thing. One night I awoke and thought I was dying, and oh! the sweetness and readiness that was given me. I believe I won't ever have that great fear again. I pray to be reconciled to God's will in all things. This will be my fiftieth year as a member of Charity and clerk most of that time. I do love the church and the dear brethren, and my faith in the power and mercy of God is beyond my expression. The road has been long and sometimes rough but I feel the journey is near the end."

Funeral services were conducted by Elder Randall Saunders and the writer on Monday, January 9, 1978, at Charity Primitive Baptist Church followed by interment in the Turner family cemetery, there to witness the redemption of her body when He that redeemed her shall come again.

Survivors include her husband, Mr. Robert A. Wood; daughters, Mrs. Nancy W. Via, Mrs. Edith W. Page; son, Robert S. Wood; 11 grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

Written by request of Charity Church.

(Elder) N. F. Conner

ALICE MAE HUGHES

Sister Mae Hughes, a beloved member of Little Flock Church, passed away December 22, 1978, after several years of declining health.

She was born May 21, 1896, and was married to Lannie Hughes on March 22, 1914, at Altus, Oklahoma.

She is survived by her companion; one son, Jack Hughes, and two grandchildren by adoption, relatives and friends.

Sister Hughes joined Little Flock Church by experience and baptism. She was baptized by Elder W. W. Taylor on May 27, 1968. She was highly esteemed and loved by the Church. May God reconcile and make us submissive to His dear will.

Funeral services were conducted by Elder W. W. Taylor at Tim's Chapel of Memories, Altus, Oklahoma. Interment was at Altus Cemetery.

May God bless and comfort all those who are left in sadness.

Done by order of the Church while in conference January 27, 1979.

Ava Stewart, Church Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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**IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 9/79
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE**

2737 Tillett Road S.W.
Roanoke, Va. 24015

Dear Elder Smith,

I am enclosing a letter written by Elder C. B. Davis, Jr., giving his views on a scripture that I had asked him about sometime ago. This scripture, Psalm 68:13, was presented to me over 26 years ago when I was so very ill in the hospital awaiting surgery. I was so alone in my feelings, no friends on earth and none in heaven, it seemed. As I lay there in the midnight darkness trying to beg that the Lord would indeed have mercy, the door to my room was closed but suddenly a beautiful white dove flew in, perched on the foot of my bed, and slowly walked across and then flew out the unopened window. Oh the peace and love and joy I felt flood my poor soul. Then came this scripture. I had never read it but I knew it was scripture. I had such a great desire to know the meaning of the gold feathers and silver wings, that I was always asking for someone to explain it to me. (Remember?)

Then after over 26 years I asked Elder Davis his views and this letter enclosed was his answer to me. I am completely satisfied now and may the Lord be praised.

I feel many of the readers of the *Signs* will remember how often I inquired about the scripture, that I want now to

share the answer that our Precious Lord and Master gave to Brother Davis. Therefore, with Brother Davis' consent, you do as you see fit and it will be alright with us.

A little unworthy sister,
Rlee B. Houchins

"Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold". (Psalm 68:13)

Roxboro, N.C.

Dear Sister Houchins,

We enjoyed being in your home again and though unworthy, we feel to thank Him who makes these moments transpire.

With reluctance I feel to express some of my (His) thoughts on your scripture of Psalm 68:13.

First, we all have lien among the pots for we are indebted to God among the pots of clay and carnal life and Christ is the only hope that the debt has been paid in full. The dove you saw could be none other than the Holy Eternal Spirit, the same manifestation recorded when Christ went down into the liquid grave and came up. This dove said, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased". Were you not well pleased (rejoicing) when you were blessed to see this spirit enter your realm (room) of concern?

Let us consider now that the door opened and the dove came in - "He opens and no one closes". There is no way the Spirit can be subdued and He opens the door of carnality and enters when He so desires. Thanks be unto Him there is no visitor's pass necessary and no door closed so tight that He can not enter.

We see the gold feathers as the perfection of God overshadowing (covering) the dove (spirit) that it might be outstanding and be protected (sealed) in the most precious metal we know. Is not His protecting Grace the most treasured covering we shall ever know

in this life? The book speaks of wisdom and grace as more precious than the gold of Ophir, etc.

We see the silver wings as none other than the person of Christ. The wings were the motivation of the dove (spirit) and it was and is Christ who is the power of God manifest to us. He came from the climes of Glory as the motivating power of God and being attached, as it were, to the very heart of God (breast) and was the expressed power of God in the world. We see then the fulness of the Diety of God, the Three-in-one, the white (purity) of the spirit, gold, the perfection of the God-head, and the silver as the power (Christ). When blessed to that end we feel the power of the wings, reverence the gold and feel the comfort and peace of the spirit.

Now it entered the door and went out the window. "My word goeth out of my mouth and shall not return unto me void", etc. This dove went out by the window of grace to visit and comfort another and though it seemed closed, I can assure you that the window of Grace is never closed. It just seems so to us. The dove would not go back as it came in that it could not return void and must convey peace and love to yet another longing soul. Christ does today and forever more convey the peace and love of God through the closed doors of tears, trials, and afflictions and travels (flies) through the window of Grace to open yet another door.

The Psalmist said on one occasion, "Oh that I had the wings like a dove". Yes, just to have the presence of Christ, it is enough.

I guess I have seemed to ramble and did not plan to write so much and yet I feel to see this morning so much in the perfection of your dove, and hope we all some day shall see it (Him) without the glass between.

Express our love and regards to your family and others we love, who cling to

the wings of silver, bear the perfection of gold and have the peace of the spirit.

With our love,
(Elder) C. B. Davis, Jr.

Quarryville, Pa. 17566

Dear Elder Smith,

Please renew my subscription to the *Signs of the Times* for another year. Check for \$5.00 is enclosed.

I received the last issue of my present subscription just yesterday and found it filled with messages of truth. "If ye know the truth, the truth will make you free". Many times do I think of the understanding that is present with the "born again" subject of free grace. Men in darkness know not how to "rightly divide" the word of Truth.

Very sincerely yours in hope,
Charles B. Osborne

A SHORT DISCOURSE ON SANCTIFICATION

By Mr. Huntington

"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." (John 17:17).

To sanctify is to appoint, ordain, consecrate, or set apart any person or thing to a holy and special use; and thus God sanctified the Sabbath day, the tabernacle, its furniture, and all the vessels of the ministry. (Gen. 2:3, Exodus 40:9-11). These things were not only to be set apart by the appointment of God to be used in his service, but they were to be sprinkled with blood and anointed with oil. To sanctify, in one sense of the word, signifies to wash, cleanse, or purify. The priests were sanctified by washing in water, and with the anointing oil; and by blood upon the right ear, the thumb of the right foot, the and the great toe of the right foot; the common people by washing their flesh, clothes, etc., etc.; and others by the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, or sprinkling the unclean, which

sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. (Heb. 9:13). But it is the substance of this shadow that I aim at, which sanctifies wholly, body, soul, and spirit.

"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth."

I. The elect of God were sanctified in the purpose of God from everlasting; and in this purpose of grace Christ was made sanctification and redemption to them from all eternity. "From everlasting I was set up." (Prov. 8:23.) And in his undertakings for us "he went forth from of old, yea, from everlasting." (Micah 5: 2.) In this sense we are said to be "sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Christ Jesus, and called." (Jude 1.) God worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; and this is His will of purpose, which in time, when He began to speak to men, became the will of promise, and in the fulness of time it became the good-will of God in Christ Jesus; that is, at Christ's appearing, Who came to execute every branch of the Father's goodwill and pleasure, and to be manifested to us as our Sanctification, according to the ancient settlements or counsels of old. "Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; by the which will we are sanctified." (Heb. 10:7, 10.) This branch of sanctification, being in the purpose and goodwill of God, must undoubtedly signify setting apart and appointing us to it; and, as it was settled and done in the purpose of God, it is spoken of in the past tense: "Sanctified by God the Father from everlasting, preserved in Christ Jesus" in time, from the womb to conversion, and called in due time to the fellowship of the Lord Jesus; for, being chosen in Christ from eternity, we are preserved in Him throughout our state of nature, as His own remnant. "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb; and even to your old age, I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you. I have made, and I will bear;

even I will carry, and will deliver you." (Isa. 46:3, 4).

II. We are sanctified by the blood of Christ, which has appeased the offended majesty of heaven; which blotted out our transgressions as a cloud from the book of God's remembrance; which satisfied justice, removed the curse, purged our consciences, and procured our enlargement from the prison. "By the blood of the covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." (Zech. 9:11) "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. 13:12.)

III. We are sanctified by the Spirit of God, who reveals God's secret purposes of grace to us, and applied the great atonement to the conscience; and who by His powerful operations, regenerates and renews us, which is called "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Under these operations the soul is cleansed, renewed, and the faculties of the soul are turned to God; the will submits and chooses the better part; the heart relents, and repents towards God, and becomes soft, broken, and contrite; the mind begins to be heavenly, and to mind heavenly things. Such have life and peace; the affections go after God and are placed above, and the conscience acts an honest and just part for God. "That the offering up of the Gentiles might be accepted, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 15:16.)

Thus it may be seen that each Person in the Godhead has a hand in the Sanctification of His people. We "are sanctified by God the Father" in His purpose; Christ sanctified us by His own blood when He suffered without the gate, and we are made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

Moreover, we may see that the word sanctification, both in the Old Testament and in the New, signifies something more than setting apart; in this sense we were sanctified in the purpose of God.

But we read of purging our sins, and of purging the conscience, of purifying the heart; of sanctifying and cleansing the church, with "the washing of water by the word," (Eph. 15:26;) and of the washing of regeneration, etc.; and of "cleansing us from all our filthiness, and from all our idols." Now this sanctification reaches to body, soul, and spirit. The body is sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; the body is His temple, and He is the Lord that sanctifies us. The soul is sanctified as above described; and even the animal spirits are often high and much elated in the service of God, when the powerful operations of God are upon the believer; much more so than a fainting, wearied man is inebriated and made merry with the most generous wine.

Furthermore, to cleave close to Christ in love, and abide in Him; to walk with God in filial fear, and with a good conscience; to serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter; to follow peace with all them that call upon God out of a pure heart; to shun the works of darkness, and abide in the truth; and to persevere in faith, is possessing the vessel in sanctification and honour.

"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." This word of truth is not the old law, though that was true. No, nor yet the prophecies of the Old Testament, though they are the "more sure word of prophecy," and are all infallibly true and cannot be broken. But then Christ is the Truth of all the legal types, and He is the substance of all the prophecies; for "to him gave all the prophets witness," and of Him they all prophesied. He is the end of the law for righteousness, and the substance of all the prophecies for life and salvation; and therefore He magnified the one and sealed the other: "He magnified the law and made it honourable; and He fulfilled and sealed up all vision and prophecy." (Dan. 9:24.) Moses the lawgiver, and Elijah the prophet, both resigned their

offices to Jesus on the mount. (Matt. 17:3) And hence it is said, "The law and the prophets were until John." (Luke 16:16) Before Christ came, the law, both moral and ceremonial, was in full force; and the prophecies respecting Christ lay open, unaccomplished, and unfulfilled. But when Christ came He abolished the one and fulfilled and sealed up the other; and now we must look for all truth cleared, fulfilled, and fulfilling in Christ; for "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And, as He is the Substance of all the ceremonial shadows, the Truth of all the legal types, the true light of all vision, and the subject and subject-matter of all predictions of prophecies, He styles Himself "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

The "truth", therefore, mentioned in my test, through which we are sanctified, is without all doubt the absolute and unconditional "promises of God, which in Christ are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us;" to the glory of God's grace by the eternal salvation of us.

I have shown that we are sanctified by the election of God, by the blood of Christ, by the Holy Ghost, and by the continual communications of grace; and as we are to be sanctified through the truth, ("thy word is truth,") we must look for some true word of promise, where this sanctification is held forth and promised to us; and, let them be where they may, they are all now in Christ.

And first, "I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." "Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." (Isa. 41:9; 65:22.) Here is His choice of us, in which decree we were sanctified.

"I will cleanse their blood which I have not cleansed." "So shall he sprinkle many nations." "From all your filthiness will I cleanse you." And, "By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit." Here are the promises of sanctification by the blood of Christ.

"I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," "I will pour out my praise." "I will direct their work in truth." "I will give them one heart and one way." "I will keep them." "I will water them, and put my fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from me." Here is the sanctification and honour that shall be upon every chosen vessel.

Now, Holy Father, as Thou hast promised thus to sanctify them and hast made my sanctification to them, and hast promised that they shall be sanctified through Me; and as Thy choice of them is in Me, and the blood I am going to shed is for them, and the fulness of the Spirit that is upon Me is to flow to them from Me; and as all the fulness of grace is in Me for them, then sanctify them according to Thy true and faithful word of promise, for "thy word is truth."

"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." Wherever Thy word is preached by those who are chosen in Me, and appointed to preach; who declare Thy whole counsels; who are pardoned by Me, and preach pardon; who are born again, and are ministers of the Spirit; who are partakers of grace and good stewards of it; let the knowledge of Thine election of them, the atonement that I have made for them, the Spirit that thou hast promised to them, and the abundant grace given them in Me, ever accompany the word of truth preached, and be communicated to all the appointed heirs of it, who receive the word with power and in the love of it: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

And every believer that is called under the ministry of the word, or by the operation of the Spirit without the word preached, which is promised in the word and come according to it, it is a living witness of His truth. By these means they make their calling and election sure; receive pardon and peace by faith in the blood of Christ, which faith mostly comes by hearing; they receive

the Spirit by the hearing of faith; and find the good work of grace begun and carried on under it, which is a full answer to this prayer: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

And in this way the disciples were sanctified under the personal ministry of the dear Redeemer. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you; abide in me." (John 15:3, 4.) What word was this? He told them of His Father's election of them. "Rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

He had told them that He "laid down his life a ransom for many," and that "his blood was drink indeed." He promised to send them the Spirit, the promise of the Father, and a measure of the Spirit was upon them, though they knew not what manner of spirit they were of. And virtue had gone out of Him to them all; the grace of life was in them; and by faith they had passed from death unto life, and had everlasting life. And thus God's promised sanctification attended the word of the Saviour to all that heard the word and kept it; they were sanctified through the truth, and clean through the word that the Lord had spoken unto them. This is the sanctification of the Lord's people, and it is all of God. "I am the Lord that sanctify you."

The prophecies and promises of the Old Testament respecting Christ were two branches; the one was what he should do and suffer, the other branch was the glory that should follow His sufferings. The former were all fulfilled by Him, and then all the other became "Yea, and amen" in Him; and all the promised blessings, and all the glory that should follow, are in Him also. Hence He is made sanctification to us in all its branches: He is the first above, and our election is in Him; our sanctification by blood is of Him, Who is the Fountain opened for sin; our sanctification by the spirit is the same,

for the Spirit with all its fulness is in Him; He sends the promise of the Father upon us, and all the communications of grace to us are out of His fulness; our sanctification is complete in Him, and we are sanctified by a believing, cordial reception of Him into our hearts; and our life of sanctification in this world stands in our walking in Him, cleaving to Him, and holding communion and fellowship with Him; for "He is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

W. H.

Lake, Mississippi

Dear Sirs,

May I humbly ask that you send me the *Signs of the Times* for two years. It is a most inspiring book to me during my sad and dark hours. I find much comfort in all the articles written (I believe) by God's gifted ones.

I have been blessed that our dear Pastor, Elder Wardell Moore has shared his books with us.

When you pray, please remember me and ask that God will stay very close to us as we journey on.

Thank you very much,
Pauline H. Culpepper

(The following article appeared in the April 1, 1841, *Signs of the Times* and later was included in Vol. I of The Editorial Writings of Elder Beebe, published in 1868. We think the readers will find it not only interesting but a sound refutation of unwarranted criticism regarding our order. Editor)

REDUCTION OF KETOCTON, VA., ASSOCIATION

"The Kettocton Association is one of the oldest associations in Virginia, and formerly one of the most flourishing. In 1833 it contained nineteen churches and about two thousand members. But, say the editor of the "Religious Herald", "The blighted influence of Antinonian-

ism has reduced it to a withered, blasted, lifeless body'. It now numbers six hundred and fifteen members, and it is yearly diminishing. When it began its opposition to the benevolent institutions, then began its downfall. We have a few similar instances of cause and effect in Ohio. All this, however, our anti-effort brethren consider only as a necessary purification of the church, and as a plain indication of the kind regards of their heavenly Father, since 'Whomsoever the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.' When will their eyes be open that they may see". -- Cross and Journal)

REMARKS

New Vernon, N.Y.

April 1, 1841

And thus old Hagar vaunted when she became the mother of her illegitimate bantling, Ishmael; in the ecstasy of her vain glory, forgetting that she, being a bond woman, could not give birth to a free child, despised her mistress, and that too on account of her barrenness. When will the eyes of these New School mockers be opened to see the close resemblance they bear to their ancient prototype. The position they assume in relation to Kettocton Association, and to all the old fashioned Baptists of the present day, serves only to demonstrate that they are a true and exact copy of the bond woman and her brood of slaves. Hagar could speak as disdainfully of the superannuated body of her mistress, as the "Herald", and the "Cross and Journal" can of the Kettocton Association; and with as much apparent plausibility. Sarah, and even Abraham seemed despondent at the appearances which, in all human calculation stood against them and in favor of their bond woman's being the mother of the promised seed. Nevertheless God had promised Abraham, and repeated His promise to Sarah, that Sarah should have a son. Thus stood the

case with the despised, insulted, "withered, blasted, lifeless body" of the free woman, until the appointed hour of God's pleasure had arrived, when, contrary to all human reasoning, triumphant over all the boastful insolence of her slave, Sarah embraced the free born boon that God had promised. Even so now stands the case with Kettocton Association, and with all the churches of the Primitive faith and order of the gospel; they seem, in the eyes of their enemies, as Mr. Sands has happily expressed, and Mr. Cole has reiterated in the above paragraph, "Reduced to a withered, blasted, lifeless body", having only the promise and oath of God to assure her, that according to His appointed time, God will come, and His antitypical Sarah shall embrace her heaven born seed.

But, to review the above article, how stands the case in point of truth? These New School mocking children of Hagar assert that "the blighting influence of antinonianism has reduced the Kettocton Association since 1833, from about two thousand members to six hundred and fifteen". As we have not the minutes of 1833 at hand we cannot say what their number was at that date, but we know that about the year 1835 three churches under the ministry of Mr. Gilmore were dropped from this Association; and at the same session, at Broad Run, a resolution was adopted by the Association to withhold their countenance and fellowship from the New School doctrines and operations of the day; this was virtually refusing to leave the very ground they had uniformly occupied from the date of their constitution, sixty-nine years previously. To this resolution the Arminian churches, called Broad Run, Buck Marsh, and Kettocton took exception; and greatly to the peace and purity of the Association, they were dropped at the next meeting, in 1836, at Winchester; and subsequently the Thumb Run, and if we mistake not, Goose Creek also was dropped.

Thumb Run has since returned, making at least six or seven large churches that were dropped for their corruption, either in faith or practice. In addition to these churches dropped for corruption and disorder, some one or more, we believe, were set off in fellowship to constitute the Rappahannock Association.

Now if these facts will justify the round assertion of these Ishmaelitish editors, that the blighting influence of antinomianism has reduced it from two thousand to six hundred and fifteen members, then have they done the Kectocon Association no injustice; but if, as it evidently appears to us, this reduction has resulted from a close and truly commendable regard for gospel truth and gospel purity, on the part of the Association, then they are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and have abundant reason to rejoice and be exceedingly glad.

To the special attention of Messrs. Sands and Cole we commend Paul's allegory—Gal. 4:21-31, inclusive, but more especially the 30th verse, "Nevertheless, what saith the scriptures? Cast out the bond woman and her son; for the son of the bond woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman."

Elder Gilbert Beebe

LETTER FROM SISTER RUSTON

Dutton Ontario
October 24, 1933

Dear Sister Gillis,

The last time I saw you, you reminded me of my promise to write you again. I do so, hoping that the Lord will guide my pen, so that I may not be left to write anything that will not be to His glory.

I think in my last letter, in response to your request, I wrote of the way I had been led up to the time of joining the church in New York City. I cannot just remember where I left off, but will go on from that time.

For a time I was very happy, but gradually I slipped back again into the depressed condition I had been in for so long, but ah! with what a difference. Before, I knew that the Lord could help me if only He would but I feared I was an outcast. Now I had the sweet assurance that He had appeared for me, and a hope which was as an anchor of the soul to me. I remember once feeling very oppressed and fearing that the old burden I had carried so long was returning, and feeling so weak and unfit to cope with earthly cares, when suddenly the words dropped into my heart, "Casting all your care on him, for He careth for you", and immediately I felt my heart lightened and could leave all my cares in His hands.

We were living in a most unsuitable apartment at this time, and we felt we must move, yet my health being so poor, I was not fit for the exertion, but the goodness of the Lord seemed so amazing to such a poor insignificant creature that it filled me with new courage, so that the way was opened for us to move to a much nicer apartment.

I went on in this way for some time, sometimes feeling there was so little comfort for me in this life on account of the depression under which I lived most of the time that it was my constant desire that the Lord would take me home to Himself. I felt all fear of death had been taken away from me, all I desired was to be with Christ, which I felt would be far better. The words were often with me, "If such the sweetness of the streams, what must the fountain be, where saints and angels draw their bliss immediately from thee?" I went on in this self-centered condition for a long time. Although I dearly loved my husband and children, I felt I could gladly lie down and leave them, if only it were the Lord's will, for I still felt physically too weak to live and care for them.

So I struggled on, never neglecting them, but hoping death might relieve

me, when one day I commenced to spit blood. I thought that I must be in a decline and that it was responsible for all the weakness I had suffered, and that I could not live long. Then to my surprise, I found that the thought of leaving my husband alone to care for our three babies seemed terrible to me, and I felt I had to beg of the Lord to spare me to them. I have always felt it must have been a slight rupture of a blood vessel, as I never had any more trouble of that kind, but it showed me that we have to take up the burdens the Lord lays on us, and that we cannot lay them down, but have to look to Him for strength to bear them. My health gradually improved, but we had trials in other ways.

My husband had been set aside to the ministry, and he accepted a call to the churches in the Catskill Mountains in New York State. It was altogether a new life for us, as it meant giving up his profession and all which that meant, but the Lord blessed us with good health, and many providential blessings, and we had many happy times together in spite of some trying things we had to pass through. We can look back and see how wonderfully the Lord appeared for us many times. At one time an epidemic of septic sore throat swept the district where we lived. We all recovered without any ill effects, except our eldest two boys. Soon afterwards our eldest boy had rheumatic fever, and for three weeks the only sleep I could get was two or three minutes at a time. When he was recovering we found that our second boy had a very uneven heart beat caused by poison from the sore throat. The condition of our two dear boys was a great grief to us.

One night a few weeks later, when the one who had been ill with rheumatism was recovered sufficiently for me to go to bed, I lay awake. I seemed to have lost the habit of sleep, and to make it worse, my husband was far away preaching. I had no objection to that, but it increased

my feeling of loneliness and anxiety. A feeling of terror took hold of me. I wondered how I could ever face the future. My husband was away so much, and the two boys I had learned to depend on so much for help and companionship both so afflicted, (at this time one was eleven and the other fourteen) it seemed doubtful if they would ever be well again. I felt exhausted, and I felt I could not care for them and manage the farm work so well during the frequent absences of my husband. My sister, Grace, was with me at that time, but she had plenty to do as well, as we had two other little ones. She was a great comfort to me, but I lost sight that night of all my comforts. As I lay there in the darkness, the darkness in my mind was far greater. Suddenly across the corner of the room appeared in illuminated letters the words, "The Lord is my shepherd". The writing was so bright in the darkness, it seemed it was the glory of the Lord. As my mind travelled over the rest of the Psalm the words, "I will fear no evil" appeared. The word "no" was underlined three times. My terror was gone, and in its place there was peace and joy unspeakable. I fell into a sweet sleep, and during the trying months that followed, when some times our hopes would be raised only to be dashed again, I felt I could leave everything in the hands of the dear Lord who had appeared so wonderfully for my help.

Eventually the boys recovered, and we could praise the Lord that apparently they suffered no ill effects. To me it has always seemed that it was as much the handwriting on the wall by the finger of God as was the writing seen by the wicked king, Belshazzar, but how different was the result wrought. To him it was death, to me life. What has never ceased to cause wonderment in my mind is that the Lord condescended to notice such a poor weak unworthy creature, and relieve my misery in such a way, when so many of the Lord's dear

people, so much worthier than I, live year after year desiring a visit from the Lord, and sometimes never experience it in this life. I do believe, though, that when they pass from this earthly scene, they prove the truth of the beautiful words of James Durand, "And morning cometh!, soon these watchings ended, Soon all these earthly nights and vigils o'er, On the freed soul shall break the radiance splendid; Of perfect day upon the sinless shore".

I often think of my own precious mother, who seemed to live for the things of God, and was beloved by all who knew her, for her sweetness and loveliness of character. Before I left home she would talk to me of her desires that the Lord would bless her with an assurance of His mercy to her. A few weeks before she died, she wrote us how much she desired an assurance from the Lord, but it seemed to be denied her, but she added, I can say, "I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth". I believe she went to her Father's house on high, and realized the fulness of her desires.

Things were now very comfortable and pleasant for us for a time. The Lord had blessed us with a comfortable home, and our church people were wonderfully kind to us, increasingly so. Our children were all well, and progressing as well as we could desire in school. We loved our people and felt our love was returned, and I really believe we thought we should live and die with them, when our peace of mind was rudely disturbed by a conviction in my husband's mind which pressed more and more heavily, that he would have to leave our churches where we were so happily settled and serve the Covenanted Baptist Churches in Canada. When he first mentioned it to me, I was too taken aback to be very impressed by it. I felt he could not leave our people, but as time passed on and I could see what a weight it was on his spirits, I was compelled to consider it too, and as Scripture after Scripture

seemed to show his duty in the matter, it became more and more a burden to us. You will remember that you gave a call to two other ministers during this time. He said each time he wished they would accept, and that would settle his mind that he would not have to do, but each time he said he did not believe they would accept for he felt he was the one who had to go there.

After two years of this anxiety, he said to me one day that if the Canadian Church gave him a call he felt he should have to accept, and very soon the call came. It was an unhappy trying time for us. To leave our dear people who had shown us love and consideration beyond measure, besides disposing of our property, tested our endurance very much. Our people could not understand how we could leave them and we did not know how we could leave them, but we found it impossible to resist what seemed to us a direct command from the Lord. The last Sunday service we attended before leaving was especially trying, but we sang, "God moves in a mysterious way", and I felt every word of it was for me, and I think I was enabled to go in the strength of that meat many days. I could not understand, and cannot yet, why we should have lived so happily for twelve years with our dear people, and then all our hearts be so disturbed and rent, but the words calmed me then, and I still have to leave it there: "Deep in unfathomable mines of never failing skill, He treasures up His bright designs, And works His sovereign will".

Our life in the church since coming to Canada has made us feel we did not do wrong in following the dictates of our conscience, but really, it was taken entirely from us; there seemed no other course open to us but to come here.

I think I have written you enough for this time, or you will be wearied. I feel a pleasure in writing to you, because on account of your deafness, you are cut off in a measure from visiting with your

brethren and friends, but you seem to enjoy letters so much. I will close with much love from your sister, I hope,

Esther Ruston

TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU

My dear Friend's letter should have had an earlier notice, but I have had many engagements, on which account I have been prevented writing.

"It is a good thing that a man bear the yoke in his youth". The bondage of the law, the curse of it felt in the conscience, the wrath that it works, the fear of death and of judgment to come, is what most in our day seem to escape. They know nothing of the guilt of sin, the depravity of our nature, nor feel their lost and perishing condition. But God comes near to judgment, (to his people while in this world,) and appears a swift witness against us. He arraigns us at his bar, and our secret sins are set in the light of his countenance, and he causes us to possess the iniquity of our youth. Shame and confusion of face cover us, and guilt makes us afraid. The caul of our heart is rent, and we meditate terror; the yoke of our transgressions is bound by his hand, and, like David, we sink into the horrible pit. The Lord makes inquisition for blood, and his arrows stick fast within us. Death is to us the king of terrors, and we look forward with dismay to the judgment to come. We feel nothing but wrath, hardness of heart, enmity, stubbornness, bondage, and fear.

"The law is holy", says Paul; "but I am carnal, sold under sin." This shows the great disparity there is betwixt God and us. By the law is the knowledge of sin. It reveals to us the concupiscence of our nature, shows the abounding of our transgression, and worketh wrath. This fills us with slavish and tormenting fear. We would fain flee out of his hand, but cannot. Turn which way we will, everything makes against us, and there appears no way of escape from this

stormy wind and tempest; there is no rest for the sole of our feet; we are dissatisfied with ourselves and with everything about us. None appears so miserable as we feel ourselves, nor can we imagine that there are any like us - none so vile, so corrupt; none have that evil working within which we find, none feel so hard, so impenitent, stupid, and dead as we. We see our state, but cannot mourn on account of sin as we desire. Nothing seems to draw us, nor does anything drive us. We have no happiness in the world, and no comfort in God. We hear of Christ, and read of him in the Scriptures; but we have no power to come to him, and for want of faith we cannot lay hold upon him. We know we have destroyed ourselves, and that in Him alone is our help; but whether he will show mercy, we cannot tell. We have no doubt of his power, but of his willingness. "Lord, if thou wilt", said the leper, "thou canst make me clean". We know that he died for sinners, but we dare not entertain a thought that he died for such as we. What we feel makes us conclude that we are too vile for the Saviour to show mercy. Though we call upon him, we cannot find that he hears our prayers; and instead of getting rid of our guilt and the load of sin we feel, every day we appear to get worse and worse, and often fear we shall be obliged to give it all up; and so we should, were it not for the power of God, which keeps us asking, seeking, knocking, though we seem to have no expectation, no hope, that we shall ever obtain what we are seeking for. We feel restless and dissatisfied on account of our state.

But there is a power we feel that causes us to separate from the world and from them that have the form of godliness only. It is the Spirit which giveth life; and this is its quickening influence. We obey its voice, and follow, as we are able, this power that we feel; but what it is we know not, nor do we know what to make of it. We have no

light or judgment to know what it is, nor whose we are; but are full of confusion, always in a hurry and in haste. When we attempt to pray the mind is filled with a thousand things, nor can we confess our sin or ask for pardon as we would; and as soon as we have tried to do so we feel ashamed, and think, "This is no prayer". Dreadful sensations seize us, and what to do we know not; but somehow or other, contrary to our expectation, we are kept calling and seeking. Abraham obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went. This is the case with every sensible sinner. The blind are brought by a way which they know not. Ask such a one where he is going, he knows not; or what is the matter, he cannot tell. He is dissatisfied, and goes on according to his feelings, but cannot believe it is a work of grace. He is distressed and asks for pardon; but whether he shall end in heaven or hell he does not know, but fears the latter. Paul says that Abraham set out for the land of Canaan, and to the land of Canaan he came. So with every one who, from a feeling sense of his wants, seeks Christ Jesus, the only Friend of sinners.

My friend complains, but I am glad to find he bears his yoke. If he follow on to know the Lord, in due time it shall be destroyed because of the anointing. Though the vision tarry, wait for it; God will avenge his own elect, that cry day and night unto him. Seek the Lord, seek his face, and you will not seek in vain. Wait upon him, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say on the Lord.

1849

J. C.

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER

Patrick Springs, Va. 24133

Dear Brother Poole,

If the Lord would see cause to direct my mind I would like to make mention of some precious thoughts occasioned by recent meditations upon the scriptures.

At the time they first came to me I did not give them as much consideration as I did later, after I had tried to speak of them to others. I found in this case - as in many others - that I was not able to impart the sweet comfort that I felt unto others with any significant degree of success. Yet, I trust I realize that whatsoever things we truly need, God will supply.

From the three chapters preceding Acts Chapter 27, we learn that the Apostle Paul was falsely accused by the Jews of preaching heresy and sedition for affirming the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Being brought before governors and rulers for judgment he appealed unto Caesar for a hearing. Inasmuch as the seat of Caesar was located in the city of Rome it became necessary to transport him thither, together with others. So it was, that he and others prisoners were taken on board a ship and the ship set sail.

Acts 27:9-11 says, "Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, And saith unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul."

Two things stand in the forefront here. One is that at this point in time the wind was yet favorable and the sailing was yet smooth. The other is that the ruler of the ship was placing his trust and confidence in the arm of the flesh; which is, as we know, providentially attended by a curse.

Let us follow their journey further and consider the ensuing events. Acts 27:18-25 reads, "And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. And when neither

sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away." (Take this to heart, dear brother; much is said here in a few words.) "But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss."

(Remember what Mary and Martha said unto Jesus as they came to Him in mourning, "Lord, if thou hadst been here our brother had not died"? But if not so, then the counsels of God could not have been made to shine in the bodily resurrection of Lazarus. The Lord surely knew what to do and how to do!)

"And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

We would quote further. but we have already told more than could be said in a great volume, had we the ability to write one. Brother Poole, if we have ever seen a biblical picture of our experience we can see it in these precious scriptures. Let us look at that picture, with the Lord being our help.

First of all, the people on board that ship where taking a journey over a sea that was sometimes calm and sometimes stormy and tempestuous. At the first they put their trust in the ability of the flesh to bring them safely to their journey's end. So long as the weather was fair they made good progress.

But by and by a storm arose; the strong wind began to blow and the waves began to roll. Whatever ability they thought they possessed to control the ship was wrested away by a power over which they had no control.

"And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away". Ah, dear brother, almost the tears begin to flow when I think back to the time that I came to such a place as this. It seemed that whatever faint light I had ever beheld was taken away, and my hope of ever seeing God was almost gone. The inward storm that raged in me was exceedingly mighty, and I knew that there was not one single solitary thing that I could do to save myself from the wrath of God. What did I then do? I feel confident that you know.

However, as with the men aboard that ship, so there finally stood before me (I fervently hope) the same One who stood by the bed of the poor crippled man and exhorted him, "Man, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." I believe He came to me in the night (I speak now of inward darkness) and stood by me and caused me to feel that even my sins - which were so many - were forgiven me.

But there is more to the story. "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

I am reminded so vividly of the ship of Zion and how it passes through this world and where it is bound and into whose hands it has been committed. The inhabitants of that ship are turned away from any confidence in man by the storms and famines and persecutions of this journey of life. They finally come to the point where they realize - as did Paul's companions - that, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."

Do you remember the words of that precious song, "I am just a poor wayfaring stranger"? Doesn't it bring to your mind the thought of what he was looking for and how very much it meant to him? And how he journeyed leaning upon the promise that was given unto him, "He said He would meet me when I come"?

The Apostle was leaning upon a promise in all his journey, also.

Acts 23:11 says, "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome".

And we know of a surety that the promise unto him was kept and that the counsels of God were made to shine thereby. Surely, we must confess with some of old, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes."

Farewell in bonds of unity and peace for this time. Greet all the holy Brethren for me in the name of our wonderful Saviour, and remember me in your prayers, if given to do so.

Humbly, your brother in hope,
John T. Wingfield

NOTE OF THANKS

We desire to acknowledge each and every contribution to the *Signs of the Times* and wish it were possible to express such to each of you, personally. Your donations, small or large, have been a valuable help, and the chief reason why, thus far, we have avoided a price increase. May God be pleased to continue with us.

Also, a word of special thanks to all who helped us with the Association announcements this year. Your valuable assistance has made our job easier.

Finally, a note in regard to the article on Absolute Predestination by Elder Gilbert Beebe which we advertised in June at 4 for \$1.00; the response was very good and mailings went out to nearly every state where we have subscribers. We incurred no personal expense and have a very limited number left for those who still wish to order.

Best regards,
Editor

BLACK CREEK UNION

The next session of the Black Creek Union will be held, the Lord willing, with the Church at Creeches, the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in September, 1979. (Sept. 29, 30).

All lovers of the truth are invited to come and worship with us.

Harold Pittman, Clerk
Box 4524
Rocky Mount, N.C. 27801

SPECIAL NOTICE

The Lord willing, Elder David Spangler will be guest minister at the Yearly Meeting of Nassaonga Old School Baptist Church the fifth Sunday in September, 1979. (Sept. 30) The church is located on State Road 12 approximately 7 miles south of Salisbury, Maryland, going to Snow Hill, Maryland.

Also we expect Elder Spangler to fill an appointment at the Salisbury Old School Baptist Church on Friday night before the fifth Sunday at 7:30 P.M.

SEPTEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

THE ORIGINAL SOUTH ARKANSAS ASSOCIATION

The original South Arkansas Association of Primitive Baptists hold their next session, the Lord willing, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, September 14, 15, 16, with Antioch Church.

Antioch Church is located on Highway 4, from Camden to Locust Bayou. Turn at Butler store, and church is located behind store.

For further information contact Elder Clovis Townley, Route 2, Box 245, Fordyce, Arkansas.

Sister Francis Townley, Association Clerk

FIVE MILE CREEK ASSOCIATION

The One hundred Twelfth annual session of the Five Mile Creek Old School Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Dorsey Creek Church, Cullman County, Alabama, on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, September 14, 15, 16.

Dorsey Creek Church is located at Breman on Alabama Highway #69, about halfway between Jasper and Cullman. All lovers of the truth are invited.

For any further information contact Elder H. C. Moon, Route 1, Box 167-A, Breman, Alabama. (Phone 1-205-287-1603).

Elder H. C. Moon, Moderator
R. L. Jacks, Clerk

SOUTH OUACHITA ASSOCIATION

(Wash-i-taw)

The eighty-ninth annual session of the South Ouachita Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Bethel Church, Friday before the 4th Sunday in September, continuing Saturday and Sunday. (September 21, 22, 23)

Bethel Church is located six miles north of El Dorado, Arkansas, one-half mile west off U. S. Highway 167.

For further information contact Clifford Wilbanks, 217 Bastrop Drive, Monroe, La. 71203.

C. C. Wilbanks, Association Clerk

SEVEN MILE ASSOCIATION

The next session of the Seven Mile Association will be held, the Lord willing, at Hickory Grove meeting house, Johnston County, North Carolina. The meeting is to begin on Friday before the third Sunday in September, 1979, and continue through Sunday. (September 14, 15, 16) The church is located about 7 miles east of Benson on Highway 50 near Meadow School.

We invite the Elders, brethren, sisters, and friends to meet with us.

Elder W. D. Godwin, Moderator
James G. Young, Clerk
Route 2, Dunn, N.C. 28334

OCTOBER ASSOCIATIONS

KEHUKEE

PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The Two hundred and fourteenth session of the Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association is to convene with the Robersonville Church, Martin County, Robersonville, N.C., the first Sunday in October, Saturday before and Monday following. (October 6, 7, 8, 1979) The church is located along U.S. Highway 64 in Robersonville. The Association is to convene on Saturday and Sunday at Robersonville Junior High School, located along U.S. Highway 64 in Robersonville. On Monday the Association will be at the church, along U.S. 64 in Robersonville.

We extend a cordial invitation to all

brethren of the same faith and order to come and meet with us. All friends are welcome.

(Elder) Marvin E. Garner, Clerk

HOPEWELL ASSOCIATION

The ninety-fifth annual session of the Hopewell Primitive Baptist Association will convene, God willing, with Liberty Hill Church, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, beginning on Friday before the third Sunday in October, 1979. (October 19, 20, 21)

Going north from Tuscaloosa on Highway #43, turn east on County Road 38 at caution light between Mile Marker 221 and 222, and follow signs to the church.

Our brethren and friends are invited to meet with us.

Elder A. H. Brock, Moderator

CONTENTNEA ASSOCIATION

The next session of the Contentnea Primitive Baptist Association is to be held, the Lord willing, with Upper Town Creek Church, Wilson County, N.C. It is to begin on Friday before the second Sunday in October, 1979. (October 12, 13, 14)

The Association will be held Friday in Upper Town Creek Church, and Saturday and Sunday in Elm City School.

All lovers of the truth are invited to visit with us.

(Elder) W. W. Stallings, Jr. Clerk

SALISBURY ASSOCIATION

The Salisbury Association will convene, the Lord willing, with the Snow Hill Old School Baptist Church at Snow Hill, Maryland, on October 24, and 25, 1979.

All ministers, brethren, and friends of our faith and order are cordially invited to meet with us.

Those arriving on Tuesday will please contact Deacon Bill Davis, New Church, Virginia, (telephone 804-824-3137), or Elder James Poole, Salisbury, Maryland, (telephone 301-742-6406). Those coming on

Wednesday go directly to the church on Washington Street.

Maude Truitt, Church Clerk

BLACK CREEK ASSOCIATION

The 1979 session of the Black Creek Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Healthy Plains Church, the fourth Sunday, Friday and Saturday before in October, 1979. (October 26, 27, 28)

The Friday services will be held at the meeting house which is located a few miles south of Bailey, N.C., on Highway 581.

The Saturday and Sunday services will be held at Rock Ridge School, which is located on State road 1142. Those coming from the North or South on Interstate 95 turn west on Highway 42 for one mile to State road 1142. Those coming from the East or West on Highway 264 should take Interstate 95 South to Highway 42 and proceed as above.

An invitation is extended to all our brethren and friends to come and be with us.

Harold Pittman, Asst. Clerk

BUTTAHATCHIE ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Fifty-fourth annual session of the Buttahatchie Old School Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, with Poplar Springs Church, Vernon, Alabama, on Friday, and Saturday, and Sunday, October 12, 13, and 14, 1979.

For directions to the meeting house contact Elder Eulie McCool, Steens, Mississippi, 39766, (Phone 1-601-328-0532) or ask directions in the city of Vernon. All lovers of the truth are welcome.

Elder Eulie McCool, Moderator
Charles P. Hayes, Clerk

I must question whether the man that dies an Arminian can go to heaven. But certainly he will not be an Arminian when he is in heaven. The employ of the blessed is to cast their crowns at the feet of God and the Lamb, and to sing, "Not unto us, O Lord".

Toplady

EDITORIAL

GOVERNMENT

Isaiah 9:1, 7

As we come to examine this outstanding portion of the text, let us take a little stroll down into the fertile field of New Testament doctrine. The theme of salvation begins with the unfolding of that salvation as it is laid down in the testimony of Christ as recorded in the Old Testament. Let it be remembered that the Bible is not our salvation but that it is the testimony of it.

In the hidden annals of eternity the Father gave to His Son a portion of the human race. His dealing with this kingdom, as well as the manifestation in time, was entirely the work of God. God set up the kingdom; God overshadowed the virgin and made manifest His Son. It seems to the enlightened child of God so foolish to speak of man having anything to do with the setting up of the kingdom. (Dan. 2:44) It is foolish to suggest to him that the Father placed the government on His Son's shoulder, but that we have got to put our shoulder to the government to get it started into motion.

Let us begin with that, to wit, that the government is upon the Lord Jesus Christ; that it was laid there by God the Father. It is blasphemy for any creature to advocate that the sinner initiates it being there, or its beginning, or its perpetuation. Come, dear reader, and look with joy upon the work of God. If you have been jested at, sneered at; if you have had to endure hardness in your following of the Lord Jesus, rejoice and be exceeding glad, for thus it was when our Lord was in the flesh. There is not any question about this. It is not a matter to be argued and debated about. A question settled is not a debatable question. This is a settled matter, for His word is forever settled in heaven, (Psa. 119:89) and men that claim to be saved by their works, and that know that they

are going to heaven, are doing all they can to prove that heaven is unsettled about salvation, and is waiting in suspense to find out if the sinner acts favorably about the matter. As far as the manifestation of these sacred matters is concerned, the Lord looked over humanity and did not find any help in salvation. (Isa. 63:5) Why is it that people can not see that? It surely is because that they can not see, and the reason that they can not see is because that Jesus came into the world that they which see (that is, that think they can see) might not see. (John 9:39) The Pharisees crucified the Lord because of His doctrine, and if the time ever comes that the wrath of man is unrestrained to where he is not afraid of the law of the land, His children will receive the same treatment. It must be because that they can not hear, for if they could have heard, they would have heard the Master while here in the flesh, and if this had been true, they would, today, hear them that are of God. (John 8:47; I John 4:6) It must be because that they cannot understand, for there is none righteous, even none that understands. (Rom. 3:11) Not having had a revelation, those that argue and debate and dispute are saying that nothing has been revealed unto them, and the Saviour verifies the case by telling them why they do not understand. (Matt. 12:40; Matt. 13; Luke 8:9; 10:26)

Two precious thoughts are contained in this. God the Father laid the government on the shoulder of Jesus. But why did Isaiah use the singular number. The scriptures describe Him as a Man, and a man in nature has two shoulders. If a load needs moving we do not say that he put his shoulders to the wheel and pushes the load out. But I urge, dear brethren, that you take deep draughts of this glorious river and fountain of everlasting love. The government was on His shoulder, and on His right shoulder is the hand that beckons His sheep to Him, and that carries them in His arm,

and the side on which they are placed. There is not any fear in this arm and hand and shoulder. He will govern in righteousness until He has put down all rule and dominion and authority that would raise its malicious head against Him or His brethren, and on His left shoulder He will reign in righteous judgment against all of the vessels of wrath to the end that not one of them shall lift their sneering voice against the poor family of God. The victory of grace manifested in His right shoulder is equal with His left shoulder in His glorious providence. The enabling power of His right shoulder in reigning grace (Eph. 3:7; 4:16) is parallel and lies coincidental with His left shoulder in providential power. (John 19:10; I Chron. 29:10, 12) His grace kept Job from charging God with evil; His power kept the evil forces from destroying Job. This government being on the shoulder of the Son causes Zion to shout for joy, and to be thankful that one part of the government was not laid on her fragile shoulder. What glorious doubles are given the saints of God. (Isa. 40:2; Num. 6,9 - Joshua and Caleb; Eccl. 4:9, 11; Rom. 5:10; II Cor. 5:18, 19) No, little one, the Lord did not make salvation dependent on my shoulder and wisdom and power on one hand and on Jesus on the other shoulder, for (since a union, or a boundary, or a chain, cannot be any stronger than its weakest part) that would make salvation the surest thing to damnation.

In the long ago when I was pouring over my lessons in journalism, it was a pleasure to note in the writing of others the sequence of plots and articles, and I was sometimes given credit at being adept in using that talent in a story or a plot. Although that gift has been laid by for what I deign to hope are better things, I still enjoy the beauty of sequency in writing. The beauty of it in natural things is desirable for a writer, but what joy and thankfulness to my hungry soul when divine inspiration

moved poor sinners to write in sequence in regard to spiritual things. Needless to say, we are often told that God has done His part, or that God has done all that He is going to do, or that our life after regeneration is what we make it, or that we get out of Christianity according as we put in it. That is not sequency, that is travesty; that is starting out with the high and lofty and sublime subject of the child born and son given, and changing it to the recipient of divine mercy. Paul would call that kind of writing as beginning in the spirit and following and carrying on the flesh. (Gal. 3:2, 3) But if we have learned (and not over learning and never coming to the knowledge of truth) Christ (that is if we have been at His feet), that is not food nor shelter nor raiment, nor is it the truth. The government shall be on His shoulder. Now, as some of the old elders used to say, let us put a scotch there until we find what is to follow. If that is all that God and His son has to do with this illustrious government, we need to know it now, the sooner and the better, for if I have to play a part in my salvation, with the fast weakening of my mortal powers, I need to get in a hurry. If it is that I have a part in this important work, I also need to know what it is that I am to do. But, what is that I hear? What is that death-knell sound that comes loud and clear? Ah, yes, troubled one, it is God speaking to all troubled ones. (II Thes. 1:7) The government was (and still is) laid on the mighty shoulder, the right hand, and the holy arm of the Lord Jesus the Christ. (Ps. 98:1) This One that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, He is glorious in His apparel, and He is travelling in greatness of His strength. "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." (Isa. 63:1) And God laid help on Him, and gave Him as the Governor of His people Israel. (Matt. 2:6) I speak fearlessly, and I hope in humility, that there is not an account of this government having been laid or placed on anyone, save Jesus

Christ the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners.

Although Satan started disputing right early about what God had said, his adherents have outshone him in it. Their claim is that the enhancing and increasing is in the hands of poor fallen sinners, and that by their good order, and their silver and gold, they can have a much better government than we can ever have by leaving the increase, and order, and establishing of it to He on whose broad and strong shoulder that it was laid.

Daniel, in his prophecy, told some gracious and precious things to the king, Nebuchadnezzar, but which really reach their intended benefit as these things are revealed to the children of God today. (Rom. 15:4) The kingdom which God set up was not to cease; it was not left to any other people; it had a breaking and consuming power of all kingdoms in opposition to it, and that is the subject matter of our text. The government is not by man's power nor wisdom, but by the mercy of God. This is an increasing government, but the increase comes from the Son of God; and did you notice the perpetuity of it? An everlasting kingdom with a government that will never end. My mind and heart and soul is lifted up above the despairing confusion around me, and I do hope that thanksgiving to my Father and God for His unspeakable gift to poor sinners. The King sent down to us from God; the government of His people manifested to them by saving grace, and held in God's longsuffering to the wicked; (Rom. 9:22) this perpetual rule never to end; the increase to come from the Son to whom the government was given; the ordering of it to continue in His hands; the establishing of it to be His glorious work.

This continuity of this government was to be upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom. This man, David, being figurative of the Son of God, then the government is to be ordered

(enforced), and established solely for the honor and glory and majesty of David's throne and His kingdom. This government extends over (not to) all things. God our heavenly Father has sworn to David, His servant, His chosen one, and He will not repent (turn back). Since God will not turn back from His oath to David (Christ), I am sure that everything promised and purposed in Christ will come to pass.

Ah, how puerile it is for poor puny man that has broken every law that the Lord has given him, to fling in the face of the Creator, the Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He is an oath-breaker; that He does not honor His oath to His own Son. The God that swore that the government would not end, also "declared (swore) the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure". (Isa. 46:10) "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. (Heb. 6:16-19) Poor puny man will do all that he can to maintain his cause; he will do all that he can to care for and protect his family; he will enter court and sit on juries and a case among men is settled or confirmed by an oath, but that same man is up in irons against the oath of God being honored and kept.

This oath in behalf of those that flee for refuge is commensurate and compatible with the government of the kingdom of heaven being laid on the shoulder of the King of glory. The laying

or placing of the government on His shoulder was for the poor laboring sinners unto whom the rigid and exacting law of God has been placed over them. The oath was made for the benefit of the same people, the same poor harassed and burdened sinners. Each of them had been brought into a burning and fuel of fire wherein all of their possessions and faculties were coming to an end for them. The government was ordered that the burning with fuel became so intense that they would flee, and it was likewise ordered that they would not be consumed. All of their self righteousness would be mowed down by the great conflagration, but they themselves would be saved by a government, and the King on the throne of it, that will not share its glory nor its throne to another.

All of the dominion found in the law; all of the rage and destruction found in the nature of the waster and his horde of ministers; all, all of the faults and weaknesses found in our flesh, as well as all other things, be they legion, will be subordinate to the reign of government and the King on the throne, to the end that all shall be broken in pieces and consumed by this government, never to molest nor make afraid forevermore.

What a joy it is to have a good hope through grace that this government was laid for us in eternity, made manifest to us while viewing through a glass darkly in time, finally to break in refulgent glory on us in the presence of the King who put down for us all opposing powers and principalities and governments.

(Elder) W. D. Griffin

Should it be thought harsh to question the salvation of one who dies under the blindness of Arminianism; as if a man who only robs God in part might miss of glory; let it be considered that, even on earth, if a person robs me only of my watch, or of a single guinea, he has forfeited his life to the law, as much as if he had robbed me of all I am worth.

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

Shroob, Ill., May 7, 1859

Dear Brother Beebe:—I earnestly desire you to answer, through the *Signs*, the following questions: 1. Why do the Old School Baptists object to their members joining secret and oath-bound orders, as the Free Masons and Odd Fellows? 2. What course should a gospel church take with members who join these orders and attend their lodges? For one, I feel deeply the importance that the Baptists should be well informed on these points, for numbers of them are joining these orders. I mourn that it is so. Please answer early. Affectionately your unworthy brother,

D. Bartley

REPLY

In replying to the inquiries of brother Bartley, it is not necessary for us to attempt to show what are the merits or demerits of the societies or orders of which he speaks, and we frankly confess our utter inability to do so from our own knowledge. We have never been connected with any of them, either directly or indirectly. Like most of the modern self-styled religious societies of the present age, these orders claim to be benevolent, moral and philanthropic, and to possess some valuable secret, which their philanthropy does not lead them to divulge without money and without price. Our soul has never come, or sought to come, into their secrets, with their assemblies we have had no inkling to be connected. As worldly, social or benevolent institutions, we shall not attempt to analyze them, nor to pronounce sentence of approval or condemnation on them. But the question of our brother calls for the reason of the course pursued by the Old School Baptists in regard to their own members, and we deem it proper that we should, so far as we are able, reply to his inquiries. Of course he does not expect us to answer for all the Old School Baptists, or to pledge all Old School

Baptists to indorse what we may say on this or any other subject, but merely to give such reasons as have weight on our own mind on the subject.

The first reason we have to give why we do not join those institutions, or feel willing that our brethren should join them is, that whatever may be their excellence, even admitting them to be as pure and benevolent as their advocates claim that they are, we find in the gospel of Christ and in the organized church of the living God, a fullness which leaves no room to hanker for any of the leaks or onions of Egypt. In Christ, it has pleased the Father, that all fullness should dwell, and if, as professed disciples of Jesus, we are found seeking for treasures or comforts which are not found in Zion, we imply by our conduct that there is not that fullness in our Father's house which has been represented. Why should we go abroad for joys if we have a feast at home?

Second. Whatever may be the secrets held by Free Masons or Odd Fellows, we have a secret which is far more profound, more useful and important; for the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and God will show to them his covenant. As heaven is higher than earth, so does the Lord's secret transcend all human mysteries. In Jesus our Lord are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this fact the apostle has declared to the saints, lest any man should beguile them with enticing words. (Col. 2:3, 4.) This wisdom and knowledge comprise all that can be profitable to the saints; for in him is given to them all things that pertain to life and godliness. (2 Peter 1:3) This heavenly treasure, this divine secret of the Lord, which God has hidden from the wise and prudent of this world, and revealed unto babes, is far superior to any secret of the orders under consideration. First, because it is the free and sovereign gift of God, and cannot be bought with money. Secondly, it requires no oath, pledge or

penalty to keep it, for none but God can reveal or show it, and none but those who are born of the Spirit of God can possibly learn it. Christians may talk freely about it before all men; ministers of the word may proclaim it unreservedly to Jews and Gentiles, without the fear that any of Adam's race will ever know it unless it be to them revealed as it was to Simon Bar-jona, by our Father which is in heaven. To seek for a secret or mystery in any other fraternity or brotherhood than that of the household of faith is to depart from the greater to seek a less.

Third. Old School Baptists object to their members uniting with those orders, because the obligations assumed in doing so conflict with the obligations assumed in their allegiance to Christ, to be subject to the watchcare of one another. In visiting the lodges, they cannot be under the watchcare of their brethren, who are not permitted to accompany them in their secret conclaves. That which makes void the laws of Christ is incompatible with the christian profession.

Fourth. It is said an oath or affirmation, a solemn pledge, or profane imprecations, are exacted of those who become members of those orders. Presuming this to be the case, the Old School Baptists object to their members assuming such obligations, because the King of Zion has forbidden them to forswear themselves.

Fifth. To waive all other objections, it is certain that when members of the church unite with those institutions, it occasions grief and trouble to their brethren. This, of itself, is sufficient to render it highly improper and disorderly for any member of the church to join such orders. They have professed to prefer Jerusalem above their chief joys; and if they do not they certainly never ought to take on them the sacred name of Jesus, or profess before heaven and earth to be disciples of the Son of God. Those who name the name of Jesus

should regard it as the business of their lives to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace; to follow after the things which tend to peace, and things whereby one may edify another. What can there be in our joining the secret orders of Free Masons or Odd Fellows that tends to the peace or edification of the saints of God? Churches have been thrown into disorder, distress, and, in some instances, have lost their visibility from this very cause. But who that sincerely loves our Lord, who is willing to deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow the Lamb, will persist in breaking the peace of the church, wounding the hearts of dear brethren, and in bringing reproach upon the sacred cause of God for this gratification of his fleshly mind? Who would, like Esau, for one morsel of meat, sell his birthright among the saints in the house of God? We have Christ and his apostles as our example, and until we can find them running into these connections, and disregarding the peace and comfort of the church, we are solemnly bound to abstain from them.

These are, at least, some of the reasons, as we apprehend, why Old School Baptists object to their members joining any of these societies, and they are some of the reasons why we could not consent ourself to join them, or feel satisfied with brethren who do join them.

The second question of brother Bartley is, "What course should a gospel church take with members who join those orders and attend their lodges?"

According to our understanding of the laws of the kingdom of Christ, a gospel church should labor faithfully, affectionately and prayerfully to reclaim such disorderly members. Point out to them the impropriety and wickedness of their course, and to restore them to the order of the church. But if after a gospel course of labor they cannot reclaim them, if they really prefer the society of Free Masons and Odd Fellows

to that of the church of the living God, then the course of the church is very plain. Let them go to their own company; but let the church withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly, as Christ by his apostle has commanded. If they refuse to hear the church, let them be unto thee as heathen men and as publicans.

Before we close this article, we wish to say, that on all subjects of discipline, a hard, overbearing or domineering spirit should be studiously avoided. You that are spiritual should attempt the work of restoration in the spirit of meekness. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glorying, but with singleness of heart to the glory of God. We have doubted the propriety of requiring a brother who has joined any of these orders to come out and denounce them, or to divulge any of their secrets, which he has promised or pledged himself to keep secret. To satisfy our own mind, it is enough that the brother discontinues his connection with such institutions, come out from them, and walk no more with them.

One word more. We hold the same objections to our brethren or sisters joining any of the professedly religious or benevolent societies of the age, except the church of God, whether it be for religious, moral, social or political purposes. Whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are of good report, may be pursued, without any unjustifiable confederacy or organization with any of these institutions. And we should never turn aside from the footsteps of the flock of Christ for any cause or pretext whatever. If, for instance, Mission, Tract or Sunday School societies do not require the forswearing of their members, yet they make more extravagant pretensions to religion than the order of Free Masons or Odd Fellows do, and are perhaps more likely to decoy the unsuspecting. Other institutions for the ostensible

purposes of temperance or politics, have used pledges, if not oaths, which are very far from being harmonious with either the spirit or letter of the gospel. Concerning all these things then, we would reiterate the admonition of inspiration, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." The man who attempted to go from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among thieves, who stripped, and robbed, and wounded, and left him half dead. Let us take warning then, and remain in Jerusalem forever,

"Where our best friends and kindred are,
Where God our Savior dwells."

Middletown, N.Y., August 15, 1859.

Elder Gilbert Beebe

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The gospel is a sovereign plaister; but Christ's own hand must make it stick.

Manton

OBITUARIES

SISTER BETTY M. TURNER

I feel a duty laid upon me to write my mother's obituary. Sister Betty M. Turner died March 13, 1979, at the age of 87 years and 10 months.

Sister Turner was a member of Martinsville Primitive Baptist Church for 37 years. She attended services faithfully as long as her health permitted, and still had a great desire to after being confined to Martinsville Convalescent Home, where she was a patient for two years.

She talked to her children, the family, friends, and brethren of the love and mercy that she had received from our Heavenly Father. Often she would tell us of not being alone, that God was with her and she would lay there and talk of Him.

The personnel of the Convalescent Home marvelled because they had never experienced the death of anyone who was alert and of sound mind up to the very last of life on earth. Neither had they or we, the family, ever witnessed the beauty of death and the love and mercy that God gives to His dying saints. On the day of her death, her entire day was spent telling lovely things such as, "Children, my call has come. I won't be with you much longer. The place is so pretty, but it is so hard to get there, and it is taking me so long. Don't try to bring me back. Please don't grieve for me. The Lord has been so good to me. He has shown me Heaven and it is the prettiest place. Every one is the same, white as snow, and moving about without making any noise". She asked Frances to go get Mrs. Draper, the R.N. She said to her, "Mrs. Draper, is this death? I felt a sting. Is this death on my body? It must be. I feel half here and half there. It must be death." She said, "Oh Lord, you have been so good to me. I have called on you so many times. I do wonder if I have asked of you too much. I know that death is on me, and Lord, if you will, please make it just as easy as you will." Well, praise His Holy Name, dear brethren, He answered a dying saint's prayer. What a beautiful day that we spent at her bedside, knowing that her time with us was short, but feeling the presence of God in the room and seeing His love and mercy being manifested on the dying bed. I desire to portray to all you dear ones how merciful

and tender God's love abounds within the depth of the soul of one of His, to the moment when the spirit leaves the body, and not another wave of trouble shall roll across our peaceful breast.

Her last words to us was, "Goodby", and the day that she had so eagerly waited for had come.

Two of her favorite songs, "Amazing Grace", and "When I can Read My Title Clear", with the chorus, "How long, how long, Oh Lord, have I on earth to stay", were sung at her funeral. Her pastor, Elder Cecil E. Turner, and Elder Posey E. Ingram conducted the services.

Mama had a beautiful life. She was beautiful in death, and I feel that she will be even more beautiful on the morning of the resurrection when her spirit and body will be reunited to ever praise our God.

She is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Charlotte M. Peters, and Mrs. Frances M. Cooper, both of Martinsville, Va.; and one son, Russell L. Martin, of Richmond, Va.

Written in our love for Mama, and in praise to our God for His loving kindness and tender mercy to us. He is our All in All.

Written By Frances M. Cooper

**SISTER LUTIE BOHORN
ANDERSON BOLTEN**

Laurel Ridge Primitive Baptist Church acknowledges the passing of our dear sister in Christ, Sister Lutie Bohorn Anderson Bolten, daughter of the late John T. and Mary Elizabeth Donman Bohorn, of Roanoke County, Bent Mountain, Virginia. She was born on July 26, 1887. She died at her home January 9, 1979.

She was united in marriage to Malcom W. Anderson in 1923. He died March 1, 1935. She married again to Samuel V. Bolten from Pa., in September, 1945. He passed away Feb. 14, 1965.

She united with Bellview Primitive Baptist Church November 18, 1911. She was a faithful member for over 67 years and was faithful to attend until her husband's health began to fail. In the past few years her health began to fail, too.

She was loved by everyone who knew her. She is sadly missed by her friends and members of our churches. She was buried in Fairview Cemetery beside her first husband.

Services were conducted by her pastor.

Written by request of Laurel Ridge Primitive Baptist Church in conference, March 17, 1979.

Ethel Sowder

SISTER ROXIE CONNER

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to call from our midst Sister Roxie Conner, widow of Willard Austin Conner.

She was born Dec. 15, 1901, and departed this life August 16, 1978, at the age of 77 years. She leaves to mourn her passing two sons and one daughter, James Warren Conner, of Roanoke; Beulah Mae Richardson, of Roanoke; and G. W. Conner, of Blue Ridge, Va.; and several grandchildren. Perry B. Conner died in December, 1977.

Sister Conner united with the Bellview Church and was baptized the first Sunday in October, 1960, by the Pastor. She was a faithful member and attended her meetings as long as she was able, and always contributed freely to the expenses of the church.

Sister Conner was sorely afflicted with arthritis and suffered much, but we feel her suffering and troubles are over.

May the family and we at the church be reconciled to our loss and His will.

Written by request,
(Elder) Leonard J. Brammer

OBITUARY OF DIANA HARRISON

Sister Diana Harrison, 35, died December 2, 1978. She was born April 28, 1943, the daughter of Ephraim C. and Maggie W. Harrison and had spent all her life in the Bear Grass Community, Williamston, North Carolina.

She is survived by her mother and three brothers, Levi, Eli D., and Billie Harrison. Sister Harrison joined the Bear Grass Primitive Baptist Church in 1960 and was baptised by her father and was faithful to attend church as long as her health permitted. She enjoyed singing and would often ask for the hymn, "Robed and Ready" to be sung when Brothers and Sisters of the church would visit her. She bore her afflictions patiently and her dear mother cared for her with love and tenderness.

Funeral services were held for her in the church by Elder N. L. Ambrose, Elder Joseph Leggett, Elder M. E. Garner and Elder Billy Everett on December 4, 1978, with interment in Martin Memorial Gardens near Everetts, North Carolina.

By order of Bear Grass Church while in Conference, December 16, 1978.

N. L. Ambrose, Moderator
Fannie Myrtle Cowin and
Theresa R. Ayers, Committee

WILBERT CLIVE HOLLANDSWORTH

I will attempt to write the obituary of our brother Clive Hollandsworth, as requested by the Union Church while in conference March 24, 1979.

Brother Clive was born June 6, 1899 and passed away February 23, 1979, making his stay on earth 79 years 8 months and 17 days.

He is survived by three sons; Herbert, Randolph, and Elder Larry, seven daughters; Mrs. Ruth Gallimore, Mrs. Bessie Cox, Mrs. June Reynolds, Mrs. Majella Mayers, Sister Ardith Harris, Mrs. Joan Henley, and Mrs. Joyce Henley, one brother; Martin, three sisters; Mrs. Vettie Harris, Mrs. Mazie Phillips, and Sister Blanche Semones, 35 grandchildren, and 23 great grandchildren.

His body was laid to rest in the Hollandsworth Cemetery in Floyd County, Virginia, to await the second coming of our Lord.

Brother Clive had been a member of the Primitive Baptist Church since 1921. He was a faithful member of his home church and visited among the other churches and associations. He was always ready to help the church in any way he could.

We read that a good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. By the large congregation at Brother Clive's funeral, I believe he had a good name.

The funeral was held at Maberry Funeral Home and was conducted by Elder Hale Terry, Elder Amos Hash, and Elder Donald Smith.

May we at the Union Church and His family bow in humble submission to our Lord.

A Sister in Christ, I hope,
Lessie Cox

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IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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CRYING FOR DELIVERANCE

Once I could praise the Saviour's name,
And joy his face to see,
Believing he in mercy came
From heaven, to rescue me.

My fears were gone, my sorrows fled,
I longed at home to be,
And blest his name because he had
In loved delivered me.

Since then how many changing scenes
My soul has lived to see;
And in distress I cry again,
"Dear Lord, deliver me".

My foes I hoped would reign no more;
My soul was blest and free;
But now I faint beneath their power;
"Dear Lord, deliver me."

My heart's deceitful, vile, and base,
To that immense degree,
I cannot live without thy grace;
"Dear Lord, deliver me."

Till Christ, my sun, these clouds remove,
Thy face I cannot see;
O let thy everlasting love,
"Dear Lord, deliver me".

O may thy blood, which speaketh peace,
Again my spirit free;
And as thy mercies never cease,
"Dear Lord, deliver me."

Sarah

"Gospel Standard", 1836

THE MINISTRY

Beloved Editors, -- You will greatly oblige an unworthy worm, by allowing these remarks to appear in your valuable work; for, as I am often sorely tried, some of your correspondents may, perhaps, under the Holy Spirit's teaching, be enabled to give me some information, and also, I trust, some consolation.

What I am so often tried about is, on account of the work of the ministry. I have stood up in the Lord's name rather more than a year, to a despised people, and the Lord only knows what trials I have had to encounter. I will just give a brief outline of what I went through, before I began to speak publicly, when the Lord first set my soul at happy liberty. I can assure you it was a time to be remembered; for I had been under severe bondage; the terrors of a broken law, the lively nature of sin, and the awful thoughts of eternity and the vengeance of Jehovah, were as though they would drive me distracted. But, bless the Lord, when he broke in upon my mind, it was heaven upon earth to me. He brought me by a way that I knew not, made the Lord Jesus exceedingly precious to my soul, and led me to see such glory in him, that I cannot describe.

At that time, the Lord directed my mind to the Acts of the Apostles; and O how I could read of Paul's conflicts, and his zeal for his Lord! No tongue can tell how my soul was poured out unto the Lord, that he would make me as valiant for the truth as Paul. Never mind, said I, what conflicts I endure. O how I thought I could spill my blood in the defence of truth; for I so loved the Lord for what he had done for me; and I continually prayed that the Lord would make me one of his ministering servants. This was about two years before I began to speak in the name of the Lord, and these words often dwelt upon my mind, "He that desireth the office of a bishop,

desires a good work;" and I was led to see that it was a good work -- no station under the sun like it; and I really believe that my desire was good, wholly for the glory of the Lord. O that it were with me as in months that are past, for this was when the candle of the Lord shone round about me. But, O wretched man that I am! Soon after this, darkness seized my mind, and I began to condemn myself for having such thoughts. Now the warfare began. Evil thoughts filled my mind; fretfulness, rebellion, lust, and a host of things that I cannot mention. Now I had rather be anything than a preacher, the Lord is my witness. The first words that cause me a great deal of trouble were as follow. It was in a dream, when I was ruminating in my mind on the importance of the work of the ministry, that it was required of a minister to be faithful, that he must be taught of God, and several other things, and these words came as an answer: "That he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"; which were followed immediately by these words: "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries". The trouble this dream caused, I cannot relate; and though the first words did not come personally, yet those, "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries", caused me to say, What can it mean? Thus I went on for about a month, till I determined I would not be a preacher. Nay, said I, I cannot speak in the name of the Lord; for it seemed to be a trick of the devil; and then I dreamed the same dream over again, only with this difference, "That you may please him", etc. When I awoke, I had a sorrowful heart, saying, I cannot, I will not speak. O that I had never been born! Go where I would, this followed me. When I went to hear the word preached, I could receive no comfort; and when the speaker named his text, I thought what ever should I do if I were in his place, and deeply did I feel for him, wondering how he would get through.

About this time, the Lord's people whispered it about, that they thought the Lord was fitting me for the work of the ministry, and that I should come forth very shortly. This was no way pleasant to me; and when they asked me if my mind was not exercised about it, I dared not to say no, though I shuffled it off as well as I could. Soon after this, I was so greatly oppressed that I determined to go to a friend's house, and open my mind; but when I arrived, I found a parson there; and he so terrified me that my mouth was closed, and instead of getting comfort, I was sorrowful beyond expression; for he prated away as though preaching was a trade. He said he had had three calls; one was not salary enough, another lay too far distant; and so he went on. I was now sorry that I had ever gone, for this mongrel made me worse than ever. I was looking at the importance of the work, but he was as trifling as could be. When I left the house I went sighing and groaning till I came to a bridge; and now I thought it was all over, and hard work indeed I had to get over without throwing myself in the river. I went home, but my friends being all carnal, I could not stop in the house five minutes; so I went out, and cried heartily to the Lord to put an end to this strife; and after I had groaned my petition to the Lord, I felt a little eased for a short time. Soon after this, being oppressed as before, I cried out unto the Lord, "What wilt thou have me to do?" and these words came as an answer, "Preach the word"; and enjoying at this moment a little sense of the Lord's goodness towards me, I said, "Lord, I will, if thou wilt teach me;" and I really did think I could speak at this time. But this did not continue long, for doubts and fears soon again took possession of my mind. On one occasion, I was saying within myself, "Surely the Lord never can have chosen me to preach the gospel! If I ever attempt it, I shall be confounded;" when these words were made to set all right

again:

"Too wise to be mistaken, He,--Too good to be unkind".

Again set for the defence of the gospel, I was again all hot for speaking; but now another difficulty arose. I was not a member of any church, so that I could not be sent out as is the usual custom. But O what fit words these were for me at this time: "And immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, but preached Christ, that he is the Son of God". Now the word of God was like a fire in my bones; but very shortly I began with my old tale: "How can I stand before the people? They will disdain me; I shall never be able to meet them;" and a host of such like things. But the reply I received was, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Then I said, "Lord, if thou wilt teach and uphold me, and strengthen and keep me, I will attempt to speak in thy name." And the Lord said, "I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

The next night I began to speak, and no tongue can describe what I went through before the time came. I spoke from Deut. 33:27. The passage lay on my mind all the night and day before. I had a good opportunity, and was a wonder to myself.

Now, beloved Editors, what has caused me to write so fully, is to know whether a man can go through these things, and be deceived at last; for sometimes I am tried severely as to whether I have any business to speak in the name of the Lord; that I am nothing but a deceiver; that I am a preacher to others, and shall be a cast-away myself: and when the people say (as is often the case) that the word has been blessed to them, I sometimes cannot believe it; and when I am compelled to believe it, O, says my unbelief, the Lord employed the raven to feed his servant. Look at Balaam, look at Judas, I say to myself; and then I am ready to conclude that I will not speak any more in the name of the Lord. But O what a dagger this is to me. I feel

satisfied within myself that if I am not called to the work of the ministry, I am not called by grace. I go to the pulpit in a worse state, I think, than a man goes to the gallows; yet in general I have liberty there; but I am seized directly that I come down, that I have condemned myself. What is worse than all, I cannot pray from the heart; it seems only lip service. Sin is too much for me; and though I hate it, yet do I the things I hate.

May the Lord grant to some one or other of your correspondents a spirit of sympathy, and enable him to be a means of strengthening my weak hands, and confirming my feeble knees.

A traveller

629 Hwy. 95A South
Cantonment, Fla. 32533

Dear Editors of the *Signs of the Times*,

I see my subscription expires next month and I want to keep it coming. I get lots of satisfaction out of reading its contents, especially Elder Beebe's article on Generation and Regeneration (May issue).

I am sending a check for two years, and you may use the rest as you see fit.

I want to say from my heart that I thank you and may God bless you to continue the good word, as no carnal mind can write as the writers of the *Signs*.

A brother in hope of eternal life,
J. A. Avera

FROM AN OLD "SIGNS"

Mt. Rose, N.J.
Feb. 4, 1898

Elder F. A. Chick -- My dear Pastor, At your request I will make the attempt to write some of the Lord's dealings with me. I was brought up a Presbyterian. My parents were of that denomination. We had to go to Sunday School, whether we

wished to go or not. We were never allowed to play, or do anything of that kind, on Sunday. I was deeply impressed in my mind upon spiritual things, when quite young. I felt myself to be a lost and ruined sinner, and was deeply grieved for some time, and formed resolutions that I would live a different life, but found to my sorrow, that I only grew worse. They told me that I must pray to God for a new heart, and he would hear my prayer. I found no peace for a year or more. Then they held a revival meeting at Pennington Church. I went, with my parents, night and day, but while others were rejoicing in their Saviour, I felt that I was an outcast. One evening when alone Christ spoke peace to my troubled soul. At that time I had never heard an Old School Baptist preach, nor had seen any one baptized. I was received into the Presbyterian church the day that I was fifteen.

A few years after I was married my husband also joined the Presbyterians. My children all became members of that denomination in their early youth. But the time came when their preaching no longer reached my case. I did not feel satisfied. I was hungering for the bread of eternal life, for something to comfort and strengthen me. I did not know what the matter was, until the Lord directed my steps to go and hear Elder Purington preach, at Mt. Rose, N.J., from the Song of Solomon, second chapter, fourteenth verse. He spoke about the redeemed being in the clefts of the rock, and in the secret places of the stairs. It was then that I heard as I had never heard before. It appeared as if every word was intended for me. He told me my experience better than I could have told it myself. I then thought, "Can it be that I am one of them?" How it humbled me. I felt as if I wanted to get right down upon my knees and thank the Lord for his love and mercy. Such words of comfort and consolation I never heard before. Here then was comfort in a finished salvation, wrought by the grace of God in

our hearts, not by our own works, but by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. I was lost in wonder, love and praise to the giver of every good and perfect gift, which cometh from above.

In two months I went to hear the Elder again. After the meeting I told him that although I had been a member of the church thirty-two years, I had never heard preaching as I did when I heard him two months before. He said it was an arrow from the quiver of the Almighty. I told him that I had often wondered why there was so much love among the Old Baptists, but I understood it now, for I loved them, as I had no other people, and that I was bound to them by ties which could never be broken. Now it was my desire to be baptized, but I kept all these things to myself as long as I could, for I feared to make it known, because there would be so much opposition. Finally I had to tell my husband. He sent right away for his minister. He came and talked and prayed until I became so nervous, and felt so badly, that I was glad when he went away. I went up stairs and fell upon my knees and tried to pray, but not a word could I say. I felt as if I was forsaken both by God and man. I cried in my anguish, "Was there ever sorrow like my sorrow?" Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? But alas! like Peter, I denied the Lord, and remained with the Presbyterians two years more. I felt that I was no longer one of them, and did not feel at home, and there was nothing in their preaching for me.

In the spring of 1883 I attended the association at Hopewell, N.J., the first time. Such preaching I never heard before. They all appeared to be of one heart and mind. They spoke with demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. How much I longed to be one of their number.

I never went to Pennington but very few times after that. How anxiously I prayer to the Lord to show me, or make known to me, the way that I should go.

Two weeks before I was baptized, all at once, everything was made plain to me, so that I could no longer doubt what was the way for me to go. Before this I had pondered these things over in my heart, at home and abroad, the Lord had spoken so many precious promises to me, and I had felt that his presence was near me. I was thinking one day of the fact that my husband and children were all members of another church, and how hard it would be for them to have me leave them, and go to another church, when the words came to me so forcibly, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee". How these words comforted me. At another time these words came, "I will be thy God and guide, even unto death;" and many others at different times, which I could not now speak of.

I sent word to Elder Purington that I intended to come before the church on Saturday before the fourth Sunday in July, after the Association, and that nothing would hinder me, but sickness or death. But could or would they receive me? I was so unworthy. If they did not, where could I go to hear the words of eternal life? But they did receive me, and need I tell you how happy and peaceful I felt.

The next morning, as we stood by the water, I thought of my husband and children. If they could only see and believe as I did, when these words came to me, "For I say to you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham". I have rested upon that promise. You know how gracious the Lord has been unto me, in bringing two of my children to follow in the footsteps of their Saviour, by being buried with him in baptism.

"Am I called? O, can it be?

Has my Saviour chosen me?

Has he named my worthless name,
Among the followers of the Lamb?"

Hymn 679, (Beebe's collection) tells my experience better than I can tell it. I soared above the world. I thought I would never have anything but sunshine. But

in this I was mistaken.

“Little of myself I knew,
Little thought of Satan’s power.”

For all along my pathway I have had my doubts and fears, my joys and sorrows, but I still have a hope that I may be clothed in the robe of Christ’s righteousness. It is by the grace of God that I am what I am. If I am one of the chosen, it is through his love and mercy, and not by works of righteousness, which I have done. It is by the renewing and sanctifying of the Holy Ghost which he has shed on us abundantly, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. I fear that I shall weary you by this long letter, so I will close. Please excuse all mistakes.

Eure A. Drake

Danville, Va.

Dear Brother Smith,

I am sorry to be late sending in for renewal of my subscription for the *Signs*. I have been sick and unable to write.

Enclosed is my check for one year and use the other as you see fit. I love the *Signs* and read it through as soon as I get it. I don’t get to the meetings much any more, and Oh, how I miss the sweet fellowship of like kindred faith. I feel all I have to live for is my Saviour Jesus Christ.

Please pray for one so unworthy when at the Throne of Grace. I am a little sister in hope of eternal life though I feel to be the least.

Lillian Holt

I DIE DAILY

So many things harass the mind, heart, and soul! The believer in Jesus finds things on the right and left hand to distress him: sin and the consequences thereof! O wretched man! He finds himself to be wretched. He would live as holy as God is holy; and it is his pain, grief,

and burden, that he does not. The bitter root of past sins is continually growing bitter fruit,—yielding it as naturally as the fruit from a tree. O the bitter consequences of sin! When he would do good, evil is present with him. Evil habits, the consequences of sin, are, day by day, a thorn in his side. What to do and what not to do; where to go and what next he should turn himself to; in these things he finds difficulty. The bitter root of nature, grown into a tree by the continual practice of sin, more or less, throughout his entire life, is a thorn under the pillow of every earthly satisfaction that the believer has. O sin, sin, sin! says he, that killed the Son of God; and I do not know but that it may kill me to all eternity, for I often, yea, continually, at times, have felt myself, I fear, to have no part or lot in precious redemption. Thus, fears and fightings, repentance and woe, anxiety and dimness of anguish, continually beset him. He does not want any one to tell him that he is a wretched man. He finds himself to be so, and very often, indeed. O that I had never sinned, says he, then would my peace have flowed like a river. He has no communion with those who say sin can do us no harm; for he bitterly bewails, laments, and, as it were, beats on his heart, day by day, like the publican, that he has sinned against God. I have sinned, says he, against God, my fellow-creatures, and myself. O wretched man that I am! I cannot undo the past. I fear I am, perhaps, in an evil snare. He finds and feels himself to be a link in the chain of predestination; whether he is made for heaven or hell, alas, he knows not! Certainly, my sins, says he, testify against me.

Woe unto the world because of offences! He finds himself to offend in many things; and the enemies of the gospel eat up his imperfections, faults, and shortcomings, like as they would eat bread. This gives him pain, and stirs him up to have such wrath, indignation, and revenge against himself, such a

jealousy for the Lord's honour, and such a tenderness of conscience, as he often thinks is a mark of his salvation, being that which he thinks the reprobate never has. He knows Arminian holiness is rotten, and that head-knowledge Calvinism grows no such fruit. Thus the believer is hemmed in on all sides, and he finds what Paul said to be his own case, "Fears from within, and fightings from without"; and he finds, at times, constrained also to speak openly of these things, and say, "I would not have you ignorant of what a great fight of afflictions I find myself to be beset with". (2 Cor. 1:8)

Alas for the day, for it is great! for Ephraim's sin is no longer bound up; but our iniquities testify against us; the ground is chapt (Jer. 14:4); and he finds himself to pine away in his iniquities, and to feel what the prophet says, "As for our iniquities, we know them."

David says, "Cleanse thou me from my secret faults"; as if at what he knew already of them, he was stunned: but what was behind the curtain he did not know how far the dismal extent might be. What he knew already of his sins drove him, at times, to the borders of madness, blasphemy, and despair. For when a saint feels he has no part in redemption, he fears he must begin to blaspheme aloud! O the awful nature of man! O the solemn nature of God! "When I think of thy terrors", says he, "I am distracted, and I am afraid of thy judgments."

Thus Christ, that exalted Prince, gives manifestatively repentance; as much overtopping all natural repentance which natural conscience knows anything of, as the blessed Almighty differs from Satan, or heaven is exalted above hell.

This man has no communion with the empty-headed nonsense of mere praters about free grace; for he believes and feels such to be only two-fold more the children of hell than the profane. He feels they have no fellowship with

Christ in his sufferings; that they know much of Christ as they think, but that they know nothing of themselves; which is a complete mark of reprobation, unless grace tears up such men's hearts; for there is not the slightest shadow of evidences that such men are of the number of the elect. For, I ask, is not Christ exalted to give this divine repentance, as well as remission of sins? Yes. (Acts 5:31)

Thus, in our day, there are swarms of persons talking about free grace and a free and full salvation, who are members of Calvinist churches and congregations, who are only twice dead, once in their Christianity, and once by nature! and therefore are as bad again as the profane, who are only once dead.

A Godly sorrow, a brokenness of spirit, a fellowship with Christ in his sufferings, a tenderness of conscience, a bewailing and lamenting through softened feelings of communion with Christ on the bloody tree, is the grand sap, as it were, of the tree of life and knowledge; and the glorious truths of imputed righteousness alone, without works, and of sin-atoning blood, are the precious fruit and eternal ornament thereof.

A knowledge of Christ, as the Prince and Saviour, to give remission of sins, without a coequal knowledge of Him as the giver of repentance too, is all head-knowledge, confusion, contradiction, and abomination; for how can he bestow remission without bestowing knowledge of the sins also?

And, moreover, when Christ comes to live in the elect soul, the carnal mind, which is enmity against him, will spit its poison and venom, by indwelling corruptions, and working all manner of concupiscence and sin against Him; and this war will continue, more or less, as long as the saint is in the body.

The elect are priests. A priest is to offer sacrifice; and the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, and a broken and contrite heart. "With this man will I dwell, says

the Lord". (Isa. 57:15; 66:3)

Thus, the elect are made to be poor, trembling, humble groaners, burdened in the tabernacle of their sin and death: they pray with groanings, deep, heartfelt, real, and which cannot be uttered (a certain sign that God the Spirit dwells in them). The Lord saveth such as be of a contrite spirit; but none else. Thus the walls of the true Jerusalem are always built in troublous times (Dan. 9:25), and the true paschal Lamb is always eat, roasted in the fire of tribulation, and eaten with bitter herbs (Ex. 12:8): for ye shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering of the Lord made by fire; (Lev. 2:11) but the sweets and bitters shall go together; and they who have great light and not great darkness, great consolations and not great sufferings, and a knowledge of Christ in light and not also in darkness, I believe to be all a delusion, and to be vamped up alone by the false angel of light, the devil; and that it is not the work of the sin-reproving, judgment-reproving Comforter.

Abingdon, May 17, 1836

J. K.

(This article is as vital today in 1979, as it was when originally written. Editor)

Summerfield, N.C.

Dear Sirs:

I find my subscription to the *Signs* is past due. My deepest appreciation for the courtesy extended by continuing the copies which have been sent past the expiration date.

My wife and I enjoy the good reading provided by the *Signs*, and at times are made to feel a blessing by the sermons and the experiences of His little children.

Enclosed is my check for \$15.00. Extend my subscription for two more years and use the remainder for the distribution of the *Signs*.

Yours in Christ (I Hope)
Hugh Knight, Jr.

Shreveport, La.

Dear Elder Smith,

We are sorry to be late in sending in our payment of the *Signs of the Times*. My beloved husband has been in the hospital over a long while now and my health is not too good. I am a lot slower than I used to be in getting things done, yet I have so much to be thankful and praise the Lord for. He has blessed me to care for my dear husband since he had open-heart surgery last July. One lung collapsed during surgery and the doctor's could not get but three of the by-passes done. (He needed five). I just thank God for sparing his life and for His marvelous grace, strength, and help to both of us. I firmly believe in a God who is all wisdom and works His will in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth - Who is all Power and makes us to rejoice even in sickness, tribulations and oppressions. Nothing just happens, but God has a purpose and reason for everything that takes place, and by experience I do know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

I do not know that I am one of God's little children, but my little hope is so precious to this poor sinner and I can look back and see that He has ever been with me and my beloved husband. Even at a very young age, though I didn't understand at the time, the Lord began showing and revealing and teaching me things by His blessed Spirit in dreams and visions and in the softest and sweetest voice, and with such power and force. I cannot express or explain, but I do know by experience that when the Lord begins a good work in one of His children, He never stops it but just goes on and on until our lives in the present world are ended. Salvation is alone of the Lord. It is all of grace, amazing grace, that saves poor hell-deserving beings such as I know myself to be. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.

Dear Brother, I didn't know when I started this note that it would end like

this. The Lord speaks and it is done. He must lead, guide, and direct us, for we can do nothing of our own that is good. Sin is mixed with all we do or say, or at least I find this so with myself. So precious are all God's promises. He'll never utterly leave or forsake one of His children. If we have not had chastisement and have been made to feel that rod, then are we bastards and not sons and daughters. We also have the staff to lean on, Jesus Christ the Rock, wherein our little hope is anchored, though often times we feel so all alone and cast down. He knows our every need and supplies all we need (not our wants).

Blessed be the God, our Father and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for all He hath done for us.

Remember us when bowed down at the Throne of mercy.

Forgive all errors and mistakes. May God bless you all to keep the *Signs* coming. It is a comfort.

A little sister, I humbly hope,
in Jesus,
Mrs. Robert Miles

MINISTERIAL GIFT

I have often heard it said of persons, that such and such as one has a gift. What gift, I ask? natural? or spiritual? For, I am persuaded, there is a difference of the highest nature between even the utterance of a natural and spiritual gift. The one is formed by the dry handicraft of the stores of nature; the spiritual gift is the costly and most precious workmanship of the Holy Ghost, that most supreme and blessed Sovereign. The utterance in a spiritual gift breathes life; it has dew. Moistened and comprehending in its expression of heavenly and experienced glories from the man's soul, wherein the blessed Trinity walks and dwells, the utterance of such a man falls with a weight neither saints nor sinners can reject. It is the key, unlocking to the eye, fellowship, advan-

tage, or injury, of all, the mysterious kingdom of God, in the speaker's soul, a savour of life or death, increasingly, to a certainty, to every saith and profane man that comes within its reach. What dry, miserable nurses are the college-clad, academy-made, sons of nature, who, not sent of Christ, preach him,--but how? As Cain, with the fruits of the earth, which are cursed, the stores of nature, their own bread, (Isa. 4:1) natural intellect, judgment, and understanding--all fallen, the endowments of the first man (I Cor. 15:45),--of the earth, earthly, having nothing whatsoever to do with the second Man, the glorious Lord from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. And I believe the fallen mind of natural man, in all its endowments of reason, ideas, capacity of expressing itself, memory, judgment, and intellectual excellence, is all Christ-hating, and has an impassable gulph of eternal enmity and separation drawn between it and the God and Father of the Lord Jesus, the true God. Natural-made ministers, who have a gift in and by the stores of nature, as above, differ as much, and are quite as much of a different kind, from heaven-ordained, and grace-ordained, experimental, ransomed ministers, as heaven differs from hell. No; never let there be confusion on this head. And, if it is said, Such an one has a gift; ask, What gift? Is he a ransomed soul, manifested in his experience? For, as for dry letter-men, their religion, standing in what they know of God through natural conscience and reading the Bible, and being breathed upon by the false angel of light, the false Christ; I say, these men, amongst dissenters and the church, as well as amongst the universal herd of self-made, and mongrel, and infinitely varied professors, are a plague, sore, and confusion to any weaklings of Christ's flock, not yet severed from them. And, as Nehemiah cursed them that spake half Ashdod and half the Jew's language, so,

generally, the vast herd of Baptist, Independent, and various profession ministers, in and out of the Establishment, who fatten on Christ and the loaves, but never, as the predestined elect, experimentally manifested by the Spirit in themselves and to spiritual persons; I say, these mongrel, Samaritan, and academy-made race, are the plague often for a long time to some poor souls that know Christ. They are the stronghold of the devil, who never leads any of the human race, so inextricably involved in his nets, as those in a false and mere natural religion. The nearer to the truth in the letter, the better for him, and the easier. Thus, he is called the false Christ; and this tribe whom I have been here attacking, are the most disguised and efficient officers in his army, children of the bondwoman. head-knowledge Calvinists and Arminians, whose natural conscience and judgment, exercised on the Bible, under the tuition of the devil, dressed as fair as any angel of light, Thus, if it were possible, planning for the deception of the very elect themselves; and thus, we are sure, he will het all the rest. All these mysteriously Satan-endowed, natural-gifted, and admired orators, of every shade and kind that can be imagined, the world is infested with; and, like Satan, walk up and down in it all around us, and increasingly every day.

And letterly high Calviniss, with a general experience, have the stamp of reprobation, as far as we can see, along with these mentioned. For, there is neither salt, dew, brokenness, contrition, extent of experience, or living marks in them to satisfy the discerning eye of a spiritual man. Their experience is like the miracles of Pharoah's magicians, as two to ten, when compared with the living marks in a living child of God: so small, scanty, feeble, and unsatisfactory; quite within the reach of natural conscience, the letter-knowledge of Scripture, and the

mystic touch of the devil to inflate and decorate it up.

Abingdon, January 14, 1836

I.K.

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

On Saturday before the first Sunday in May, 1979, the Mill Branch Primitive Baptist Church met in conference, and agreed that we ask that Brother Hardy Barnes be set apart to the office of Deacon, and the ordination service was set for Sunday morning at 10:00 A.M.

On Sunday morning, May 6, 1979, the church met and conference was opened with Hymn No. 563, by Elder Holland, and prayer by Elder Kenneth Windham.

The presbytery was organized by electing Elder Harvey Holland, Moderator, and Sister Estelle Joyner Williford, Clerk. Ministers and deacons present were invited to seats with us in the service.

The moderator called for the candidate, who was presented by deacons John Williams and Leon Griffin, and he was seated in front of the ministers. The ministers present were Elders W. B. Barnes, Kenneth Windham, and Harvey Holland.

The presbytery being satisfied with the qualifications of the candidate, administered the laying on of hands and prayer. The charge was delivered by Elder Harvey Holland.

The ordained deacon was delivered back to the church as a deacon of the Primitive Old School Baptist Church at Mill Branch, and the right hand of fellowship was extended to him. A copy of this is to be recorded in the church book, and a copy sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication.

Conference was dismissed by Elder Kenneth Windham.

Elder Harvey Holland, Moderator
Sister Estelle Joyner Williford, Clerk

CONTENTNEA ASSOCIATION

The next session of the Contentnea Primitive Baptist Association is to be held, the Lord willing, with Upper Town Creek Church, Wilson County, N.C. It is to begin on Friday before the second Sunday in October, 1979. (October 12, 13, 14)

The Association will be held Friday in Upper Town Creek Church, and Saturday and Sunday in Elm City School.

All lovers of the truth are invited to visit with us.

(Elder) W. W. Stallings, Jr. Clerk

SALISBURY ASSOCIATION

The Salisbury Association will convene, the Lord willing, with the Snow Hill Old School Baptist Church at Snow Hill, Maryland, on October 24, and 25, 1979.

All ministers, brethren, and friends of our faith and order are cordially invited to meet with us.

Those arriving on Tuesday will please contact Deacon Bill Davis, New Church, Virginia, (telephone 804-824-3137), or Elder James Poole, Salisbury, Maryland, (telephone 301-742-6406). Those coming on Wednesday go directly to the church on Washington Street.

Maude Truitt, Church Clerk

BLACK CREEK ASSOCIATION

The 1979 session of the Black Creek Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Healthy Plains Church, the fourth Sunday, Friday and Saturday before in October, 1979. (October 26, 27, 28)

The Friday services will be held at the meeting house which is located a few miles south of Bailey, N.C., on Highway 581.

The Saturday and Sunday services will be held at Rock Ridge School, which is located on State Road 1142. Those coming from the North or South on Interstate 95 turn west on Highway 42 for one mile to State Road 1142. Those coming from the East or West on Highway 264 should take Interstate 95 South to Highway 42 and proceed as above.

An invitation is extended to all our brethren and friends to come and be with us.

Harold Pittman, Asst. Clerk

BUTTAHATCHIE ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Fifty-fourth annual session of the Buttahatchie Old School Primitive Baptist Association will be held, the Lord willing, with Poplar Springs

Church, Vernon, Alabama, on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 12, 13, and 14, 1979.

For directions to the meeting house contact Elder Eulie McCool, Steens, Mississippi, 39766, (Phone 1-601-328-0532) or ask directions in the city of Vernon. All lovers of the truth are welcome.

Elder Eulie McCool, Moderator
Charles P. Hayes, Clerk

KEHUKEE

PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The Two hundredth and fourteenth session of the Kehukee Primitive Baptist Association is to convene with the Robersonville Church, Martin County, Robersonville, N.C., the first Sunday in October, Saturday before and Monday following. (October 6, 7, 8, 1979) The church is located along U.S. Highway 64 in Robersonville. The Association is to convene on Saturday and Sunday at Robersonville Junior High School, located along U.S. Highway 64 in Robersonville. On Monday the Association will be at the church, along U.S. 64 in Robersonville.

We extend a cordial invitation to all brethren of the same faith and order to come and meet with us. All friends are welcome.

(Elder) Marvin E. Garner, Clerk

HOPEWELL ASSOCIATION

The ninety-fifth annual session of the Hopewell Primitive Baptist Association will convene, God willing, with Liberty Hill Church, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, beginning on Friday before the third Sunday in October, 1979. (October 19, 20, 21)

Going north from Tuscaloosa on Highway #43, turn east on County Road 38 at caution light between Mile Marker 221 and 222, and follow signs to the church.

Our brethren and friends are invited to meet with us.

Elder A. H. Brock, Moderator

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DISTRIBUTION OF THE
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CONSOLATION

What an unspeakable mercy and soul-supporting truth it is, that the everlasting covenant of grace is ordered in all things and sure! How comforting and consoling to the mind when under affliction or desertion. The tried, tempted, buffeted, cast down believer may reason thus: Well, I am afflicted in my poor body; I feel the symptoms of approaching dissolution; this poor tabernacle will soon be taken down, soon be laid in the grave, and moulder into dust. I know this is all according to covenant arrangements. The afflictions I now feel, the time when I was to be exercised with it, the measure of it, the nature of it, how long I am to endure it, and when to be brought out of it, or whether it will end in my removal from this desert of sin and woe are all ordered by my heavenly Father, who has my good at heart, and will do all things right.

"Sweet to lie passive in his hands,
And know no will but his."

How blessed it is to be brought to bow to divine sovereignty, and to perfectly acquiesce in the will of our heavenly Father. None but the blessed Spirit of the living God can bring a poor sinner here. He may now and then remind us that this is not our rest, for it is polluted, by laying upon us his afflicting hand; yet he is ever with us, and has passed his infallible word that he will never leave us nor forsake us. Precious promise! the perfection of his nature is stamped upon it, and upon every promise of his word. O for precious faith in exercise in his blessed promises! They are like so many bank notes. Christ is the believer's never-failing bank; for it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead. John well knew this was an inexhaustible bank; for, having been taught by the blessed Spirit his own emptiness, he cries out, with holy rapture, at the thought that he and his brethren had such a bank, "Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." The children of God have been drawing upon this bank for nearly six thousand years, and it is not exhausted yet; so far from it, it contains as much now as ever it did. It still stands the same, "His fulness".

Hallelujah! Precious Jesus! Bring me, though a poor beggar, all in rags, without a friend, without a home, bring me, by thy blessed Spirit, to thyself, as my almighty Banker. Give me a little note, even one, out of the many that are in thy word. Hast thou not said, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? Here is a precious note, of thy own blessed writing, signed and sealed! Pay it off, thou blessed Banker, and give me rest. Enable me to rest upon thy precious promises, thy immutable veracity, covenant love, atoning blood, complete and eternal redemption, finished salvation, justifying righteousness.

May I know, by thy Spirit's teaching, that my name is written in thy book of life, that my title is good, that my interest is founded upon union, upon relationship, to thee. Bear witness to my spirit that I am a son, and if a son, then an heir, heir of God, and joint heir with Christ Jesus.

We read of some, in the days of Nehemiah, who could not show their Father's house, nor their seed, or pedigree; whether they were of Israel or no. (See Nehemiah 7:61-64) O my soul, canst thou prove thy pedigree, as belonging to the Israel of God, the election of grace? Is thy name written amongst the living in Jerusalem? (Isa. 4:3) Or is it written in the earth? (Jer. 17:13) Solemn thought! Search, my soul; give no sleep to thy eyes, nor slumber to thy eyelids, till thou art satisfied upon this important subject. The great question is, Am I born again? Have I been quickened from a death in sin to a life of righteousness? Have I been made to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust my all in his hands, to love him above all things, and to cry to him for mercy? He says he calls his sheep by name. What is my name, and character? My state by nature is described in the latter part of Rom. 1; but can I read my name in Romans 3:19, and Rom. 7, or in Isaiah 55:1? If I can, under the sweet power and unction of the Holy Ghost, then I may be sure it is written in the Lamb's book of life.

O what poor, worthless worms we are; nothing in ourselves but a mass of corruption. May the blessed Spirit bear witness to each of our souls of our interest in a precious Christ, and bless us, manifestatively, with the sweet consolations of his love, for his name and mercy's sake.

R. J.

Wherever there is a Paul to preach, there will be a Tertullus to find fault.

Toplady

EDITORIAL

GALATIANS 5:17-26

“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 of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” (Gal. 5:17-26)

As I come before you with this vast and important subject, I do hope that kind indulgence will flow to me from you. I am sure that the object of Paul is the comfort of believers and the glory of God, and I do hope that this object might be mine as I write on these sacred matters. Many things I am lacking; in fact, if I am a sharer with the apostle, I do not know anything as I ought. However, that these are good things I am sure, and only good things will do us any good here or here after. I may say something that you do not agree with, but the object or the lesson intended, I do believe that we are mutually agreed. I am sure that Paul is condemning all ungodliness, and that he is injoining upon us only the good things of the Spirit. If we can lay aside our personal whims and ideas and come to Him in the Spirit of holiness for guidance and instruction, we will sit down at His feet.

I do hope that as long as I avoid dealing in personalities or attributing to the apostle that he is encouraging any lasciviousness, that I will have your well wishes in my endeavor to find the beauties in what is being dealt with.

If we always know what the inspired writers were dealing with, we could safely say that the inspired writers say what they mean and mean what they say. Our limited understanding forbids us taking a rigid or dictatorial position about sacred things. For instance, it is an established fact that we are not under law. But if we take that as it first appears we immediately are ready to say that the child of grace is not under any restraint about indulging in the lusts of the flesh. I am sure that such a thought is not true; that the Bible condemns it from beginning to end; that the experience of each and every child of grace condemns such a thought. The truth of the matter is this: We are not under the law of Moses (which is to say that he brought it down from Sinai, but that it proceeded from God), but we are under the grace of God. This grace of God is in action now, and, while it has always been in force, yet it was not manifest to Israel with the same sweetness that it is unto the Gentiles. It is made unto us with power as the New Covenant is made known unto us. Before this, the law was written on tables of stone, now it is written in the heart. As it appeared to Israel from the Lord, they were under it but unable to hear it and live (under it). If God had left them in that condition there would not have been any salvation, for no one could be justified by the deeds of keeping that law. (Acts 13:39) It was in mercy that He (God) raised them up another prophet, and they could hear Him. (Deut. 18:18) This covenant of grace was not written on the hearts of men and women in eternity; it was not written in their hearts while they were in a state of death or aliens from God. It was written in their hearts and put into their mind as they came into the light of the New

Birth. The law was not removed from the heart and the mind. I think that this is getting into the inward man as much as it could ever be—to be put into the mind, and to be written in or upon the heart. Instead of removing the laws of God from a man or woman, it seems that it is bringing it into their lives much closer than while on tables of stone. If this does not seem to be the case, what would you suggest that Jeremiah and Paul meant about this sacred matter? You surely would not attempt to say that all law was done away with. I do not see how a law could very well be done away with, when it is removed from tables of stone and put in the mind and written into the heart. For it to be put in the mind simply means that it is there all the time from the first operation of the Holy Spirit until that subject of grace is called hence. This is in keeping with the apostle, to wit, “To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not”. (Rom. 7:18) I do not think too much of the thought, to wit; “I did not know any better.” I do not think too much of the assertion, to wit; “If you will show me where I have done wrong I will confess to it.” This might be, and is, true about head matters, but it is not true about heart matters. You do not need a minister to tell you whether you have done wrong or not. The laws of God, being in your mind, and on your heart, you will know when you have done wrong.

As Christ is raised up in our experience, He becomes everything to us. At the first beams of His rising, we see Him through the lattice work or through the veil, and He does not look promising to us. He is dull; He is as a Root out of dry ground. What did Isaiah mean by a “Root out of dry ground”? Surely we are not going to say that He was as a natural root out of dry soil like my garden often is in the summer. Surely there must be something more important being said to us. The question is, What is it? Well now look at the achievements of Israel; look at their

history; look at the way that they have broken every mandate of God as uttered in that law. That is dry ground indeed; that is not much to base a hope on; that is little, if any, better than what our forefathers were under. His speaking to us as the dismal curtains of the law, as to obtaining salvation for us, is pulled down; is, seemingly, far off, so much so, that we at first feel that what we have heard is nothing but a mirage to a lost wanderer in the desert. But the Sun rises still further, and with His rising the fears and the doubtful surmisings of the soul are dispersed; his ears are unclogged from the ravages of death; his eyes are slowly adjusted to the brilliant light. The Voice comes a little closer; the smoothing tenderness of its resonance floods our astonished soul as it says, "Come unto me and I will give you rest", etc. (Matt. 11:28)

Therefore, we must conclude that we are not under the law as our means of obtaining salvation. It has condemned all of the way; it condemns us in our experience every moment when under the auspices of the Holy Spirit. No one ever obtained rest by the deeds of the law. Had God left us to obtain it that way, there never would have been any rest. "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, 5) God did not give the law to have it tread under the unhallowed feet of vile sinners. He did not give it that it might become ignoble at our hands. If that is our conception of God having given the law to us, we have either forgotten from whence we have been hewn, or we have never been hewn. It has been said that God did not intend for the law to be kept. It does not seem that anyone could adopt that view. Those that would say that seem to think that they are advocates of good old sound predestination. To me there is not any soundness in it. The law of God

entered that the offence might abound. That is predestination, and it is credible and sound. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." That is predestination, and that is sound. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." That is predestination, and it is sound. Jesus Christ having stood as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and He having come to save His people from their sin, and He having been made under the law that they were under, He became their sin bearer, therefore He must die in their room and stead. That is predestination, and it is sound. But do not tell me that God did not purpose or intend that His law be fulfilled. He gave it to be fulfilled.

Jesus Christ fulfilled that law to a jot and to a tittle. It had to be that way. God has purposed the salvation of His chosen people before the world began. This purpose was purposed in Jesus Christ. He became the surety for His people. He obligated Himself to fulfill that law. He obligated Himself to live for them--to keep the law for them--and to die for them when they failed. That is the work of a surety - to pay the debt if the one to whom the law was given fails. We failed in the morning of time, and we have been a failure ever since, but Christ came in the morning, that is in the time of youth (Psa. 110:3) and the vigor of the morning is perpetually fulfilling that law in us according to His fulfilling of it for us. On tables of stone it was binding on Israel; on tables of the heart it is binding on us. Else what was the reason for instilling it in the heart and in the mind? It is binding on us, but we must remember that we are not under any law--the law of sin and death, the law of Moses, the Levitical laws of ceremonies or any other kind of law, as a means to our attaining righteousness or salvation. Christ has fulfilled all laws for us, having nailed all that was against us to His cross and took them out of the way. But they are now in our hearts and our minds as our rule of

conduct. They have been fulfilled by Christ, together with all penalties and condemnations. This removal of the children of God from under the law of sin and death was through the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One who has made us free from that law. The law could not do this; it was not its use to free us but to condemn us. But Christ coming in the flesh, and under this law of sin and death, fulfilling it for us before God, thus reconciling us to God by His death. However, being reconciled to God was not enough. He had died for us, but if death held Him, we would not have any one to live in us and for us. Death could not hold Him, and He came from the dead. This is a two fold blessing. This is one of the doubles that is graciously given to us. His coming from the dead forever signifies that He both lived and died for us. He did not need to live under the law given Adam nor the one given by Moses to enhance His own glory or well being. But we needed all of His life, and we needed it so much that His blood draining from Him to the last drop was exactly, no more, no less, what we needed to reconcile us to God. If our poor hearts are not deceived, this gives us all that Christ came to do for us. Everything that we needed to reconcile us to God was in His death; everything that we needed to justify us before God was in His living that law for us. And this is not all. God having sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. May God give us an unction from above that we might glean a little while in this fertile field that Paul has given us. Christ condemned sin in His flesh. Let us not pass that by too lightly. Let us meditate on the high favor from God to usward. We could not remove our sin from our flesh, must less could we, already in a condemned state, condemn sin in our flesh. We did not have the will nor the ability to do this. We could not make a token payment on such a gigantic undertaking. We were completely depraved,

not able to think, much less able to do, such a high ranking necessity. Jesus came and condemned sin in His flesh, that is, in His dying as a sinner would have to die. Sin is condemned before God, that is, our sinning is the cause of His death, and by this ignoble death, He has condemned sin as well as the consequences of it. But there are greater things in store for us. His having condemned sin by His death in the flesh, and us having Him as our Advocate and Intercessor; His death in the flesh was for the condemning of sin in our flesh, as well as forever removing our being condemned before God in our flesh. This condemnation of sin in His flesh presents us before God as without sin, as without ever having sinned. But it gave us more than that. The

righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, because He lives in us and it is because of this indwelling of Him that the law is thus fulfilled.

Let us remember that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us. There was no righteousness in store for us by keeping any law; rather there was always condemnation. Righteousness did not come by us keeping the law, but that does not say that the law was unrighteous. Not at all. We were the ones who were unrighteous. How could he or she that was unrighteous keep a righteous law? It is not fulfilled in us to give us life, or, if you want to talk of the law of Moses, to give us the good of the land. But it having been made honorable by Christ keeping it and magnifying it, it is now being fulfilled in us. We who went astray, (Isa. 53:6) have been redeemed, sought, and brought back, now having a more sure standing than when we fell, having been loved which, by the shedding of that love abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, causes us to love Him, which shows forth in the light of heaven that the law is being fulfilled in us; love being the fulfillment of the law.

Now please be patient with me here. Let us look at Paul in the 16th verse of this fifth chapter of Galatians. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh". If Paul had stopped there I would not be pursuing the subject any further. If Paul had not gone any further, I would be miserable indeed. It is miserable enough to be such a sinner as to be unable to walk in the Spirit, but that is not nearly as miserable as it would be if the apostle had told us to do it, and had left the impression that it would not be difficult to do so. Finding it out, as he found it out, (Rom. 7:18) and as I have been finding out for more than fifty years that I can not do as I would, it would indeed be an austere doctrine. But finding out, as Paul gives us to know in the text, that we can not do as we would, gives us hope that the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that are not utterable. He continues, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye can not do the things that ye would". I do not rejoice that my flesh lusteth against the Spirit, but I do rejoice that, since Paul tells us this, I know by experience that it is true. It has been a matter that I have wondered at much, to wit, how can a poor sinner say that he or she can do righteousness at any time? How can they? How can they say that? Poor sinner, if you have said this, how do you say it? When you malign some poor sinner that says that they are unable to do as they would, or that says that they have not found how to perform that which is good, have you considered who you are talking about? You are talking about the Apostle to us Gentiles. When one says, "You need not tell me that you can not do righteous deeds and think righteous thoughts", they are saying that the testimony of Paul does not have any weight with them. However, this may not be what they mean. If not, I wonder what they do

mean?

These two principles being in us, and being contrary to one another, is the warfare that all the children of God know so much about. Or do they? If the differences between these two principles or lives were so great in Paul's day that he and the Galatians could not do as they would, and they have been dealt with in such a way today that they are not quite so diametrically opposed, then by all means the intensity of the warfare has lessened since Paul's day. The warfare was critical in Paul's experience. His experience receives very little credence today. It is rare to hear a professed follower of Jesus Christ say, "When I would do good, evil is present with me"; to say, "The things which I would do, I do not, and that the things which I would not, that I do". One thing is certain; Paul was either buried in some kind of foreign ideology to a child of God, or we today have lost the right perspective in regard to the religion of Jesus Christ. I will have to acknowledge, both from my limited knowledge of Holy Writ, and from my daily experience, that I believe that Paul said the very thing that he experienced. The only escape from this warfare; the only oasis in the desert road; the only way that we are able to do the things of the Spirit is when we are strengthened by the self same Spirit of Christ. Then we can do the things of the Spirit; and if not thus strengthened, we cannot do them. Thus the glory belongs to either the One who strengthens or to the one strengthened. Unless the Bible is not true, and unless I do not have an experience of salvation, I know who is due it. Do you?

(Elder) W. D. Griffin

I have no more conception of a true believer without morality, than of a river without water, or of a sun without light and heat.

Toplady

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD

Omniscience — boundless knowledge. Omniscient — knowing all things. God only is omniscient, for he alone knoweth all things. All his intelligent creatures whether men or angels, are greatly limited in knowledge, being finite in all their powers. Not so with God, who is unlimited in every perfection of his, for he is the infinite one. Infiniteness cannot be measured nor bounded, and therefore God is absolutely unlimited, both in his being and in all his faculties or powers. So his knowledge is as unbounded as his eternity, and omnipresence, and omnipotence, for these, with all his other perfections, ascend upward and downward and outward forever and forever, all filling infinite eternity, having no bound or limit. And in all these majestic and awe-inspiring attributes, our blessed God and Father has always been present in all his limitless or infinite universe, and now is **AT ONCE AND EVER SEEING AND KNOWING ALL THINGS.**

This is profoundly wonderful, and it overwhelms us, beloved, because we are so infinitely less than nothing, as compared with God, and we know nothing perfectly. But the omniscient One, who fills eternal space or limitless ether, sees and knows us and all things at a glance, perfectly and exactly as we are. For although his word says that all the nations are as the small dust of the balance, which is too small for us to notice, yet they are all so clearly seen in his omniscient eye that he watches the little bird, and numbers the very hairs of our heads. No wonder that David the king would say, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it." "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count

them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee." All this is as true of every child of God, as it was of David. How blessed for us that it is true!

Yet there are those who are so wise in their own eyes that they make light of all this, and even ridicule the belief that the infinite One takes notice of all little things, because they in their self-importance would not. And so they measure God by themselves, and think themselves so wise that they can judge of what the Almighty should be and do, and set limits for him. It is a rich mercy, however, that our omniscient God does see and care for the smallest particles of dust in his boundless dominion, because unless he did, those vaunting nothings, who reply against their Maker, would be left to their own reward, that is, to perish in their littleness.

**EVIDENCE THAT GOD IS
OMNISCIENT.**

While Baptists and many others admit the omniscience of God, that he forever knew all things, still this does not prove that it is so, and we must therefore turn to the law and testimony of the Lord in proof of this, as also of every other attribute and truth of God. For, on the other hand, some Baptists and many others deny the omnipotence of God, his unlimited sovereignty, but their denial of this truth does not disprove it by any means, for if it did, then "his eternal power and Godhead" would be destroyed. The apostle Peter said to his Lord, "Thou knowest all things." James said, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." And as to the extent of his works, Solomon said, "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." David asks, "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? he that chastiseth the heathen, shall not be correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? The Lord knoweth the thoughts

of man, that they are vanity." Hannah said, "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard," sang the sweet psalmist of Israel. "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." To his disciples the Lord said, "Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; nor hid, that shall not be known." Of Christ, Paul says, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The wise man said, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Paul said of him, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

All this Scripture fully establishes the omniscience of God, and shows that all things were forever known unto him, so that his foreknowledge is perfect, unlimited or infinite. To deny this, is equal to saying that the Lord was both ignorant and changeable; for every increase in knowledge shows former ignorance, and change to more perfect knowledge. It follows also, that if God did not possess perfect knowledge from all eternity of all things that should ever be, then neither could he "work all things after the counsel of his own will," nor could Paul have truly said, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose;" for both his counsel and his purpose would be at fault concerning everything which God did not perfectly see and know from the beginning. This is a self-evident truth. The most perfect man in knowledge, is yet ignorant of many things, both present and future, and so he cannot provide for or against anything or all things unknown to him, even if he has the power to do so.

This absolute truth as certainly establishes another truth; that is,

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES ARE EQUAL.

His counsel and his purpose and his power are as unlimited as his knowledge, and all are alike infinite and changeless. To deny this, is to deny that God is, and say with the fool, "There is no God." For as truly as the omniscience of God saw and knew all things from the beginning, or ever the earth was, so surely did his wisdom and counsel and purpose also determine all things; because either himself or some one else must determine all things, before they could be foreknown as certain to come to pass. This is a self-evident fact. For not God himself could foreknow anything, great or small, and yet that thing never exist or come to pass. To say he could, would be as absurd as to say that a lie is the truth. Therefore, beloved, all must admit, either that the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God "

ESTABLISH THE CERTAINTY OF ALL THINGS,

or else they must deny the certain foreknowledge of God, and limit him in knowledge, even as they limit him in his "determinate counsel" and purpose; for it is self-evident that the divine foreknowledge of all things, makes

ALL THINGS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN

And we know, beloved brethren, that when God knew all things in the beginning, there was no other being or power besides himself that could have determined the certainty of all things, nor of anything whatever. Therefore, the God of omniscience is equally the God of omnipotence, and his foreknowledge and foreordination are co-extensive and co-equal, for they are parallel and harmonious one with the other, as also with every divine attribute. To deny this, would be to say that God is divided against himself, and that while he is unlimited and infinite in some of his perfections, he is limited and finite in others. But our infinite God declares that his ways are equal; and we know

that there is no weakness or defect or lack in him, but in all his divine nature he is a unit or one, and so he is

INFINITE PERFECTION.

O, beloved, how this divine truth fills us with supreme reverence and adoration in his holy presence; and inspires our spirit with confidence and trust in him, and the heart with the love that casteth out fear. And now, as God is omniscient, perfectly foreknowing all things in his unlimited universe, this fixes the absolute certainty of all things, and also makes it evident that God himself determined their certainty, because not anything yet existed, outside of himself, when he foreknew all things in eternity, before he had created heaven and earth, with all the fullness of them. For unless the infinite Creator of the universe had before determined in his wisdom and counsel and purpose all things, his omnipotent power could and would have prevented them, and he in his infinite wisdom would have purposed and ordered differently. Certainly he would. To say otherwise, is to charge God with folly, and such folly that even an intelligent man would not knowingly be guilty of.

The self-evident truth, therefore, beloved children of God, is this: The infinite foreknowledge and the infinite foreordination of all things,

BOTH STAND OR FALL TOGETHER.

This is inevitable, because there is not the least discrepance, conflict or opposition in the uniting and perfect attributes of him who is at once all knowledge, all wisdom and all power, and who says, "I will do all my pleasure." It certainly follows, therefore, that the infinite and blessed and holy Lord God Almighty, who "declared the end from the beginning,"

BOTH DETERMINED AND FORE-KNEW ALL THINGS.

For unless God had before determined all things, they could not possibly exist or come to pass; and unless all things

are certain to come to pass, they could not exist in the foreknowledge of God. These are undeniable facts. So then, a denial of God's determination of all things, is a virtual denial of his foreknowledge of all things, and there is no sensible escape from this fact. *Hence, Arminians, who limit the Almighty in his foreknowledge, as they do in his other attributes, are more consistent than Baptists, who limit him in his "determinate counsel" and "eternal purpose," while they admit his unlimited foreknowledge.* For the eternal and infinite Jehovah, whose presence fills all immensity and all eternity, is as almighty and unlimited in all his attributes as he is in any one of them. This is perfectly self-evident, and God has thus most infallibly and gloriously, ***REVEALED HIMSELF IN THE BIBLE.***

Therefore, beloved, a denial of any of the unlimited or infinite perfections of the everlasting God, who changes not, is a virtual or real denial of his "eternal power and Godhead," and it leads to godless infidelity. While many brethren, who limit the holy One, do not so intend, and do not see that they are replying against God, or else they would not tremble before the Majesty of heaven and beseech his forgiveness for their ignorant presumption and folly, and shrink with horror from this whirlpool of dark infidelity, which is fast swallowing up the faithless world; yet the fact is solemnly the same, that all the divine attributes are alike unlimited, and they all co-operate and join in unison as the mighty pillars of the grand and unbounded universe, which God upholds by his own power, and are

THE GLORIOUS HIGH THRONE FROM THE BEGINNING,

or else the kingdom, dominion and power of the Most High, all are denied and charged with weakness and fearful failure. We know, beloved brethren, that all the Arminian religious world, no less than open infidels, do thus charge the God of the Bible, whose attributes are all

alike unlimited, with weakness and woeful failure, with "wanting" many things done in which he is defeated. But we know that the Almighty, who "doeth his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth," has no "wants," never "tries", and knows no failure, but "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." And this because omnipotence is an limitless as omniscience. And now, beloved, well may we be glad and rejoice in the Lord that it is so. If the Lord will, the closing attributes will be the truth of God.

Sept. 1, 1902

D. Bartley

Newton, Alabama

Dear Elders,

I am sending a check for a renewal of two years and use the rest for the Indigent Fund.

I witness as Elder W. A. Williams, Moderator of the Claybank Association in south east Alabama did, the reunion of the two factions of the Claybank Association. This association convened with the New Prospect Church near Kinston, Alabama, in Coffee County, on October 21, 22, and 23, 1978. In my 79 years of life I have never witnessed such rejoicing and happiness in a "jam-packed" house. How I wish all divided associations could be blessed to lay down their grievances and reunite.

My membership is at Bethlehem Church, located 5 miles south of Dothan, Alabama, just of Road #52, and we meet each second Sunday at 11 A.M. All believers of like faith are invited to meet with us.

In bonds, I trust,
Charles T. Collins

Charleston, W. Va.

Dear Brother Spangler,

Please find enclosed a check for renewal of the *Signs of the Times* for

one year. I notice it is due again. I hope I don't miss one copy, because I do love the dear paper. I don't get to go to meeting any more due to my age and poor health. I have been reading the dear *Signs* ever since I was big enough to read. My father always got the *Signs* and I always loved it and believed the dear doctrine. I am not any good at putting on paper what I believe in and hope for. I sometimes wonder why such a worm as I and a sinful human as I could hope to be redeemed. Oh that God's holy wisdom could bless me. And yet I know that His will must be done and not my will. I cannot see very good so will close.

Hope all of you are well and I do love you.

Your sister in Christ Jesus, I hope,
Lurecy Smith McCutcheon

Weak faith says, "God can save me if He will." Strong faith says, "God both can and will save me." See Dan. 3:17.

Toplady

OBITUARIES

SISTER EULA RUSS WOOLARD

Sister Eula Russ Woolard was born in Beaufort County on June 24, 1893, and she passed away on January 5, 1979, after a critical illness of about a week.

She was the daughter of the late William Charles and Nancy Warren Russ. She was married to Jesse R. Woolard on July 19, 1911.

Sister Woolard was a member of the Singleton Primitive Baptist Church for many years, and she attended regularly as long as her health permitted. She always inquired about the welfare of the church and was faithful to send gifts to the church and her pastor when she was not able to attend. We will miss her.

Sister Woolard leaves to mourn one son, James L. Woolard, of Atlanta, Georgia; two daughters, Mrs. Allene D. Darrow, of Washington, and Mrs. Eloise W. Gibbs, of Greenville, six grandchildren; and two great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at the Paul

Funeral Home Chapel by Dr. Glenn S. Weaver, and she was laid to rest under a beautiful floral arrangement in Oak Dale Cemetery to await the King who will say, "Come ye blessed of My Father; inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Written by Violet J. O'Neal

MARY O'NEAL DILLON

Sister Mary O'Neal Dillon was born May 7, 1891, and departed this life March 12, 1979, after a lingering illness of more than two years. She was the daughter of the late John and Susan Gibbs O'Neal. She was married in 1912 to Southey Dillon, who passed away in 1936. Surviving is one son, William Dillon of Kinston; one brother, John B. O'Neal of Washington; one aunt, Martha Eborn of Hampton, Va.; two nephews and one niece.

Sister Dillon was a member of the Primitive Baptist Church for more than fifty years. She was a faithful member, attending regularly as long as health permitted.

Funeral services were held at the Paul Funeral Home Chapel by her Pastor, Elder Joe Leggett, assisted by Elder Reeves Smith. Sister Dillon was laid to rest under a beautiful floral offering in Mount Olive Cemetery in Hyde County.

Written by Violet O'Neal

SISTER ERA WADE WHITATAKER

Many friends and brethren mourn the loss of our dear Sister Era Wade Whitataker, who was called from this earth on November 19, 1978.

Sister Era was both a sister in the church and a cousin to me. She was very dear to me from the time we were children as well as after we became members of the church.

Sister Era had been in declining health for several years, and for the past two or three years she had been unable to attend church as she would have loved to. Her heart was always with her church even though she was not able to attend. She was a dutiful wife and mother as well as a good friend and neighbor.

Sister Era was born on May 18, 1916, and was married on September 28, 1935, to Zeb Whitataker. She and Brother Zeb had been

members of our church for several years and he later became our deacon, and has served his church well.

Sister Era had two children, Barbara Jean and Donald Wayne. Donald Wayne died on July 21, 1970, and was laid to rest in the church cemetery.

Sister Era leaves her husband, Zeb Whitataker, and one daughter, Barbara Jean Reaves, five grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

Elder Amos Hash and Elder William Holland conducted her funeral at Republican Church and she was laid to rest in the church cemetery. We trust our loss will be her eternal gain.

Prepared by request of her husband and family.

Sister Sally Cundiff

(Brother Zeb spent two months in the hospital with a broken hip, broken shoulder, and internal injuries. He later went back for hip surgery and at present is back home and is getting around very well with a cane. He needs the prayers of all his friends and brethren.)

ALTON F. ROWE

July 10, 1897 - March 19, 1979

Brother Rowe was born in Small, a rural community in southern Beaufort County, North Carolina, the son of Willis C. and Margie Dowty Rowe.

He joined the church at Sandy Grove and remained a member there until all the other members had either died or moved away. He wrote a letter to North Creek Church and presented it himself asking for transfer of membership. He was no stranger to our church and we felt so thankful that God had sent him to us. He was a deacon and one of the most qualified that this writer had ever known.

Brother Rowe took over as manager of the Planters Bank in Ayden during the Depression in the early thirties and remained there until he retired.

He married Rosa Sasser on February 21, 1922; she died January 3, 1964.

He is survived by two children, Mrs. Majorie R. Taylor and A. F. Rowe, Jr., four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Brother Rowe's walk in life was a manifestation of the love that he had for his

fellow man. His greatest desire was that he might walk humbly and circumspectly before his God. We the members of North Creek Church feel the loss of a devoted member, but we feel that he was prepared of the Father for this corporal death and at times had a great longing to go home to be with God.

His funeral was conducted by his beloved pastor, Elder J. T. Prescott, at an Ayden funeral home and the large floral arrangements and large attendance showed the esteem of his neighbors and friends.

Like all of us, he had his fears and doubts but felt that his hope was founded on the promises of our Lord and Savior and that he would hear that precious voice saying "Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

J. T. Prescott, Moderator
R. O. Smith, Clerk

**SISTER
FLORENCE SAUNDERS BUTLER**

It is with a sad heart that I attempt to write the resolutions of one so near and dear to me. She was born July 30, 1880 and on February 19, 1979, our Heavenly Father saw fit to call her home to that blessed Kingdom on high, making her stay on this earth 98 years, 7 months, and 11 days.

Her earthly father was William Robertson Saunders and her mother was Mary Virginia Dix Saunders. She was married in 1903 to J. L. Butler and to this union four children were born, Lawrence and William, deceased, and Ethel and Herbert of Reidsville, N.C.

Sister Butler joined Lick Fork Church in June, 1905, and remained a faithful member for nearly 74 years. As long as she was able she attended church and was a faithful servant. She loved Lick Fork and supported it in any way she could. Through all her suffering she always had a smile and a kind word for everyone. She loved for her pastor, brethren, and friends to visit with her and delighted in talking about the Lord. Her face was always beaming like a drop of morning dew that sparkles on a rose when the sun comes shining through.

We at Lick Fork will miss her so much. Sister Butler's walk on this earth was witness that she had a wonderful hope. Her suffering was long but her faith remained strong.

Our prayer is God's richest blessing upon her dear daughters who stood by her so faithfully until the end and feels her departure so keenly.

This was written by the order of Lick Fork Church. May it be resolved that this be recorded on the church records, a copy sent to the *Signs of the Times* and a copy sent to the family.

Submitted in love,
Willie W. Lee
Elder Wallis Smith, Moderator

BROTHER MORRIS K. AGEE

This is written in memory of Brother Morris K. Agee, one who we loved and were drawn very close to over the years.

Brother Morris was born January 20, 1911 and passed from this life on January 18, 1978. I do not feel uneasy about his resting place. We feel that our loss is his eternal gain.

Brother Morris was afflicted for about 4 years, but he bore his afflictions patiently. He would always say that what God does is right and he hoped he could be made willing to His will.

He was the son of Thomas and Lillie Agee, and he was married to Velvie Lenora Sowers by Elder B. O. Thompson the 25th day of February, 1956. He leaves to mourn his lovely widow, and one daughter, Karen Edmonds, a foster daughter, Judy Wood; also one brother, Alvin Agee; a sister, Emma Casta.

I was present when he asked for a home among Old Baptist at Lural Creek Church the fifth Sunday in July, 1956. He asked for his membership to be placed at Mountain View Church. He was baptized by Elder Otey Conner. He was a faithful member and went many times when seemingly he was not able to go. He loved to hear God's Name praised above every name and man abased as nothing. He often said he was nothing. The writer and all of those that loved him will never forget him, but may we be blessed to say as one of old has said, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, Blessed be the name of the Lord."

His funeral was conducted by Elder Roy Agee, Elder Hale Terry, Elder Larry Hollandsworth. His body was laid to rest at Wilson's Cemetery, Floyd County, Virginia, to await the second coming of the Lord when He will call them to take them to be with Him in that world that shall never end.

Written by Elder Roy Agee

JOHN HERBERT LOVELACE

Brother John Lovelace born December 15, 1898 departed this world of sorrow March 30, 1979.

He was the son of the late Carolina Burton and John P. Lovelace. Brother Lovelace leaves behind his lovely wife of 50 years, Sister Emma Lovelace and one son Herbert Lovelace.

Brother Lovelace was a humble, meek, and kind man with a strong Hope in his Blessed Savior. He was a firm believer in the doctrine of salvation by the Grace of God and was ever ready to give a reason for his hope. To know him was to love him and a comforting person to be around and talk to.

We here at Pleasant Grove will miss him greatly, but our prayer is to be reconciled to God's will and we feel that our loss is his eternal gain. May the love of God be with his lovely wife that she may say not my will but Thine be done.

His funeral was conducted at Pleasant Grove Church by his pastor Elder Donald Smith and Elder Wallis Smith. His body was laid to rest at Reidlawn Cemetery to return to dust from which it came, we believed his soul return to God who gave it.

Submitted in love by
George Tatum
Elder Donald Smith, Moderator
Brother Robert Walker, Clerk

SISTER VIRGINIA (JENNY) TILLET
BEASLEY

As appointed from before the foundation of the world by Almighty God the Creator of both heaven and earth and the fulness thereof, this great God of all grace, infinite wisdom, and mercy, removed from this earthly veil of tears Sister Jenny Beasley (as she was known and called by her friends and neighbors) January 22, 1979. She was born March 9, 1890 to Benjamin D. and Almira B. Tillet, making her sojourn here some 88 years and 10 months.

On July 12, 1905, she was married to the late Samuel B. Beasley. To this union was born 3 boys, Lorenzo Weldon, Elbert Vonzell, and Marshall Jennings; these first two having preceeded her in death; 2 girls, Oriental Dell Henly, and Sister Virginia Dare Dowdy. All living are within a short distance of where Sister Jenny lived in Kitty Hawk, N.C.

I, the writer of this, having lived near Sister Jenny for some 7 or 8 years prior to her

death, spent many pleasant hours visiting in her place of abode, talking with her concerning our sweet hope and our Lord and God. Those are precious moments for my memory still at times.

In September, 1918, at the age of 28, she was received into the fellowship of the Providence Primitive Baptist Church in Kitty Hawk, N.C., and remained a loving and faithful member unto her departing from this earthly life. Her earthly remains was laid to rest in the Austin Cemetery here in Kitty Hawk in the presence of a host of her friends and neighbors. Her pastor, Elder Henry Jones, officiated at her funeral.

To her children who are left here, and to all others of us who loved her; in as much as be in accord with the will of God, may you and all be reconciled to His holy will and pleasure, to take her out of this world of sin. May we from time to time be brought to the memory of these things; "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints", and that "our loss is her eternal gain". May those words be of some comfort to you, her children, from time to time.

Written by her little brother in Christ, I hope,
Troy G. Shepard

A note to the Editors of the *Signs*

Dear Brethren;

To know this Sister and (I feel) Mother in Israel, was to love her. Not that I have any desire whatsoever to praise the flesh or mankind of himself, for therein lieth no thing deserving of praise. But on some few occasions while in the presence of Sister Jenny Beasley, I felt to see the very beauty of the workings of the precious Lord in her. She was one of the most unselfish people I have ever had the privilege to meet. Naturally speaking, her dealings with her fellowman manifested clear evidence that she truly believed and practiced that saying -- "It is better to give than to receive". She seemed to find pure joy in so doing. Now as for her love for the church and "Christ its Head" of that I am left with no doubt. Why she ever manifested and expressed a love for this poor unworthy feeling one, I sometimes feared I had deceived her into such feelings toward me. But if not deceived in my own heart, I loved her for Christ's sake. As is my hope, that this love I feel toward all the children of God everywhere is "for Christ's sake".

Troy G. Shepard
S. R. 28
Kitty Hawk, N.C. 27949

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IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 11/79
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

When days are dark and things go wrong
Say a prayer and sing a song.
You may be sad as you go along
When things are darkest you're not alone.

Listen quietly and He will say,
"I am beside you and I will stay.
I'll comfort and guide you all the way.
I'll not leave or go away."

"In times of sorrow I'll be near,
With words of comfort no one can hear.
When you stumble I'll hear you call.
I'll be with you when you fall."

"I'll give you courage to try again,
As you know we all can't win.
When the time comes, we know not when;
I'll be with you even then."

S.W.C.

(Written after the death of a grandson)

Roanoke, Virginia

Dear Ones in the Lord,

Enclosed is a precious letter I received from a brother in response to the letter I tried to write on the word "Sanctuary". I found it to be a precious gift of wisdom and comfort and I hope it can be to others, also.

I promptly wrote back to the brother and expressed how very pleased I was with his views and hoped he would give me his permission to have it published.

I have had no further answer. Perhaps you might wish to contact him, or it may be I will get an answer one of these days with the permission to publish it.

Humbly,
Sister Mamie Rose Ferguson

Shokan, N.Y.

Dear Sister in Christ,

I am a stranger in the flesh to you and I too have pondered much; thought about blessed words, even the "shalls" and the "wills" of Almighty God, with the little "if's" and "ands".

There is nothing to do but wait upon the Lord for all we receive from the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of Truth, even as you said.

You asked that some one might be given to write sweet comfort on the word "Sanctuary". And you say isn't it true that the gospel, as God gives it to us, is the Sanctuary? It is and has all stirred something within me to consider. The gospel truly is the right place, and the only place, to know what the "Sanctuary" is and all about it. Let me see if I have been given anything as I look into the blessed Word and find, not only for you, but for myself also (a poor needy soul ever) that through Christ Jesus, who said He would send a Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost (Spirit), "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". (John 14:26) John 15:26 says, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth...."

Now to the "Sanctuary" again; the word generally is a place set apart for the worship of God; the most high place, also a place of refuge and protection. It is the place of the Holy of Holies.

Let us look at Leviticus 12:4, and it reads, "And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and

thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled." In this is the type of the Church. She shall not come into the sanctuary until she is purified. For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for her. Remember how the Old Testament has Christ concealed in it, and the New Testament has Christ revealed in it. This is the shadow of good things to come. Purification and Christ is your atonement for sin, and mine, also, and those of like precious faith. These offerings all had to be burned or cleansed in the fire (the dross to remove). The Word in Numbers 3:38 speaks of Aaron and his sons keeping charge of the Sanctuary. Leviticus 19:30 also states, "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord."

Now in First Chronicles 22:19 David says, "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God,....". Now read King David's prayer in I Chronicles 29, beginning with the 10th Verse. In Verse 13 he says, "Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name"; and then Verse 14, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee". This is true humbleness, as is pleasing to God from you, from me, from us all who are His "my people". "For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding". (Verse 15) All this "cometh of thine hand" (Verse 16); "Prepare their heart unto thee" (Verse 18); a most beautiful prayer is this last chapter of First Chronicles.

Many places, dear Sister in Christ, we read of the sanctuary being built in the midst of the Tabernacle, the holy of holies of which Aaron went once a year on the day of atonement. Only the

priesthood could enter and it was called the holy place.

Going to Hebrews in the New Testament we can read in Chapter 8, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." At the third verse it reads of the offering and gifts and sacrifices under the Law and the fifth verse says, "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things....", and verse 6 "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry..... established upon better promises"; and 10th verse, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Then you, dear Sister, read the ninth chapter and find how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself, without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Continue to read Hebrews even to the end, and we find the law having a shadow of good things to come. "But this man, (Christ Jesus) after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb. 10:12) "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified". (Heb. 10:14) This chapter goes on to say in Verse 17, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more". Sister, it looks like there is a place in the sanctuary for you, for me, even, and for us all that have been born again and called. Just think of it! It brings only fear and trembling in this poor heart of mine. It speaks of boldness, but I only keep on saying, "O Lord, where do I stand before Thee." Verse 20 says, "By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his

flesh". He suffered, was cursed, scourged, spit upon, all for such as us. So then in Verse 22, "Let us" (think of this) "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water"; the pure water of the word! It says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together"--how can I, alone, assemble and exhort one another? The meeting house would be verily empty would I not enter in. There is no minister here to hear, but God can preach to "an invisible church" and has many times.

Have you ever considered this thought as it is written in Eph. 1:4, "Chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love"? "In whom we have redemption"; and "You hath he quickened"; "For by grace are ye saved through faith"; yes, even the faith of a grain of mustard seed. And again, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works". And again, "In whom ye also are builded together". "For in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord". Yes, through the Spirit (Comforter) submitting (humbling) yourselves one to another (to Christ) in the fear of God. Do you see that? "One to another". The submitting is obedience; not that you or I or any can do something.

It is like also as dear Brother Spangler says in his sermon - We see thru a glass darkly. God's glory is so intense, so strong, so great that as Moses had to cover his face with a veil, so that is the way we see - "thru a glass darkly". But a most blessed hope. Christ is our Hope; as Philpot says - made tender in His fear, and His love endureth forever.

Edward K. Adsit

(To consider the Sanctuary one must consider or be concerned as how to arrive there or receive sanctification, which is an act of God (Holy Spirit) or even the Trinity for all are apart, to be

made holy. An act of consecration in which one is set apart for the sacred purpose of consecration. To be sanctified is to sanctify a person or persons, is then first to be made holy, to separate, to set aside, to make holy or sacred, to appoint to a holy place or position, to be prepared for divine service, to purify from sin detaching the affections from the world; in order to enter the "Sanctuary".

(From dictionary)

E.K.A.

COMMENT ON 10TH CHAPTER OF JOHN

What manner of darkness do people live in to misinterpret the tenth chapter of John. One passage may be misconstrued and then the whole message of God's election and calling of His people is scrapped because of the ninth verse:

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture".

One famous Bible handbook (Haley's, page 543) comments on the entirety of verses 1-21 this way: "Jesus declares Himself to be the Shepherd of mankind, that is, of as many of mankind as will accept Him as their Shepherd."

Even so, let us look at the passage that is so misunderstood. First, Jesus compares Himself to the door-the passageway to eternal life. Who has control over the opening and closing of this portal to heaven? Jesus declares, "By me, if any man enter....". Thus, not by the wishes of men is this door opened, but by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Moreover, those that enter by Him, "Shall be saved". No other one will be saved for "the sheep hear his voice and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out". (Verse 3) His sheep will not follow a stranger's voice (Verse 5), while those that believed not on Jesus were so "because ye are not of my sheep". (Verse 26) So only the chosen flock of God will be saved, and blessed.

They roam in His pastures of love and grace, and after a bodily death they reach an everlasting pasture and eternal home.

With the firm belief that God has called every member of His flock, comfort is found for us in this chapter. "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring..." (Verse 16) Paul consented to the persecution of those who believed on Jesus. We may consider him at that time not of the earthly fold. Yet he was one of God's sheep, and he was called by name, and his carnal heart was made unto one of Jesus' own. If it would have been up to Paul, I don't believe there would have ever been such a change. As in my own life, I've come to believe what I do, not by my own human reasoning, but our precious doctrine has been laid in my heart by a force more powerful than I. Paul heard the voice and followed, for his name was called, not by chance, but by God's eternal plan for His people.

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (Verse 28, 29)

What about Judas Iscariot? Was not he plucked from the hand of Jesus? Was he a disciple gone bad through the Devil? On the contrary, the act of betrayal was prophesied in the 41st Psalm well in advance of the event. Jesus also predicts the event in the 13th chapter of John. We can say Judas was never of the flock, but was fulfilling prophesy in his role. And what about the rest of us? If we be so blessed to be one of God's called, the promise has been made - we shall never be removed from God's grace or guiding light. I would pray for such but often feel unworthy of even that.

In love of the truth and of the brethren,
Thomas P. Houser III

June 3, 1979

Dear Elder Spangler,

I have been trying to write to you ever since the *Signs* came three days ago, but haven't been able to get started. I read the paper through that afternoon, as the weather has been so gloomy for some time. I rarely write in the day time as I like to be out in the sun.

As I send the *Signs* to a sister, I am sending \$10.00 to have this issue sent to me. I am sure the *Signs* carries extra issues each month. since they have had such a large distribution. I especially enjoyed this month's issue, and I thought your Editorial was the best I have ever read. One reason is that several years I had been to a three day's meeting and they sang the hymn, "Glorious things of Thee are spoken". I started humming it and all the next morning I could not think of a single word of it. Just as I got to the door of the building the words came into my mind. I went immediately and found it. That is a beautiful hymn and the word "glory" and its derivatives have meant so much to me, and especially after the Lord gave you such a blessing to write the edifying article. You stated that you hope to write other articles on His glory, and you should be able to have it published together with this one in the June issue. You can make it as large as you desire, as there is no ending to it.

Elder Bellow's article in "Voices of the Past" is good. He was a good writer and a good preacher as well. I met him on one of my trips to Brother Rustons'. Also in this issue Sister Ferguson was blessed to find references to the "Sanctuary" that she inquired about. All the *Signs* was extra good.

None of the writers was equal to David in his praise in blessing the Lord. He used glory about a dozen times in the Psalms. I hadn't seen the beauty in Proverbs 8:22-31, but Solomon was no such a man as David, but he was one of the strongest. He asked for wisdom but the Lord gave him everything which

was a snare unto him. He died in almost disgrace, and there is no record of him ever repenting. Someone said that David was such a wicked person. That is given to show if the Lord is for you nothing can destroy you.

I am anxious to see your next writings or even a book.

In love and fellowship,
Harry T. Vories

NUMBERS 32:32

"And be sure your sin will find you out."

These are very solemn and awful words. The circumstances attending their utterance by Moses were these; Israel had now finished their journey in the wilderness. They were about to enter into their inheritance in the promised land, but the land was full of enemies who must be conquered and driven out before them. A sore warfare awaited them. Now, as they stand upon the borders of the promised land, soon to cross over Jordan, the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, seeing that the land upon this side of Jordan was good for pasturage for their flocks and herds, came to Moses asking that they might have their inheritance here, and not on the other side of the river. Moses replied, "Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here". This land was already conquered, and conquered by the arms of all the tribes. Should they now sit down here, and leave the rest of their brethren to still fight for the possession which should be theirs on the other side of the river? He also reminds them that to do so would be to discourage those who should go over to the conflict. He reminds them that thus did their fathers when from Kadesh Barnea he sent them to see the land. They brought back such a report as discouraged the people, and the anger of the Lord was therefore kindled against them, and he swore that none of those who came out of Egypt should ever enter

the land, who were from twenty years old and upward. He goes on to recount that the Lord made them wander forty years in the wilderness. And now, he says, "Ye are risen up in your father's stead, an increase of sinful men to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord toward Israel; for, if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people". Then they came to him, and promised they would go over with the rest and help them until their enemies were conquered, and then they would return and dwell in this place. Moses gave them this permission, but said they if they did not fulfill this promise, they should have sinned against God, "and be sure your sin will find you out". This is the narrative in brief of the event which gave rise to these words.

The truth taught here is in no wise different from that which is taught all through the Scriptures. In Genesis 4 the Lord said to Cain, "If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." That is, your sin is ever ready to meet you. It shall, like a wild beast, leap upon you at any time. It is the same truth that Paul taught in the following words, "What a man sows, that shall he reap. If ye sow to the flesh, ye shall of the flesh reap corruption". The sin of the brethren of Joseph met them when they were face to face with him in their distress in Egypt. Judah said, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants". There is no truth more clear than this. In some way, sin always finds out the sinner, and he reaps his reward. There are some things in the text, and in its connection to which we wish to call attention.

First. Moses said that in doing as he had said, that is, in neglecting to aid their brethren, they should sin against God. It was not in the judgment of Moses, against their brethren that they should sin, but against God. All sin is against God. Thus David felt, when he had been brought to a conviction of his

sin, in the case of Uriah and Bathsheba. In response to the searching words of the prophet of the Lord, "Thou art the man", he said, "I have sinned". And in that wonderful confession in the fifty-first Psalm he said, "Against thee, and thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight". He did not, under the sense of the enormity of his guilt, say, "I have sinned against Uriah and Bathsheba, or against my fellow-man, in any way, but against thee." The anguish of his soul was deeper in this view of the matter by far, than it could have been had he thought only of the harm done to his faithful captain and his wife. The vice in which he had engaged, and the crime of which he was guilty, was all swallowed up by the force of the far greater thing; sin against God. So Moses, in the text, and in the connection, does not lay stress upon the wrong which their brethren might suffer at their hands, but solely upon the sin against God. The wrong which we do to our fellow-man may be made good again, but we cannot make our sin good. Thanks be to God, there is one who has paid even that debt, the sin against God. But there are some reflections concerning this, which we wish to present. The whole testimony of the Scripture, and of our own experience, is to this effect; the one who suffers the wrong is not to be pitied so much as the one who willfully does the wrong. Sin is a far more fearful thing than any other thing can be. He that observes lying vanities forsakes his own mercies. The man who does his brother wrong, injures himself still more. Thus the Saviour said, that it were better that one should be drowned in the midst of the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones which believed in him. His care was not so much for the little ones who believed in him, and who suffered the wrong, as for that disciple, who might be led under the dictates of the flesh, to do his brother wrong. Such an one should find that it is indeed a fearful thing to fall into the

hands of the living God. Thus David felt when he made his confession. We may be sure that the wrong against his faithful captain seemed none the less, because the sin against God seemed so great. He who fears to sin against God, will fear to wrong his fellow-man. It is impossible that he should do the one without the other. The wrong against our fellow-man may endure but for a moment, but who shall limit the duration of the sin against God? The one may be measured by a little time, or by the bounds of its results against the man who is injured, or we may make reparation, but who shall atone for his sin against God. As love to God must always be accompanied by love to our fellow-man so an abhorrence of sin will be accompanied by an abhorrence of wrong against our fellow-men. The one is not and cannot be without the other. There is also another side to this matter, which is most important. He who suffers the wrong, will be helped by remembering this fact that all sin is against God. It will serve to make him patient and submissive, and prevent him from revenging himself, since the wrong-doer must appear before the Judge of all, against whom he has sinned. The heavenly Father may, and will, make up to him who has suffered the wrong, in other ways, more than he has lost, yea, he may make the very wrong itself the medium of still greater blessings. Out of it he may cause to grow, more patience, and trust, and faith, and more of the spirit of forgiveness, but for him who has done the wrong, and so sinned against God, there remains the rod of his displeasure. There also is this in it, viz: the wrong rebounds to the hurt of his own soul. He reaps the very thing he has sown. He has sown the wind, and he shall reap the whirlwind. A child in a family, stronger than his brother, may rob him of some gift which his father has bestowed upon him, but the child must not seek revenge; he must not take the case into his own hand. the father

will settle all that. He who has robbed his brother, has sinned against the common father. He must settle the whole matter. He can make up to the weaker brother more than he has lost, but who shall make up to the wrong-doer the smiles of his father, which he has for a time lost? No! If we, when we feel we are wronged by another, could but remember that God sees it all, and that he will visit the transgression with the rod, while he will bind up the heart that is broken, should we not feel very different from what we sometimes do? Where, in view of these things, would be room for any spirit of revenge, or malice, or resentment? Would not all this be swallowed up by the greatness of our pity for the one who has done the wrong, seeing that he has fallen into the hands of the living God, on account of his sin?

Thus Moses would put the matter upon the high ground of sin against God. If this reflection will not avail to prevent a man from doing the wrong, surely nothing else will. In this view of the matter, both he who has done the wrong, and he who has suffered the wrong, must fall at the feet of the Lord of all, and leave themselves with him. How quickly would strife cease between brethren everywhere, could this be remembered. Thus Jesus, our Lord and life, and example, committed himself to him who judgeth righteously. And he was heard in that he feared. The whole spirit of what we have been trying to say is summed up in the prayer, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do". Also in the prayer of the first martyr, Stephen, "Lord Jesus lay not this sin to their charge".

A second thing which seems to us to be taught in the text is this: no man can live to himself. The people of God cannot withdraw themselves to themselves, and think alone of their own interests, without committing sin against God. The tribes of Israel were taught that they must stand together in mutual love, and helpfulness. They were one people.

It is true today, that if one member suffer, all suffer in their measure, with that member. So if one member be wrapped up in himself, and so that he has ease and prosperity, it matters little about how others fare, the harm will not only fall upon him, but upon all the body. Because of the false report of a few, who brought back discouraging news of the land to which the tribes were journeying, all Israel suffered in the wilderness. And so here Moses tells them that if they do not go over to the battle with the rest, they all will be discouraged, and the anger of God will fall upon them. How close is the union which our God has established among his people. It is compared to the union between the members of the body. The church at Laodicea was in this condition. She said that she was rich, and increased in goods, and had need of nothing, and as she needed nothing, it is evident that she also cared little for the love and fellowship and help of her kindred in Christ; and that help which she needed not, in her estimation, she would not bestow upon her brethren in their need. And the Lord said that he would spue them out of his mouth. This is as true today as it has ever been. It is a sin against God, when we do not feel a readiness to bear each other's burdens. To bear each other's burdens, is to fulfill the law of Christ. This law is love, and love is the fulfilling of the law. If we do not as churches, and as individuals, find our hearts going out to our brethren in their need; if when we are well supplied for instance with the word of the gospel, we do not think of those who are destitute of such privileges, and stand ready to minister help to them, we are guilty of sin against God. Love for God, and for each other will solve all this, and solve it upon the right side. If we love enough, the rest will follow. It would be no task for these two tribes to go over and help the rest in their warfare, if they loved God and the rest of the tribes, as well as they did themselves.

Moses accompanies the word of commandment, with a word of warning. If they should not do this, then they might be sure that their sin should find them out. Its results should be sure. All sin reacts upon the guilty one. We cannot hide from the consequences of our sins. That which is evil, indulged in and followed, will be found to eat into one's own soul, as does a canker. It will abide there, and lead to still more ungodliness. We may forget the sin, but it has not forgotten us, and will lie in wait for us, and meet us at our own door. We have often thought of the peculiarity of the language of the apostle: What a man sows, that very thing he shall reap. He may reap sorrow for his sins. It is sure to be so, and it is well when it is so, but he shall reap more than this, he shall reap just what he has sown. From sowing the wind, he shall reap a mightier wind; the reaping shall be the whirlwind. The evil that we do fastens itself upon our own hearts. The little foxes that seem so small, soon grow to be large foxes. If we are careless toward our brethren, in their need in any way, we shall grow poor in soul. Our sin will find us out, in poverty, and leanness and barrenness. Who has not found it so in his own experience? Ungodliness leads to more ungodliness. One begins to neglect his privileges in the house of God. How rapidly this grows, and how many companion evils come into that soul, and abide there. The sin has found them out. This comes in the way of that discipline which the Lord holds in his own hand, and which he visits upon the disobedient. This is the rod, and these are the stripes, with which he visits them. It is their sin finding them out. Such discipline is good for the disobedient child, but he has this also for his strength, that he be not overborne with sorrow. His redemption is secure. Though he has the rod, yet it is the rod of love. The blood of Jesus Christ has put away all sin: therefore his loving-kindness he will not take away from him, nor

from any in him. Their sin shall indeed find them out, but so shall redemption find them out, yea, it has already found them out, and none can perish who are embraced in this everlasting covenant. We will leave the subject. The field is very broad; we have but glanced at it.

(Elder) F. A. Chick

May 15, 1898

MY WAIT UPON THE LORD

Many years have passed - and yet they seem few - since I first began to wonder about an Omnipotent God. I attended the Primitive Baptist Church throughout my childhood, and as a teenager with my parents. Suddenly, I found myself continuing the practice as a young adult in a strange town. Was I finding my way to this denomination through habit or respect or through interest? Why didn't other churches, their large crowds and various functions, attract me? I soon rationalized that my feet were leading me to the Primitive Baptist by deception.

I inquired and learned that choir practice, sponsored by a nearby church, met on Wednesday nights in private homes. I attended several of these and was made most welcome. I was then invited to sing in the choir the following Sunday. I accepted their invitation and considered it an honor. On Sunday, I stood before a strange congregation, with a robe on, uttering words that made me weak with shame. I simply couldn't believe such a dishonor to God - and I in the middle of it all. This one frightful attempt at performing with the world proved to me that I couldn't reappear in the role. I never returned.!

My greatest concern then seemed to be just to be given a small token of evidence from time to time that I was a believer. Yet, each such token would only cause me to crave for something more concrete. For many nights and years, I would attempt to beg God for mercy and kindness toward me. I tried to be recon-

ciled to the idea that I would never be shown the way, or be able to belong to His church. I only wanted a few crumbs to comfort me.

Throughout these twenty years I would slip into church two or three times a month, but always when our home church met on first Sundays. Just to be allowed to attend church - the Primitive Baptist - was a great privilege (and still is!) My active thoughts concerning becoming a member had almost been banished. The realization of my obvious short comings had convinced me of my unworthiness to be numbered among those precious brethren.

By this time in life I was married to a most understanding husband and had been given three wonderful children. The urge to belong to the church had become more pressing each time I attended. I could not allow myself to attend Saturday night services or to attend baptisms. My burning desire to ask for a home was as an impenetrable cloud; yet, I could not utter a sound to anyone.

One rainy Sunday I suddenly decided to go to church alone. Usually, I'd contact my Mother, but not this day. I crept in, sat near the back of the church, and left immediately after services. Elder O. K. Tench, Pastor of the church, followed me to the car and requested that I bring my clothes to the baptizing the following Sunday. The tears rolled down my cheeks; I can't recall giving him any reply. I thought I'd been concealing my feelings so well.

Tuesday night I wrote him that I would be there if God would permit. My doubts were great, and only on Thursday could I mail the letter. How could I deceive the very people I esteemed so highly? Friday afternoon I visited Elder D. V. Spangler to inform him of my intentions and request his presence. Through the years, I had dreamed of offering to the church in his presence as he had served Malmaison, our home church, much of my life. Elder

Spangler had previously arranged for someone to fill his appointment and attend the baptizing.

My heart rejoiced. I could not believe the way had been made straight just for me. All those years the obstacles had been insurmountable; useless utterings to an Omnipotent God had seemingly bounced back. The door was now open, and my soul rejoiced and praised the Lord. Yet, I knew the burden was heavy, and wondered if survival would be possible if the church saw me as I really was.

The day came - a bright, "unclouded" day, in June, 1963. The members graciously heard my feeble attempts to explain my wishes and doubts and received me. I was baptized.

Recently I have been made more aware than usual of God's goodness and mercy toward my family. Without His blessings and the fellowship and friendship of His people, all our days would be as nothing.

I sincerely hope I have written this in humbleness and in love and as an unworthy member of God's Church on earth.

Submitted in love,
Naomi W. Houser

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forward to reading the wonderful experience and walk of life of our dear ones in Christ. We hope to be one that the dear Lord will have mercy on and remember.

May God bless and keep you all in His loving care.

Yours in hope,
Junius Allison

Mt. Brydges, Ontario

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

Pursuant to the request of Rocky Mount Primitive Baptist Church, Franklin County, Va., in conference April 21, 1979, a presbytery met July 21, 1979, for the examination of Brother Junior Dent, if found qualified in accordance with the written word of God, at the satisfaction and discretion of their judgment, ordain the above named to the full work of deacon.

Prayer was offered by Elder P. E. Ingram, and Elder C. E. Turner was chosen as Moderator, with Brother James Holley as clerk. Brother Ira Powell was spokesman for the church. The questioning of the candidate was lead by Elder William Holland and Elder Rufus Brown assisted him. Questions from Bible reference in I Timothy, Chapter 3, verse 8-13 were asked and satisfactory answers were given. All Elders present participated in the laying on of hands and the ordination prayer was by Elder P. E. Ingram, and Elder Lane Carter gave the charge.

Brother Dent was returned to the church as an ordained deacon of Rocky Mount Primitive Baptist Church. The Presbytery was dismissed by Elder Rufus Brown.

In addition to the above named Elders, the deacons present were Brothers M. Davidson, C. Haygood, A. Hudson, C. Johnson, T. Lovell, P. Poindexter, J. Tynee, and T. Young.

Elder C. E. Turner, Moderator
Deacon James Holley, Clerk

Burlington, N.C.

Dear Brother Smith,

Enclosed is a check to renew the *Signs of the Times* for another year. We enjoy it in our home and look

Dear Elder Wood,

I have enjoyed reading the *Signs of the Times* for a number of years. The letters bring a warmth to my breast not found elsewhere. But due to an oversight on my part for some time, I find myself considerably in arrears in paying for my subscription, as I find it ran out in November.

You will find enclosed a Royal Bank Money Order to pay for my 1979 subscription. Sorry to be so late with it.

I so enjoyed reading "Bank of Faith" published last year. I often felt akin to the writer for so many times past I have felt the Lord provided for me and my family in many times of special need, not only in a material way, but in a spiritual way as well.

Congratulations to the editors for their good work, and for publishing the writings of the brethren of 100 years ago. It does one's heart good to read of how they wrote 100 years ago and to realize the present Elders write and speak the same--the Word of God taken from the Bible--without embellishments.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Lilliam McColl

Macclenny, Florida

Dear Editors, and dear people in Christ,

For some reason best known unto God, I must submit a few lines. I pray the good Lord will bless this unworthy one to do so. I beg God to enable me to write pleasingly of Him and the ones whom I hope God gave me to love for

Christ's sake - "The children of God". They must be the children of God for there is that love that runs like a lovely and beautiful brook - sweet and peaceful. This love can never be told or expressed in words.

I remember how happy I was after being accepted into the fellowship of my church. I love all the brethren in Christ. May the God of all grace bless every one and all the gifted writers.

Enclosed is \$20.00 to renew my subscription to the *Signs* for two more years and use the balance to help distribute this worthy publication.

With much love, a sister in hope
of eternal life,
Mrs. Letcher Smith

Memphis, Tenn.

Dear Elder Smith,

You will find enclosed a check for a two year subscription to the *Signs of the Times*. Use the balance as you see fit.

Brother Smith, I hope you editors will keep the *Signs* in the Truth. I have been a subscriber for many years. I can't remember ever believing any thing else than what I hope to be the Truth today, as it is in Christ Jesus. For we know that there is "none other name given whereby we must be saved". There is salvation in none other. So may the Lord bless us all is my prayer.

Love to all,
(Elder) H. R. Prince

Hermitage, AR.

Dear Editors:

Please renew my subscription for two years and you may use the balance as you see fit.

I enjoy the paper very much. Although I am not a member of the Primitive Baptist, if not deceived, I believe the doctrine they advocate. My desire is to be associated with them.

J. O. Harrod

OUR THANKS TO ELDER JOHN WOOD

Be it known that we, the Pigg River Association express our sincere thanks and appreciation to Elder John Wood for his years of devotion and service to us while serving as clerk of our association. He has served us faithfully and well for forty (40) years. We do hope that he and Sister Wood will be blessed with health to attend our association in the future years. May our Heavenly Father continue to uphold you both with the power of His love and mercy.

Jamie E. Cooper

Chattaroy, Washington

Dear Editors,

I am sorry I have overlooked the *Signs of the Times* subscription and it is now a month late. I am sending it now. I have taken it for many years and I don't want to stop now. I am 86 years old and my father took it as long as I can remember, so it has been in our home a long time. I do enjoy the many good letters in it. Some of them are so much like my own experience.

May God bless you all to keep up the good work.

Sister in Hope,
Mrs. Blanche Brown

I can compare some ranting Arminian preachers, who represent salvation as a matter of choice, and press men to help forward their own conversion, upon pain of damnation, to none so well as to auctioneers; who, with the hammer in their hands, are always bawling out, "Now is your time; now is your time: a-going, a-going, a-going".

Such a method is equally inconsistent with the analogy of faith, and subversive of the majesty of the gospel. Shall I order a dead soul to awake, and raise itself to life? Let me rather address the living God, and say, "Awake, and put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord! Breathe on these slain, that they may live!"

Toplady

EDITORIAL

GALATIANS 5:17, 26

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of which before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. In all the literature that the world has produced there is not a fuller nor more comprehensive treatise ever written on the works of the fleshly nature of men and women given than this. We may take texts apart, and we may be blessed to put them together, but no sacred writer has ever been inspired more than this apostle. These are works of the flesh. They are not the fruit of the flesh; they are not by-products of the flesh. They are the things that are being done by the flesh in men. Let us make it clear that this flesh is the carnal mind of man (Gr. fleshly). There is not a thing good about it. It can not do a good deed nor think a good thought. This carnal mind is an evil tree. In this carnality Paul did not have a good thing about him. He did not say that there was not anything good in him. I think that we are mistaken when we make so bold a statement as to say that there is not a good thing about us. It is a good thing when the heart is established in grace, and Paul said, I am what I am by the grace of God, therefore he was not saying that there was not anything good in him or about him. But he did say that, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing (Rom. 7:18). As at other times, it seemed that he was about to leave the wrong impression (Gal. 2:20; I Cor. 15:10), and lest he do that, he said it in the right way. Therefore, it seems to me, using the ministry of Paul as our guide, that we should not say that there is not

anything good in us. The tree being evil, it can not bring forth a good thing or fruit. The Saviour said that. He spoke the truth, yea, He was truth. It still is the truth today, that a good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, and an evil tree can not bring forth good fruit. These are self evident facts, and it seems so strange to hear intellects say that an evil tree can will to do good. For an evil tree to bring forth good fruit, it must be made into a good tree. This is a strange matter with most of today's theologians. They are mistaken in thinking that the old or evil tree is renovated or made over. There is not a thing done for the evil nature of that tree except that it is brought into subjection to a new tree. The man or tree that was evil is born again, even from above. The old nature or tree is not removed, only subjugated and brought under control. This tree being born again, not of a corruptible nature or seed, but of an incorruptible, is a good tree.

These works of the flesh emanates from the flesh; they are the flesh at work; they are the works that the flesh is always doing. These works are not found out by noble birth; they are not taught in the schools of men; they can not be learned at mother's knee; they can not be ascertained by the flesh searching them out. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it (Jer. 17:9)? None can know it save He that knows all things. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5). What a sentence is this, and yet, as I sit here and ponder the religious situation in the world, I am somewhat taken back to find that most of the religious forces in the universe believe that this carnal and fleshly nature can turn and rise above its level and get itself into favor with God and do good things. These works of the flesh none but God can understand how untamed they are, and how far afield it will go to

indulge its sensual appetites to satisfaction. While the children of God were not able to fathom this fleshly or carnal mind before regeneration, neither have they come to a clear knowledge of it since. It still baffles them; it is still beyond their powers of perception to where they can manage it. Yet, they know something of their weakness, and me thinks that my readers will see themselves in these works of the flesh, and they will be often at a throne of grace begging the Lord that He will keep them from these presumptuous sins. It has been so hard to understand why that people whose experience of the first deliverance from the law you would not question, will stand off and mock poor sinners that also have been delivered, but who are not only looking for deliverance from the same source now, but do not expect to improve in the future, that do not expect to learn better how to do righteousness, that do not expect to get a promotion in the future, but are, like unto an eminent citizen of Zion, hoping for deliverance in the future (2 Cor. 1:10). Since these that belong to the commonwealth of Israel know their weakness, it seems out of line to dwell on these bad things, these works of the flesh. Remembering that there is law against these works, and since the inhabitants of Zion are begging for deliverance from these works of the flesh, realizing that, while they have not found out how to do that which is good, at the same time that they have a will toward fruit instead of work, we will leave these matters and go to the fruits of the Spirit.

Ah yes, dear readers, what a lovely and transcending thought it is to have our minds arrested and placed on divine and glorious things, even the fruits of the Spirit. But we are not carried away into imagery and into seeing mirages. We have found out by bitter experience that the flesh is deceitful above all things, therefore, our longing desire is to be preserved from thinking that we can bring the fruit of the Spirit to fruition.

Doesn't it seem like a hard doctrine to think that we who desire these fruits in our lives must join in with the Spirit to produce them, and harder yet, it seems so out of place to think that we, in our flesh, can keep the Spirit from bearing fruit. If that had any credibility in it at all, then the Lord would not have ever brought us to fruitbearing, for we said in the early days of His ministry that we would not have this man reign over us (Luke 19:14).

In our relationship with the flesh, is there any of these fleshly works that we have not done? I hear you saying, Well I have not murdered anybody, I have not committed adultery, I have not done this and that and the other. Let us look at ourselves for a moment. Let us not cast a personal stone, insinuation, accusation, but let us come to the tribunal of truth, leaving our pharisaical spirit out of the investigation. Have we lacked at all? Is there a skeleton hid (?) in our closet? Have we failed in the least degree? Have we loved the Lord with all of our hearts, minds, souls, and strength? Have we loved our neighbor accordingly? Have we denied the Lord in the crisis of His life? You tell me again that I have not denied Him. Pardon me, but I thought that we were going to leave the pharisaical spirit out of this. Have you failed to attend services because that it was too far, or too hot, or too cold, or because of business, or because of your children coming? ***If the answer is yes, then you are as guilty of denying Him as Peter ever was.*** As far as fleshly service is concerned, if you have failed in the nth degree to keep the law of Moses with all of its ramifications, you are guilty of the whole. I realize the triteness of what I am saying, but it is necessary to say it once again in order that I might get before us what I am reaching after. There is not any beginning in the law and discontinuing it; if we continue not in all points of it we are guilty of the whole, and cursed is every one that continueth not in all

points of it. Now are we guilty? It is true that I have not killed anybody, but providence is to be praised for that, for I have been angry enough that I would have, if I could have, killed somebody, and so we run down the whole list of these works of the flesh; if I have not openly broke them it is not because of a sanctimonious nature, but because the providence of God prevented it, and, I do hope, that for the last forty-nine years because of the grace of God in my heart.

"But they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." If our failure to enter heaven and immortal glory is predicated on what we do not of these fleshly works, then by all means none of us will get there. We shall not get into the kingdom of God, the law giver, if we have been guilty of any of these things. The law of God (the entrance into His realm of existence) demanded that we not sin at all. We failed in our father Adam, and we have failed in a practical sense all of the way. Regardless of all the hurrah about keeping the ten commandments, or of mending our disobedience of the first commandment in the garden of Eden, none of the Adamic family has, or ever will, make the grade. It is too demanding, too steep, and our uprightness in the morning having been natural, we have not been able to refrain from these fleshly works.

But we must remember that some of the most illustrious mouthpieces of God have been openly guilty of these fleshly works. Take Noah, the brethren of Joseph, Jonah, Jeremiah, David, Peter, Paul, you and I, and we are all as guilty as sin can make us. Will heaven be our home? Is that the zenith of perfection that we are seeking? If so, it will never be reached by having avoided the works of the flesh. It will be by the mercy and love and grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But you say to me, Some of these have committed these sins after having had mercy shown them. That is true with the most of them; that is true with this sinner. Then we must find a

scriptural solution to this predicament. It is not worthwhile to lambast one another for seeking something that is scriptural to alleviate the suffering and anxiety that comes to us when we survey our life, since we have had a good hope in Christ, and have found it lacking along the way. I want you to notice what Paul says. He had said it before (I Cor. 6:9), and in our text, he says it again, that they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. He does not mention doing them one time, or slipping from a steadfast position and lapsing into a mistake. He is talking about a habitual living in them. All of the Lord's people are sinners, and they are not able to continue at all times in gracious living. But the apostle is not talking about those that do not have any sin, but he is talking about those that do such things, those that live in them, and those that are habitually sinning and living in these fleshly works.

The beloved John is treating on the same order of truth when he sent the precious messages to the elect lady and her children. I want to urge that you notice carefully the many urgent pleas to these elect children that he makes as to their obedience to the commandments of God. Dear brethren, dear readers from coast to coast, you that have been maligning one another (and I am guilty) so often, over one word, one application of the scripture, so often about a private interpretation. I plead with you to stop the deadly devouring of one another about these matters. Do not be one sided about a sinner. He and she has more of it than they desire; if they were not hampered and hindered by still being a poor sinner they would not ever sin again. Some of us have gone too far about this; some of us about that; some of us about the other, *and, sad to relate, some of us about nothing in particular except that we seem to have a burning intention to bite and devour one another.* We have

forgotten the sure word of our Lord and Master that biting and devouring one another brings the consuming of one another. When our brethren first came to America at Welsh Tract, they had some differences with the Baptists over the laying on of hands. They felt that it was an ordinance as was baptism and the communion. They had a meeting or two with the thought in mind of finding a solution to the matter so that fellowship would abound. Let me ask, Would we do that today? Would we try to find a middle ground for our differences so that fellowship could be had among these that we are separated from? Would we? These Welsh Baptists did not want to give up the practice of laying on of hands, but neither did they want to be separated from the surrounding Baptist people. Because both sides desired union in the privileges of the gospel, and because that they that were without were mocking because of the variance between the Baptists, they compromised about the matter. Would we do that today? Would we even consider meeting together to talk over differences? Would we give a hoot about what the outside people thought about us? Even though the same situation exists to day (that is, that many people look upon us with disdain and amusement because that we can not get along with each other) would we, like the Welsh brethren (whom we like to claim when we get hot pressed by our enemies), consider meeting together to settle differences?

Please pardon my digression (not that I am asking pardon for being wrong, only for digressing from the subject), but John and Paul were writing the same doctrine. John said a number of lovely things about this important matter. He wrote that our joy be full, and it is worth our time to find what it takes to make our joy full. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. This reference to walking in darkness

can not mean our mistakes in moments of weakness, for this is stumbling but not walking. This is habitual sinning, and it is equal to Paul's doing such things. If one is walking in darkness; if he is doing such things, where is the evidence that he has ever been in the light? If Paul had continued from the Damascus road to breathe out threatenings and slaughter against the church of God, would Ananias have called him brother? Would he have baptized him? The answer is obvious, and thus seeing that one does such things, or that one walks in darkness, or that one is habitually evil, has no part in the kingdom of God or in the kingdom of heaven.

If we walk in the light, as He is the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. The walking in the light, having fellowship one with another, and the cleansing by the blood, are all in the present tense. They all come together; the walk, the fellowship, the cleansing are all blessings that we were blessed with in Christ before the world had its beginning. They do not originate with us. They originated in the eternal mind of God and are manifest in our present life. They are timely blessings. It has been whispered around the country that I advocated time salvation. I certainly have. *Although I realize that the crossing from out of this time state is close at hand, yet, I am, at this writing, still on the time side of eternity. I am writing to those on this same side. I am not expecting these lines to reach beyond this vale of sorrow. However, if I am mistaken, and it does reach any beyond this life, let me hear from you. If I do not hear from you, I will know that you also are a sharer with me

*(We believe that Elder Griffin is not setting forth the doctrine of "Conditional" Time Salvation, but rather expressing the true view that while we live in time, we are blessed in time, and that by free grace. Editor)

of timely blessings, of time salvation. Walking in the truth is the only way that gospel fellowship can be had. If our churches are faithful, none will ever get into them that are not walking in this truth both from a doctrinal as well as a practical standpoint. A faithful church would not receive one that was "doing such things." Nor would they receive one that said that they were free of sin, for I do not think that any one could be indulging in "such things" any more than by lying, and John tells us that the one that says that he does not have any sin is a liar (I John 1:8). If one came to the church that seemingly was a fruit bearing tree, and yet told the church that he or she would be a valuable asset to the church, they would be "doing such things" and would certainly be a liability to that church. It is as much enjoined upon us to confess our sins as it is for us to abstain from saying that we do not have any sin. His faithfulness will not fail, for He forgives our sin and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. This cleansing from all unrighteousness in the ninth verse is the same cleansing by blood in the seventh verse; it is in the present tense; it is in manifestation in our daily experience, and this is stemming from what was actually accomplished on the Tree by the glorious Sufferer.

As I draw near conclusion I would notice what John says, I write unto you, that ye sin not (I John 2:1). Would any of you say different to the saints, to the little children? Would any of you dare lift your voice in the pulpit, or write it in a letter that it is alright to sin? If so, I write as humble as I know, but I write boldly as I know how that there is a law against any of "such things" but that in walking humbly and quietly and peaceable in the fruits of the Spirit that there is not any law against it.

Yours in blessed hope,
W. D. G.

Meadow Grove, Nebraska

Dear Editors:

Enclosed is \$1.00 for 4 copies of the Absolute Predestination by Elder Gilbert Beebe. I think it is so very good. I also thoroughly enjoyed the "Bank of Faith". I also like the "Voices of the Past". I guess I should say I like the paper, the letters, the editorials, and all. Since it has been coming for so many years, I feel the Lord will continue blessings to us thru its pages as long as time endures. I know my folks took it for years and I'm sure some of my children will continue after I am gone.

In Christian fellowship,
Mrs. Walter Black

It is a great mercy to enjoy the gospel of peace, but a greater to enjoy the peace of the gospel.

Dyer

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

ABSOLUTE PREDESTINATION

Our Standard Lexicon defines absolute to mean, in its literal, or general sense, free, independent of anything extraneous. 2. Complete in 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 and 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. 54:16, 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, etc., "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 afflicted by the Egyptians four hundred years, he certainly would not have told Abram so; read Gen. 15:12-16. 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 said, God will send them strong delusions that they may believe a lie, that all may be damned, etc. God said by the mouth of Isaiah that he would choose their delusions. This is solid Bible testimony, and it is what we intended to express by the words absolute predestination. And pray brother, what objection have you to it? 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 any 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? Or 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.*

(Elder) Gilbert Beebe
Middletown, N.Y. July 1, 1855

The foregoing article was published in the editorial columns of the *Signs of the Times* nearly half a century ago, and many thousands of copies of it read in nearly every State and Territory of the country, and received by the brethren and sisters generally, as the truth. As then stated by our dear father, "This is solid Bible testimony, and it is what we intend to express by absolute predestination", so we now state. Many of the dear saints have been deceived by a misrepresentation of the position of the *Signs* on this subject, and we can but feel that in many cases they have been deceived by those who knew they were misrepresenting us. There has been an effort to make it appear that the *Signs* advocates, and its patrons believe, that God, or the Holy Spirit of God, prompts man to sin. Some have even gone so far as to say that with us a man can commit any sin, and if arraigned before the church, he can plead that it was all predestinated, and

we are obliged to accept his plea, and can take no further action in church discipline.

Now if any one will show us a single number of the *Signs of the Times* in which any such a sentiment is published, either in the editorial, or correspondents' columns, we will make a public acknowledgment of the error, if in an editorial, or if by a correspondent, we will refute the same, and beg the forgiveness of our brethren for having published it.

We have seen quite frequent allusions to a mythical individual, who somewhere, came before some church, with the argument that he was not accountable for his sin, because it was predestinated, and he could not help it. ***But personally we have never met with such a case, nor have we ever met with any one that has ever met this much maligned individual.*** And if there are any who may know of an authentic case, among Primitive Baptists, who will write us, giving name of party, church, place, and date, when and where this oft repeated incident occurred, we will agree to send that church a scriptural antidote, or specific, for all such maladies.

We have been pained to observe of late, in some of the periodicals claiming to be Primitive Baptist publications, a disposition to resort to ridicule, and slang, in referring to brethren who believe the doctrine of the predestination of all things, designating them as "the can't help its". Aside from all question as to the truth or error of the views held by the brethren on this subject, there can be no doubt as to the spirit manifested in such a course being prompted by the carnal mind. It is one of the strongest evidences of the self-consciousness of the weakness of the position of an opponent, when he is driven to ridicule or derision, in an effort to maintain his position.

As to the appellation itself, taken in a scriptural sense, it is not so objectionable to us. We were born of the Adamic

race, and we "can't help it"; we were conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and we "can't help it"; we are prone to evil as the sparks are to fly upward, and we "can't help it"; the good that we would, we do not; but the evil which we would not, that we do, and we "can't help it". Almost endless instances of scriptural definitions might be sighted in which we know that we are a "can't help it". Does it then follow that we are led or prompted by the Holy Spirit to sin? God forbid. From whence, then, come these wicked promptings, causing us to sin? Let an ancient inspired "can't help it", answer. He says, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me". (Rom. 7:20)

Now if Paul had done that he would not, he most certainly was a "can't help it". But he does not leave us in the dark as to why he could not help it, but tells us it was because of sin that dwelt in him. Inherent sin is the cause of all our wicked acts, the grace of God is the restraint, power, or limit placed upon them. The Psalmist says, "The wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain". In our sinful nature we are full of wrath against God; our carnal mind is enmity against him, and is ever striving to rebel against his holy law, and if not held in restraint by his almighty power, will make itself manifest. The engineer admits just such amount of steam in his engine as may be necessary to accomplish his work, and the remainder he restrains, but what sane man would say that the engineer propels the engine? Just so we understand our God permits just sufficient amount of the wrath of man to escape, to accomplish his praise, and the remainder he restrains.

That every thought, act, and circumstance, is as firmly fixed in the future, as in the past, and that by the determinate counsel of God, we most sincerely believe, and this is what we mean by the predestination of all things. If this doctrine seems, to some, to be fraught with too fearful

consequences, we have no disposition to argue that matter; the inspired word, to our mind, answers all cavilings on that point. What we wish to refute in this article, is the false charge that is being circulated throughout the land, that the *Signs*, and those that indorse its position in regard to predestination, believe that the Holy Spirit prompts men to sin, and that a member of any of our churches having been overtaken in a fault, could plead that his wickedness was predestinated and therefore he was not responsible, and we would be obliged to accept this excuse, and could not deal with him for his sin. As stated above, we never knew of such a case, but if we should, we would have no hesitancy as to what course to pursue. In the first place, we should have very serious doubts about any one who could commit sin, whether discovered by his brethren or not, and not experience "a certain looking for of judgment", having any knowledge of the grace of God. But, be that as it may, we have the law of the gospel directing us how to proceed against a transgressor, and if we act in obedience to that, we need have little concern as to whether or not it is in harmony with the reasonings of the carnal mind, as to justice.

When we commenced this article it was on our mind to simply append a note, stating that the editorial above was in accord with the views of the present editors of the *Signs*, and its readers in general, as far as we understand them, but we have extended it to a much greater length than we intended, and ask the forgiveness of our brethren for trespassing upon their forbearance. If what we have written is of the Lord, no matter how crudely it is expressed, it will be blessed to the comfort and edification of some poor saint, but if it is merely the promptings of the flesh, we know that the Lord can overrule it for good to them that love him.

Elder Wm. L. Beebe

Feb. 15, 1898

OBITUARIES

SISTER EFFIE ALLEN

Sister Effie Allen was the daughter of the late Randell M. and Media Frances Barefoot Smith. Sister Allen was born November 10, 1890, and departed this life January 16, 1978, having lived 87 years, 3 months, and 10 days.

She was married to Brother Jason Allen and to this union was born two sons and a daughter. Her husband died in 1947; son, Jesse Lee died in 1943; and son, Randell Eldridge (Tobby) Allen died in 1975. Her survivors are one daughter, Miss Mozell Allen; four grandsons, and three great grand-children, also many nieces and nephews.

She was blessed in having a wonderful daughter that rendered her loving care so faithful and patiently in her long declining health.

Sister Allen joined Bethsada Church many years ago and moved her membership as a charter member to Liberty Primitive Church the first Sunday in August, 1955. She loved her church and was faithful in attending as long as her health permitted.

Her services were conducted by her Pastor, Elder C. D. Turner, and Mr. J. A. Allen, in Cromartie, Pearsall, Smith's Funeral Home Chapel. She was placed beside her husband in Bethsada Church Cemetery beneath a mound of beautiful flowers.

We, the Liberty Church, and friends believe she will be placed on the right side of the Saviour to be with the family of God and be satisfied for ever more.

Committee: Sister Lovie Young
Sister Dorothy Barefoot
Sister Bessie Hall

WILLIAM COY HOWARD

William Coy Howard was born on October 22, 1915, in Duplin County, near Pink Hill, North Carolina. He was the only child of Oscar and Mary Houston Howard.

He and I (Katie Eubank) was united in marriage on December 26, 1934, by Elder Lenster Bryan. God blessed us with three daughters and one son.

Coy united with the Sand Hill Primitive Baptist Church on May 14, 1961, and was baptized by Elder Lonnie Yopp.

He was employed by the United States Civil Service as an Aircraft Electrician for twenty years. He retired in 1963, because of declining health. He suffered from bad health for sixteen years. On December 20, 1978, God took him out of his suffering in this world to a peaceful sleep.

He was laid to rest in the Sand Hill Cemetery, with Elder Curtis Rains officiating, where he will remain until God's time comes to take him to the home He has prepared for him. There, there, will be no more pain, sickness nor sorrow, but will be peace forever more.

Coy was a good husband, a loving father, and attended his church meetings as much as his health permitted.

He never spoke of death until the morning he departed from this earth. He said to me, "This is it". I believe he was ready and had been for a good while, to make the change.

He leaves an empty, lonely place in our home that can never be filled, but his work in this world is finished and I can never wish him back to suffer again.

Written by request of the Church,
Katie E. Howard

O. R. (DOC) BRUMFIELD

With a heart pained with sorrow and filled with grief I attempt to write an obituary for our beloved father and husband, and your beloved brother in Weatherford Church, Mr. O. R. (Doc) Brumfield.

He was born July 3, 1905, and passed away on March 29, 1979, making his stay on earth 73 years and 8 months. He was faithful to the church until his sickness kept him from being able to attend. He was a firm believer in salvation by Grace, believing the Lord has fixed all things. It is well said that a man's days are numbered, and his time appointed, and his bounds are with the Lord, and he cannot pass them.

He was received into the fellowship of Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church on July 7, 1962, and was baptized by his pastor, Elder O. K. Tench, on July 22, 1962.

He leaves to mourn their loss his wife, Sister Ruby D. Brumfield; two daughters, Shirley Dalton, and Sylvia Hughes; four

sons, Calvin, Carvel, Donnie, and Billy Brumfield; eight grandchildren; one brother, and one sister.

His funeral was conducted at Weatherford Church by Elders O. K. Tench, Raymond Goad, Denver Simpson, and Julian Williams, and his body was laid beneath a beautiful mound of flowers in Weatherford Cemetery to await the second coming of our Lord and Saviour.

May God enable us to be reconciled to His will, and say, "Not my will, but Thine be done".

Written by his son, Billy Brumfield
Moderator - Elder O. K. Tench
Clerk - L. H. Doss

SISTER EVA GADLOCK

God, in His infinite wisdom, called Sister Eva Gadlock into His fold on June 3, 1978. She arrived in the home of Lazrus A. (Bud) and Lessie McLamb Stewart on August 6, 1908, making her stay on earth 69 years, 9 months, and 28 days. She was stricken with a stroke in 1976.

Sister Eva was a faithful person in her home, her neighborhood, as well as in her church, and especially in sickness. She heard about Sister Edna Barefoot being sick and expecting to enter the hospital for surgery. She was taken to see Sister Edna. When she was brought back home she asked for a drink of water, but by the time the water was brought she was slumped over in her wheel chair unconscious. She remained in this condition for 11 days before her death. This represents her life. She never gave up duties in life easily.

She joined the Primitive Baptist Church in the early part of the twenties. During Associations the Gadlocks always brought so much food to try to feed all the people who came.

She married Mr. James Gadlock on October 10, 1926. They were blessed with five respectable children.

Her funeral was conducted in Cromartie, Pearsall and Smith Funeral Home Chapel by her Pastor, Elder C. D. Turner and Mr. W. R. Pearce, and she was laid to rest in Devotional Gardner Cemetery in Harnett County under a mound of beautiful flowers.

She leaves to mourn Liberty Church; the widower; and sons, Larry, John Wesley, of

Dunn, N.C., James, Jr. of Varginio; a daughter, Magadlene Stephenson, Angier, N.C.; a sister Miss Lydia Stewart; and a brother, Ollin Stewart, of Dunn; also a half-sister, Mrs. Alva Pearl Simmons, Fayetteville, N.C.; half brother, Weldon Stewart, of Raleigh, N.C.; six grandchildren, many nieces, nephews, and a host of friends.

On the Resurrection Day we feel she will be placed with the elect family of God. She will be missed by all those who knew her.

Committee: Sister Lovie Young
Sister Dorothy Barefoot
Sister Bessie Hall

BROTHER DANIEL R. STEWART

Daniel R. Stewart arrived at the home of Jesse Martin and Mary Elizabeth Cannady Stewart on December 6, 1895, and God's calling came on September 26, 1978. He was faithful in many worthwhile duties during 82 years, 9 months, and 20 days of life.

Brother Daniel married Dora Monds in 1928. To this union were born 3 sons, and 3 daughters. Preceding him in death were two infants; his oldest son, Daniel, Jr., on May 26, 1965, and the oldest daughter, Mary Lou Whittington on Feb. 21, 1978. His survivors are one daughter, Margaret Woodall, of Forest City, N.C., a son, W. N. (Bobby) Stewart, of Spring Lake, N.C.; three sisters, Katie Barefoot, Spring Lake, N.C.; Lovie Young and Mary Wagstaff, of Dunn, N.C., and eight grand children.

His funeral services were held in Geddy and Adcock's Funeral Home Chapel by his Pastor, Elder C. D. Turner, and Elder W. D. Godwin.

The ones who knew him have the upmost confidence in his well-being in the resurrection. He lived his religion every day.

Committee: Sister Lovie Young
Sister Lucille Moore
Sister Bessie Hall

Brother Stewart was a very humble man and was very much loved by all who knew him. Being left after the death of his wife in 1940 with four small children, he was both father and mother to them, seeing to their every need.

He was a very faithful brother to the church as long as his health permitted. In his later years he lived with his daughter

until her death and then with a son. His children were very faithful to give him the best of care during his long illness. He will be greatly missed by Liberty Church and all who knew him. May God's richest blessings rest upon the family.

Sisters Iva and Lucille

I only heard good words said about Brother Stewart. He attended Liberty Church and was a good supporter for many years before he united with the church on September 3, 1964. He came to church when hardly able to be present.

Much could be said about this faithful brother.

Sister Bessie

ELDER JOSEPH DARNALL

Elder Joseph "Nuck" Darnall was born in Trigg County, Kentucky, April 9, 1895. He gave up the ghost while in sleep at his home on April 13, 1979, making his pilgrimage of sojourn in this life 84 years and 4 days.

He was the son of the late Elder Jessie Lyn Darnall and Martha Ann Atkins Darnall. He was united in marriage to Ella Dixon on August 13, 1916 and to this union was born seven sons and two daughters; one daughter preceded him in death in infancy.

He is survived by his loving companion; Sister Ella Darnall: seven sons; Fentress, Clayton, Eugene, Elwood, Joe, Irvin, Elias and one daughter; Addie Pearl Harris, one sister; Mrs. Ricks Skinner; twenty-one grandchildren and fourteen great grandchildren.

Elder Darnall was the fourth generation of preachers in his family. His father, grandfather and great-grandfather were all preachers in the Primitive Church before him.

He became a member of the body of Christ in Dry Creek Church in the year 1917. He preached his first sermon there the second Sunday in May 1919. Had he lived until May 13, 1979, he would have served the Church for sixty years.

Besides serving the Church at Dry Creek throughout those years, he pastored other Churches both within and without the Little River Association and from time to time was an itinerant preacher; doing the work of an evangelist preaching both far and near,

visiting Churches and Associations everywhere.

Elder Darnall was a man greatly endowed of God. The manner of man he was, the excellency of his gift and the ability of his preaching demanded and received from those who heard him the highest of respect and honor. His sermons and discourses were so profound and to the point, so illuminating and enlightening, so penetrating and in depth that they continued alive and living in the hearts and minds of those that heard him a feast of fat things for days, yea, even weeks afterwards.

He was a pillar in the house of God and a chief man among the brethren. He had and maintained a good report among them that were without. He was, within his own right, an institution in and around the little town of Cadiz, Kentucky. In the eyes of that community he was the epitome, and epitomized all that was good pertaining to the Primitive Baptist and their cause in Christ.

His eulogy was delivered by this writer at Goodwin Funeral Home, Cadiz, Kentucky in the presence of one of the largest gatherings I ever saw, consisting of both those within the Church and of those without.

His seven sons carried him to his final resting place, where like Stephen of old, great lamentation was made over him. I deeply sympathize with the sons and daughter and especially with his companion, Sister Ella, who endured with him throughout all those years and hardships, the many sacrifices and afflictions of the gospel common to a man of his stature, but who also shared with him the many happy, content and exhilarating blessings received from God that Giver of every good and perfect gift.

His race was set before him - he ran it with patience. He looked to Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith. His departure is now past and with his fathers before him his body now sleeps in Jesus on one of the many little knolls that grace the landscape behind old Dry Creek Church where he served so many years.

This man was so talented and gifted in preaching the Gospel of the Blessed Son of God that I think we shall never see the likes of him again - at least not in my generation. Humanly speaking, one might wonder what Elder Darnall might have been had he been a highly educated man, but then again, had

he been highly educated, we might never have known the real Elder Darnall.

As I have endeavored to pen with words this last tribute of respect to this great man of God, I am burdened with such a deep feeling of inadequacy and shortcomings of expressions, but in my weakness I feel and believe with all my heart that he died the death of the righteous and his last end shall be like His, and when this *Boanerges* (son of Thunder) day of *Talithacumi* (I say unto thee arise) comes, I am confident that it shall not be a day of *Tekel* (weighed and found wanting), but rather a day of *Jezliah - Jezoar* (Jehovah delivers-the shining one) and he, like the wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmaments and like him that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

He is now at rest but shall yet stand in his lot, whose destiny is known only by Him whose *Urim* and *Thummin* (lights and perfections) are with His Holy One.

Elder R. H. Hale

JAMES LINDSAY BEESON

Camp Branch Primitive Baptist Church mourns the loss of one of its members, James Lindsay Beeson. He was born in Alvarado, Texas on September 15, 1919. His parents were Thomas Lindsay and Nettie Voila Hathcock Beeson, who are both deceased.

Brother Jimmy entered C. C. Camp at an early age, and then joined the Army at age 17 and served overseas 9 years. He served in the Normandy invasion.

Brother Beeson was later married to Geraldine Snyder and to this union was born 2 sons. Brother Jimmy leaves to mourn their loss, his wife, two sons, one step daughter, several grandchildren, two sisters, and two brothers and a host of friends.

Brother Jimmy was taken sick at work and he was carried to the hospital where he passed from this life into the great beyond, a few hours later.

His funeral was held at McKee Funeral Home, and his body was laid to rest in Roselawn Cemetery at Martinsville beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the coming of our Lord and Saviour.

Elder Rufus Brown, Moderator
Nancy Haynes, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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SPECIAL NOTICE

Several rumors have been circulating lately that the *Signs of the Times*, or the Editors, more specifically, have been guilty of deliberately publishing error and unsound doctrine. Allegations of "tempting God", "bringing in confusion", "robbing God", "ignoring the Scriptures", etc., etc., are but a few of the specific charges.

We claim nothing near perfection. Rather, we see much imperfection in ourselves. We do, however, deny that any justification exists for such rumors.

If the subscribers will be patient with us we will in short order fully answer all such charges publicly. God willing, we shall do it decisively and to the satisfaction of all fair minded readers.

Humbly,
The Editors

BLACK CREEK UNION

The next session of the Black Creek Union will be held, the Lord willing, with the church at Old Beulah, the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in December, 1979.

All lovers of the truth are invited to come and worship with us.

Harold Pittman, Clerk
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JESUS CHRIST,
THE SERVANT BRANCH

"Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH."—Zechariah 3:8

We have before considered Jesus Christ as the Branch of Psalm 80 (*Signs of the Times*, March, 1978), and as the King Branch of Jeremiah 23 (January, 1979). Now, may we be graced to see Him as the Servant-Branch of Zechariah 3 as He is set forth in the inspired scriptures.

As certainly as God says, "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness," He just as surely proclaims, "Behold my Servant whom I uphold." (Isaiah 32:1, 42:1) Those who are given that spiritual ability to behold Him will see not only the King of Kings but also the Servant of servants and will realize that both are one and the same in Jesus Christ.

Usually, people either rule or are ruled; they will serve or be served, but ordinarily not both. Over a course of a lifetime one might possibly do both; a king might first rule and later be made a servant to a conqueror who defeated him, or a servant might eventually attain to a throne. However, when either of these things happens, the conquered king who has become a servant obviously no longer reigns, and the servant who has ascended to the throne no longer serves.

Notwithstanding this usual flow of events in the natural world, Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, is unique in every respect, including this one. He is not like a mere mortal who is bound by providence to rule or to be ruled, to reign or to serve. He alone can and does do both simultaneously. Many religionists in so-called Christendom state that Christ served during the days of His earthly ministry, but that He rules now, or that He will rule in the future, as though He can only do one or the other

at any specified time. Few see the truth that He also ruled in His humiliation and that He likewise serves in His glorified state. It is said that the first sentence of Psalm 96:10 in the old Latin version reads, "Say unto the people that the Lord reigneth from the tree;" that is, He reigns from the cross; not in the sense of a perpetual crucifix, but that, while He was in His deepest humiliation suffering death on the cross as Jehovah's servant, He nevertheless ruled the universe as He ever has and as He ever will. There is no correct way to trisect the mediatorship of Christ Jesus into past, present and future functions.

As Matthew wrote of the Kingship of Jesus, Mark wrote of His servitude. Kings must have a genealogy to prove their royal heritage, to show that they are of royal blood and legal heirs of the throne; therefore Matthew quite correctly traced Jesus' ancestry back to Abraham, the father of the Israelite nation, through forty-two generations of royal blood, tracing His lineage through their great and respected King David, just as would be required.

In contrast, Mark, who presents Christ as the Servant-Branch, gives no genealogy, for, who cares about the ancestry or birth of a servant, a slave? Pedigrees add nothing to one's ability to serve. The only requirements for a person to be a good servant are a spirit of obedience and the strength to carry out the assigned tasks. Mark then, saying nothing of Christ's lineage, begins abruptly with Jesus' baptism, His temptation, and the beginning of the work set before Him.

The servitude of Jesus Christ might be considered from two major standpoints: His service to His Father, and His service to His people. However, it soon becomes apparent that these two branches of the Servant-Branch's task are inseparable, since His direct service to His Father is an indirect service to the children of God, while His direct service to them is an indirect service to His

Father. This will become increasingly manifest if God so graces us to consider first,

I. Jesus Christ, the Servant-Branch, as the Servant of His Father:

“Behold my servant whom I uphold,” says Jehovah in Isaiah 42:1. God speaks this to a beholding, seeing people, directing their gaze and attention toward His servant. He effectually bids them to behold His servant in this text, thereby emphasizing the importance of Christ’s servitude, for, why else would He call our attention here to His “Servant”? He certainly would not direct the hungry, longing eyes of His little children to something unimportant.

The mind or attitude in the Son of God whom we are here bid to behold as a servant is described by the apostle in Philippians 2: being in the form of God, He “thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him 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.”

Angels are servants of God and fellowservants with His children (Rev. 22:8f); yet Christ took not on Him the nature of angels (Heb. 2:16), taking on rather the seed of Abraham. This taking on the seed of Abraham was lowering Himself beneath the level of the angels (Heb. 2:7, 9). Paul generalizes this “seed of Abraham” to “the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7) because the entire Adamic race, of which the seed of Abraham was only a part, originally was put into the garden of Eden in a relationship of service to God (Gen. 2:15). Thus, when Paul says Christ Jesus “took upon Him the form of a servant,” he further explains, “and was made in the likeness of men.” Then, in that likeness, Christ humbled Himself further indicating His ready mind to serve His Father—and became obedient (a word which can only

be linked with servitude). The obedience of this man-servant was to the extent of death, but not an ordinary or quick, easy and painless death. The death He was foreordained and predestinated to undergo was the ultimate form of a suffering death: crossifixion, or, as crucifixion literally means, being fixed or impaled upon a cross. In this way, under the terms of the eternal covenant, He that was co-possessor of the Father’s glory before the world was (John 17:5) divested Himself of the eternal glory inherent in Himself and demonstrated forever another type of glory, the ultimate glory of serving the Father even unto death. from the form of God (Phil. 2:6) to the form of a crucified servant (Phil. 2:7f)! What a magnificent move on His part; how awe-inspiring, how productive of worship! And Paul says, “Let this mind be in you.”

Having thus briefly looked at the mind of the servant of the Lord, let us return to Zechariah and Isaiah and see the power and support He receives from His God. Jehovah says, “I” will bring forth my Servant the Branch. I uphold Him. My soul delights in Him. I have put my Spirit upon Him. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness and will hold thine hand and will keep thee (Isa. 42:1, 6). Through Jehovah’s support the Servant-Branch’s success is such that He shall not fail, nor even be discouraged at His tasks (42:4). He shall neither fail nor be discouraged in what? What does Jehovah say His Servant-Branch shall do? God says He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, bringing forth judgment unto truth. He shall set judgment in the earth and the isles shall wait for His law. He Himself, Jesus, shall be for a covenant of the people and for a light of the Gentiles. His task as Jehovah’s suffering Servant is to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. He shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall

stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against His enemies (Isa. 42:1-13).

These are some of the specifics that the Servant-Branch is to accomplish as far as His direct service to the Father is concerned. Isaiah continues, chapter after chapter, as do the other Old Testament writers, prophesying of His accomplishments. A book could be written on the subject. That book has been written: "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart (Psalm 40:7f)." With this in mind, we now need to summarize Christ's direct service to His Father without further attempting to itemize here those things written of Him in the volume of that book. To do so, we might resort to the following few New Testament citations:

A. At the time of Jesus' baptism by John (Matt. 3:13ff) He said, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Of necessity, the "us" in that statement goes far beyond Jesus and John. It embraces every one of the elect of God for whom the Servant-Branch fulfilled all righteousness in a manner acceptable to the Father. One phase of the task set before Him was to finish the work and to cut it short in righteousness. This involved removing the elect sinners' unrighteousness from them and fulfilling all righteousness in their place; "so by the obedience of one (Jesus) shall many (the elect) be made righteous (Rom. 5:19)."

B. Jesus, confronted by the Pharisees in the temple, said, "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him (John 8:29)." Consequently, whatever it took to please the Father, that and that only is what the Servant-Branch Jesus did.

C. Jesus later asked the same legalists, "Which of you convinceth me of sin? (John 8:46)" The weight of His ques-

tion in more modern terms is, which of you can convict me of sin—who could convince anyone that I am a sinner? Face to face with such a now-or-never challenge his enemies were forced to back down. The negative aspect of His service to His Father, then, was in His not sinning, not indulging in any variation from His Father's commandments, His will, or the eternal covenant.

D. "It became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10)." Whatever it would take to bring these "many sons" unto glory from their fallen and lost condition, while yet remaining perfect through whatever He suffered, this would be done by the captain of their salvation who is none other than the Servant-Branch, Jesus Christ.

It should now be seen readily that, without exception, all of Christ's direct service to His Father--His fulfilling all righteousness, His humility and submission to the Father in all things, His obedience to God's laws through suffering even unto death--was an indirect service to His people, because (1) both His service and His suffering in their entirety were vicarious, being done in His people's place and on their behalf; and (2) all of His merits are imputed and reckoned to their credit before the Father.

We come now to consider,
II. Jesus Christ, the Servant-Branch, as the Servant of His people:

Mark's account of Jesus' ministry is direct and powerful. In bold, incisive language Mark tells of Jesus Christ's baptism, temptation, His call of His disciples and His teaching in the synagogue of Capernaum; His healing of a man with an unclean spirit, His healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law who was sick with a fever. That evening He healed countless who were diseased and possessed with devils. Long before

daybreak the next morning He went out to pray. After daybreak He left on a tour of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues of the entire region, and casting out devils seemingly everywhere He went. He touched an untouchable leper, healing him of that dread disease that illustrates the plague of sin which only Jesus can touch and not be tainted by it. By His touch and the expression of His will ("I will, be thou clean") He banished both the disease and the sin it typifies.

Returning to Capernaum Jesus then healed a man sick with palsy, forgave his sins, and for His words and actions was immediately attacked by the Pharisees. Undaunted, He went forth as a mighty man, and stirred up jealousy as a man of war, just as Isaiah had prophesied. He returned to their synagogue the following sabbath and healed a man with a withered hand, knowing full well He was stirring up the wrath and jealousy of the Pharisees again. They immediately began plotting His death.

He withdrew to the seaside and multitudes followed. Again He taught, He preached, He healed. He ordained His twelve apostles. The multitudes came again and He served them so constantly He literally had no time to eat (Compare this with Christ's account in Luke 17:7-10 of the servant who, having worked all day must first feed his master before he feeds himself; Jesus in practice took the position of the unprofitable servant He there described).

His friends came and said, "He is beside Himself," unsuccessfully trying to take Him into protective custody for what they thought was His own good.

His enemies came saying that He did His healings by the prince of devils.

His mother, His brothers, and His sisters (Mary's other children) came and called for Him, but He de-emphasized human family ties, stressing instead the importance of His spiritual family.

Neither friends, enemies nor family succeeded in stopping His service to His people.

From a boat He then spoke in parables to the multitudes on the shore of Galilee, and later expounded all His teachings to His disciples when He was alone with them. That evening, after sending the crowds away, He had his disciples sail to the other side of the little sea. It was then, only then, that Mark finally says that this marvellous Servant rested, "in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow." It would almost seem that Mark would not have mentioned this brief rest-period even now, had it not been pertinent to the further account of Jesus' stilling the storm that night.

The account of His service to His people is quickly resumed: He healed the demon-possessed man of Gadara's tombs and returned to Capernaum. There He healed the woman with the issue of blood and raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. Soon after this He returned to His home town of Nazareth from which He sent out His apostles two by two, preaching and healing--an extension of His own service.

It was then that word came to Him of John the Baptist's death, and upon the return of the apostles He said, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile," providing rest for His weary followers while He Himself had little or none. Mark says they had no leisure so much as to eat.

They departed to a desert place, but the crowds followed Him there also. Instead of resting awhile, He taught and then miraculously fed the thousands. He went on from there to Gennesaret, and throughout the cities of that region He continued to heal untold numbers.

All of these miracles and activities which Christ did in service to His people, and much more, is recorded in only the first six chapters of Mark. Thinking of it all, it seems enough to leave us breathless as Jehovah's seemingly tireless Servant appears to rush about, day and night, always going, always about His Father's business, ceaselessly helping, aiding, teaching, healing, comforting, caring, encourag-

ing and serving His people wherever He goes.

Nor was He reluctant or slow in His service. The Greek word "Eutheos" means at once, instantly, or immediately. It is a word which would tell what kind of service one would expect out of a bond-slave. In the King James New Testament it is translated by the English words anon, as soon as, by and by, forthwith, immediately, shortly, and straightway. "Eutheos" occurs eighty times in the New Testament, and forty of those times, exactly half of all of the occurrences, are in Mark's gospel. Of the forty uses by Mark, the grand majority tell of what Christ did and the immediate results, and the good results produced in others by Him. It is true that several times the word is used to describe the evil to which Judas, the chief priests, and Satan himself all hastened (Mark 14:43-45, 15:1, and 4:15); but, in a word, the servant's words "straightway" and "immediately" in Mark show Jesus' willing, instant response in service to His people, and their resultant, immediate response to Him.

Of course, Mark's catalogue of Christ's service does not end with chapter 6. Mark continues, but we must break off here, as the point is amply illustrated: the Lord Jesus Christ lived an entirely selfless life of service to His people. And, even as His direct service to His Father was an indirect service to His people, so His direct service to His people was an indirect service to His Father, the True and Living God. This principle is made plain in:

A. Christ's own words recorded in Matthew 25:40--"Verily, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Here Christ is speaking as God the King (Matt. 25:34). Further, He said in Matthew 10:40, "He that receiveth you (Christ's brethren) receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that

sent me (God the Father)." John amplifies this principle in I John 5:20: "If a man say 'I love God' and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Putting these scriptural facts together, Jesus as the man-servant, when He loved, received, healed and saved the demoniac of Gadara, the lepers, the palsied, the poor and afflicted throngs, was doing kindness to God the King, God the Father; for God's abode through Jesus Christ, in the Person of the Eternal Spirit, is in His people. Thus, to serve one of God's children is to serve God Himself.

B. Christ's fulfilling all righteousness in behalf of His people, which was before discussed, but which can now be considered from another approach: as God requires of His people their being kind one to another, tender-hearted and forgiving one to another, loving one another, bearing one another's burdens, and many such things, so Jesus the man-servant did all of these things and more. His goodness, kindness, love, longsuffering and all other graces are imputed to His children and recognized by the Father as service to Himself. Although His healing of Bartemaeus, for example, was a direct service and kindness to that poor, blind beggar, it was also in a very true sense a service to the Father.

In closing, may God give us a clear insight into the combination of Christ's two offices as King and Servant. A Servant-King is illogical, unreasonable and indefensible to the carnal mind. Solomon said, "For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear," and the first of these things which disquiets (takes away the peace or tranquility of; disturbs, alarms) the earth and which the earth cannot bear is, "for a servant when he reigneth (Prov. 30:21f)."

Why is this so? It is so because of the exact same conflict between the princi-

ples of God and the principles of this world which is set forth in the first chapter of I Corinthians. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, and being a servant was a major step which Jesus the Servant-Branch took toward the cross. The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, and there is neither a sign nor wisdom to either a Jew or a Greek in servitude, crucifixion and death. As Christ crucified is unto the Jews a stumblingblock and unto the Greeks foolishness, so likewise is a Servant-King. The natural mind, which desires so desperately to reign supreme as king, ranks servitude and crucifixion as something totally humiliating, foolish, and undesirable. The natural mind craves to glory in itself. But God, in His wisdom has forever confounded natural wisdom by His King-Servant-Branch "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption, that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

In hope of life in Christ,
(Elder) C. C. Morris

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STONE CASTERS

(For those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.)

Text: II Samuel 16:5-6

"And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left."

This was one of the many trials King David endured. He had seen his beloved son, Absalom, his trusted councillor, Ahithophel, and multitudes of his brethren turn their back on him. He was now going into exile and had just passed over brook Kidron and ascended up the Mount of Olive and was weeping as he went, with his head covered and his feet bare. (II Samuel 15:30)

It was grief enough for David to find treachery in his family and treason in his court, but the tirade of Shimei only added insult to his injury.

Let us learn from this the following things:

1. ALL THE SAINTS OF GOD HAVE ENEMIES.

This we know from the Word of God and from our own experience. Yes, and David could even speak about it in the highest terms when in Psalm 23 he made mention of the Lord preparing a table for him in the presence of his

enemies. Our Saviour instructed His disciples thusly, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you". (Luke 6:26)

2. OUR ENEMIES USUALLY DISTORT THE FACTS. (Verse 8)

You will observe when Shimei came out casting stones at David he also hurled many false invectives. He accused David of being a "bloody man" and "a man of Belial". (Verse 7) Such accusations as these were handling the truth in a deceitful manner. True enough, David was a bloody man but was it not in the cause of Israel? But could it rightly be said that because of this he worshipped a false god? Indeed it could not, except by one who would seek to cast stones. (Shimei may have been referring to David's affair with Batheshba, but this would have made his stone casting all the worse. David had confessed his sin and God had delivered him.)

3. STONE CASTERS MORE OFTEN THAN NOT ARE ALSO LIERS IN WAIT.

They seek the right moment to cast their stones. They wait until the Davids are in distress, or have their heads bowed low because of troubles to cast their stones. Stone casters are always on the offensive and seek to take advantage. Stone casters will also hold their distance. They will not face David in a personal confrontation. Rather they will travel along on the outskirts at a safe distance and cast their stones and kick up their dust.

4. STONE CASTING MUST BE ENDURED.

When David's men would seek to take off "the head of this dead dog" (Verse 9) as they considered him, David denied them their desire. His reply was, "The Lord hath said unto him, Curse David". However evil the intentions of stone casters may be: however vile may be their accusations, remember David's attitude. Remember his patience in the matter. He says further, "Let him alone, and let him curse", which brings us to....

5. STONE CASTERS ARE DOING GOD'S BIDDING.

Even though their actions are evil, and they intend it for such, God intends it for good. (Gen. 50:20) Listen to the sweet words of David as he replies, "Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him". (Verse 11) Observe David traces the problem to the source, - that being the eternal purpose of God. May we ever look to the First Cause and not the agencies. May we see behind the cloud to the bright sun of God's good will.

6. SEE NOW THE GROUND FOR HOPE.

David says in verse 12, "It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." Stone casters may seek our harm. They may despise our person. But when they are done, the Lord's children will always have profited by the ordeal and the enemy will receive his recompense. David looks for the good that the Lord will bring from this in what he calls "mine affliction", and David looks to His hand for deliverance. He dares not draw his own sword for "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord". (Rom. 12:19) May we ever find hope in God when stone casters show themselves.

In closing this brief expression, observe that when David and his men went along the hillside over against them, and as Shimei cast stones and cursed as he went and cast dust, they finally came to their appointed place, and though weary, they refreshed themselves there. So it is at the end of our journey that we find our refreshment, and though the stone casters may follow us to the very gaping tomb, may we know that they can do no more harm by and by. There are those in this world that would put us out of the Synagogue, as our Lord said, "Yea the time cometh,

that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service". (John 16:2) They do their stone casting in the name of God and in the defense of truth and to uphold order and church integrity, etc., etc. But Jesus says, "But these things will they do unto you because they have not known the Father nor me." (John 16:3) We cannot say if all stone casters are aliens or not. Often times we've been guilty ourselves of taking up a stone to throw at someone. May the Lord stay our hand from casting stones. But if stone casters would seek to destroy us, let us follow this example of David. I see also that in II Samuel 19:16-21 when David returned again in his full glory as king, Shimei came crawling seeking mercy and David granted it. However, in I Kings 2:8, 9 we find that David counselled Solomon to "hold him not guiltless". In I Kings 2:26-46, we find Shimei receiving the end of his wicked deeds.

A final word of caution. Never be surprised at the prominence or station of stone casters. Shimei was of the family of the house of Saul the king. May the Lord instruct us in this lesson.

James F. Poole

Dear Sister Mamie Ferguson,

I feel very unworthy as a person, and thank God daily, morning and night for all the blessings He has bestowed and all he has provided even in the heart and very soul even of me.

As I reread the letter to you I found another beautiful thought. It is that part where I said, "Many places dear Sister (In Christ) we read of the 'Sanctuary' being built in the midst of the Tabernacle". The children of God are themselves verily "The Tabernacle" or in the New Testament they are the "Church" built up in heavenly places in Christ. But the "Sanctuary" is a place "within" that church. A place "within you" and the blessed hope of Glory, for Christ is our Hope and there is no better

place for He is "all our assurance".

Old Baptists speak mostly of "Hope" but that hope is Christ and Christ is our Assurance of life eternal, for Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and we say "Walk ye in it". In this I see our travel to come into the "Sanctuary" like I Chronicles 29:14-17, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers; our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own." And then verse 17 says, "I know also, my God that thou triest the heart", (not hearts, for it is an individual matter) but we press on to that high calling "in order to come into the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies".

You may send the letter, dear Sister, but may the Editors of the *Signs of the Times* consider well also before acceptance.

I close this message with David's words in I Chronicles 29:11, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in heaven, and in the earth is Thine.

With joy in His love,
Edward K. Adsit

LETTER TO
BROTHER FRANK HOLLAND

July 13, 1979

Brother Holland,

I think I told you I could not go to sleep unless God sent the sleep to me, and it is now almost midnight and still no sleep. I did enjoy you talking over at the cemetery. No I wasn't blessed to have the lovely vision you spoke of but I am always glad to hear of others having

them. Oh so much I have longed for a vision, but it hasn't been the will of the Father to grant me those things. As I said to you, all my travels have been full of sorrow and heartache, but each one I have had I hope has taught me my Lord rules and reigns and none can add or take away what He has in store for each of us. The valleys have become so deep and the hills have been so high, but that has been my lot here. "I am a stranger here below, And what I am tis hard to know".

I have had lots of dreams of being in large crowds of people and all were loved ones, and I would always be left standing alone and they would all vanish in the air. That has all made me feel like I was standing as "one alone". I go with a sorrowful heart feeling my unworthiness of even being in your company, but when I am blessed to sit among the Lord's people, like it was today, it is just a little bit of heaven here below. It is my meat and drink.

I feel so washed up and so empty in my feelings tonight but thanks be unto God He holds the world in His hands and all that therein is, so I hope I am thankful for what He has blessed me with, for it is far more than I deserve. Some are blessed with much joy and some with a little, but it has been enough to keep me longing and begging for mercy to go home where all will be peace and joy unspeakable, if this one is blessed to go there. "Oh for a closer walk with Thee" is my desire but I fall so short that it grieves me. I spend lots of sleepless nights moaning and groaning over my failures. I can say I am glad I have seen myself and what I see in me is less than nothing and a vile sinner saved by the grace of God if saved at all. Thanks be to the Lord, first of all, and then I thank you for the love and fellowship you have manifested towards me. I treasure it highly and you all are most welcome in my home. Jim loved you also. May it please the Lord to grant you a rich full spiritual life while you travel in this

world, and in the end may He grant you grace to say, "Come death I will gladly go with thee". Sometime I am blessed to feel I could truly be glad to go home where there will be no sorrow, and all will be sweet peace.

Say a little prayer for this weak frail vile sinner and may God always keep us close to Him and to each other. I need the Sisters and Brothers so much, but they don't need me.

May you be blessed with a safe journey home and come to see me. It was a sweet day and a sad one too. I miss Jim and Brother and Sister Walker so much. I would catch myself almost expecting to see them coming among us.

God bless you.

In bonds of sweet fellowship,
Nannie Carter

A believer's affections are, too often, like a cascade, or waterfall, that flows downward; instead of being like a fountain, which rises and shoots upward toward heaven.

Toplady

LAZARUS, COME FORTH

Dearly beloved brethern, if the Lord will bless me to do so, I will share with you a few of the precious thoughts that have lingered with me for several days concerning that glorious command from the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, found in the eleventh chapter of John.

At the time Jesus gave this command, Lazarus had been dead four days, and buried. Who else could have given such a command, and know that it would be obeyed? On another occasion he touched the bier of a dead man and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And again: he spake to the dead daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, saying, "Maid, arise." And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway.

"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." Jesus is the resurrection and the life. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

Every born-again child of God has heard the voice of Jesus speaking to his soul; though he was dead in trespasses and sin. "Lazarus, come forth." "Young man, arise." "Maid, arise." The very moment you heard this majestic command, you came forth; from a state of death, sin and darkness you came forth into the marvelous light of Jesus Christ: you passed from death unto life. The world knows nothing of this passing from death unto life, for they have never heard his word. "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." Death means, to be separated from or cut off. When Adam transgressed the law of God he died a spiritual death: he was cut off or separated from fellowship with God. Adam was the federal head of all men; and when he fell, all his posterity fell with him. In Adam they all died: they were separated from God. As surely as death separates loved ones here on earth, were they separated from God.

Now let us carefully examine what Jesus said in the 24th verse of John, fifth chapter. "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." He did not say "if he will hear my word" and "if he will believe" I will give him everlasting life, etc. No, he definitely did not say that: but that the ones who hear his word and believe on him hath everlasting life. That life is eternal; it has ever been with the Father. That life is in Jesus Christ: but no one knows anything about that eternal life

until Jesus speaks to his soul. Birth does not give life; it only makes manifest the life that already is.

"Lazarus, come forth." And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Lazarus came out of the grave still bound by the law and his eyes were covered so that he could not see the end thereof. What advantage would it be to a child of grace if he came forth, but was still under the law that he could in no wise keep, and could not see Jesus thru the eye of faith? None that I can see; but the One who gave the commandment to come forth also said, "Loose him, and let him go." What a marvelous command! Jesus is the end of the law; he completely fulfilled it to a jot and tittle, and paid to justice all her due; therefore he could justly command, "Loose him, and let him go." He is now free from the law thru faith, and the vail has been taken away. He can see Jesus thru the eye of faith, and walk in the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ which has made him free from the law of sin and death. As Paul wrote: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God thru Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. Therefore there is now no condemnation to them which are in Jesus Christ, 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."

"Maid, arise." And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. Every living thing must have food to survive. Natural food sustains the flesh, but spiritual food must be the diet of the spiritual. Jesus is that spiritual food. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I give is my flesh, which I will

give for the life of the world." Natural man cannot eat the flesh of Christ nor drink his blood, 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." Only the ones who have spiritual life need spiritual food and drink, and, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Those who hear his command to come forth, those who believe in him, those who eat his flesh and drink his blood, are those who have eternal life; and shall never come into condemnation, and are passed from death unto life.

"Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. Jesus hath called you forth from your dead estate; he hath set you free; he hath fed you manna from heaven; and he delivers you to your mother. Who is your mother? Is she not the church of God; and Paul says, "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." And when Jesus delivers you to the church, you begin to speak and tell your friends what great things God has done for you.

I do not know for a certainty that I have heard the voice of Christ; but I do believe I have been given a good hope, however small and weak it may seem at times. I am certain of this however, all who have heard that majestic voice have eternal life; and shall be called home on that great day when Christ shall come again and say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Beloved brethern, cast a mantle of charity over my mistakes. I beg an interest in your prayers of faith for this poor worm of the dust.

Clifford Wilbanks

EDITORIAL

BUT WE SEE JESUS

"For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me." (Heb. 2:5-13)

In reading the words of this text the lovely lines of the poet expresses so much our feelings in connection with this which the apostle wrote the Hebrews:

"Lord let me see thy beautiful face,
It yields a heaven below,
And angels round the throne will say,
Tis all the heaven they know.

A glimpse, a single glimpse of thee,
Would more delight my soul,
Than this vain world with all its joys,
Could I possess the whole."

What more could a poor child of God ask for than the words expressed in this poetry? "A glimpse, a single glimpse of thee". If we have that we are rich beyond our fondest desire. We may want to often see our brothers and sisters in the Lord;

we may often desire to see our pastor, or our dear friends, having in mind that we might walk among them and be among them but all of these joys cannot compare with the joy of having a single glimpse of Him, whom to know is life eternal. This is why we meet in His Name. We feel when gathered together that we are richly and greatly rewarded, and satisfied, too, when in these meetings we see Him whom our soul loveth. We thought some years ago that more than anything else the people of God needed to be instructed in strong doctrines. And certainly strong doctrines do have their place. But what benefit would it be to a man if he had his head crammed full of strong doctrines and had not seen the Jesus of the doctrine. He would have nothing. What good would it do if he knew all doctrines and had not seen in those very doctrines Jesus the Saviour? What good would it do if we attended meetings for years and were able to boast that we had not missed a meeting, and yet had missed seeing Him? We would be no better than the brute beast or the heathen who worships idols, or the poor unhumiliated Arminian who strives to win new stars for his crown. The joy in assembling, the joy in praying, the whole sum of all joy in our salvation is in seeing Jesus. This is the intent, spiritually, of the expression in John when the Greeks came and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus". Whatever their motive was we cannot say with certainty. We can say, however, that the heaven-taught child of God will meet together and come together with the view in mind that they would see Jesus.

When reading our Bibles what are we looking for? Often the preacher is reading to find a text. The Bible student is reading so that they might be more familiar with the scriptures. Others read that they might be more proficient in defending their belief. These things may all be good in themselves, but these are not the best motives. Our Lord said to

the Pharisees, "(Ye) search the scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me". (John 5:39) All the Psalms, the prophets, and the Law have but one aim, and that is to set before the reader or hearer the one sweet name from Heaven which saves poor sinners from their sin, which delivers them from their ungodliness, removes them from the wrath to come, takes the broken hearts and binds them up, and delivers up the cast down and gives them hope, and takes the destitute and makes them full. They make the thirsty to be satisfied. They make the hungry to be fed. That alone is how to read God's Word. To see Jesus, to have a glimpse of Him, and find there Him whom our soul loveth. And when we see Jesus there we have been well repaid. We are made to feel rich then, and not before. We feel blessed, indeed, and when we feel that heaven has come down to manifest its glory in us, and that glory of heaven being nothing more or less than the felt (and by faith observed) manifestation of Jesus to our souls. Oh, what glory!

One of old spoke of seeing Jesus. Listen as he speaks. "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Septre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." (Num. 24:17) There has been many a person read these words and said, "Well, Balaam was a false prophet". Indeed he was. Balaam knew no more of Jesus Christ than the ass which spake concerning his madness. But he spoke under the moving of God's power, and if you listen to his words carefully, you will see that he never said anything that would give us even a small assurance that he had a true hope. He said, "I shall see him, but not now." If there is one thing we can be certain the Word of God teaches regarding the redemption of God's people, it is this; they shall know Jesus in this life. They

will see Him, by faith, in their heart. We cannot make exception to this. No blood-bought sinner shall ever rest in Glory but what he has by faith seen Jesus in this life; not just waiting to see Him in the next. There will never be a saved sinner in heaven but what saw Jesus while in this life. Balaam said, "But I shall see him, but not now:" and that was right because Balaam did not see him at that time. He said, "I shall behold him, but not nigh." Observe, his anticipation of seeing Him regards some future time but not in this life. Here is the clue to what Balaam said: "But not nigh". "I will not see Him close at hand. I will see Him from a distance." Did Balaam really know what he said? Whether he knew or not he had said that he would never hear in this life the sweet voice of the Son of God speaking blessed trust and hope into his soul. He would never in the life to come hear the precious words, "Come ye blessed of My Father". He would see Him from a distance, not nigh. You see, there was a great gulf fixed, and the hireling Balaam never crossed it, for only the elect rests in Abraham's bosom. (Luke 16:23) Balaam is a sad case. Balaam gives many manifestations that many would accept as being christian experience. But the facts of the matter seem to teach that Balaam was a hireling and utilized his gifts for gain and not for the glory of God.

Compare now Job with Balaam. "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skinworms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: though my reins be consumed within me." (Job 19:25-27) The difference between what Job said and what Balaam said lies in Job's first expression, "I know that my redeemer liveth". Balaam could not say words like that because he had no redeemer. Job knew something about redemption and

could say so. And though he would not have a visible manifestation of God in this world, he said that in the latter days he would see Him. He knew that his Redeemer lived, and that he would live also. What a beautiful figure Job is of all believers in whatever age they may live. They know something. Though they may have many trials, as Job did, their anticipation is to see Him Who is their life, Who is their salvation, and Who is their deliverance.

This leads to the words our Lord spoke to Martha when He proclaimed Himself the Resurrection and the Life. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live." Did Martha believe this? "Yea, Lord, I believe." (John 11:27) She did believe, too, as all of God's children do, no matter where they might be scattered in this world. He is their Resurrection and their Life and they long more to see Him for there is nothing else in this world worth seeing. As we observed earlier there may be things we long to see in this world, people we long to be with, but that which our inward man longs for is a glimpse of Jesus. We cry out daily, "We would see Jesus".

Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the mount and He was transfigured before them. What a scene of beauty and wonder; the Lord's face shined as the sun, and His raiment was as white as light. (Matt. 17:3) In the progress of the events on the mount, a cloud overshadowed them and God spoke from Heaven saying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." (Matt. 17:5) In their great fear they fell on their faces and when sore afraid Jesus came and touched them and instructed them to arise. "And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. (Matt. 17:8) Moses is gone! Elijah is gone! But He who was all glorious remains and they could see Him. Blessed as they were on the mount, however, they are no more blessed than those today who with the eye of faith see the glorified Saviour.

Peter, James, and John saw something that no mortal eye had seen before, but the faith which God gives His little children sees the same glorified Saviour. From first to last all the heirs of grace may say, "We see Jesus", and they care not to see Moses or Elijah or anyone else. They see no man, just Jesus only.

"But we see Jesus". How did Paul see Him? He said, "We see Him made a little lower than the angels". Multitudes have seen Jesus as Balaam saw Him, but few have seen Jesus as Job did. Balaam didn't have a vision, for instance, such as Stephen had, did he? Stephen in his dying breath said, "Behold I see the heavens open and the Son of man (Jesus) standing" In his dying agony that which he saw was an unveiling of his Redeemer at the right hand of God to receive his dying spirit. Can we not all take great comfort in the words of Stephen, "I see the heavens open", and what do we look for there? We look to see Jesus. Oh, how we long to see Jesus when our eyes are wearied of seeing the evil scenes of this life. As quoted before, "A glimpse, a single glimpse of Him". If we have that, who would not want to be in Stephen's place, to lay down our head and sleep. "Lord Jesus receive my spirit". Oh, to be carried away in the arms of the lovely, heavenly, eternal Redeemer. It would be a glory to die, would it not?

But we are called upon to live, and brethren, if we must live in this world a little longer, what do we long to see? Hopefully, we long to see Jesus, lower than the angels, first. When blessed to see Him lower than the angels we learn something of His humanity. You will never know anything of His heavenly diety until you first see His humanity. He was made lower than the angels. "Then said I, lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, Oh God." (Heb. 10:5-7) Our Lord came from heaven, came from the highest heights and descended a little lower than the angels. He was *made*

lower than the angels.

A scripture of particular interest at this point is the following, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (I Peter 1:10-12) Observe first in verse 11 the order of Christ's service. It spoke of His sufferings, and the glory that should follow. We observe this to be the order throughout the holy word of God. First, Christ suffered, then He entered into His glory. Then we notice that these were things that the angels themselves finally desired to look into; the things of the gospel story. They cannot see it. Here is contained a key as to why Jesus was made a little lower than the angels. The angels could not, did not, and never will understand the gospel message. They cannot sing with the saints of God regarding salvation. They cannot cry as we have, "Worthy is the Lamb". They cannot lift their voices up in anthems of praise to Him who washes away sin in His own blood. The angels who have kept their first estate, who have not fallen with those that fell with Lucifer, have never known the love of a saviour, because they don't have a saviour. He is their Lord but He is not their saviour, and thus tho sinless, they cannot comprehend these things and yet God has suffered them to desire to look into it.

Had Jesus been equal with the angels He could not have entered into the sufferings mentioned here. Angels can know nothing of sufferings; they can know nothing of grief; they know nothing of mercy as we understand it. All they know is holy and eternal obedience to the God who created them to serve Him and to gather round the throne, and being ministering spirits to those that shall be the heirs of salvation.

(Heb. 1:14) But it was necessary for Jesus to descend lower than the angels. He came down to the regions of sin to take the nature of man and to bare our sins in His body on the tree. This an angelic being could not do. Yet He Himself was without sin though this be the wonder of wonders. We must ever keep in mind that in heaven God could not come in contact with sin. To be made lower and equal with the angels would still not answer our needs; for an angel could not suffer for a man. But for Jesus to be made lower than the angels we have One with whom we can find communion for He took upon Him our infirmities.

He came down to earth that He might suffer in death. Listen to the wording, "But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." His suffering in death is the area, seemingly, which amazed the angels and rightly so, for it amazes us, too. How we sit and wonder when we think of the love of God to send His Son to suffer and to suffer to the extent that He did.

Oftentimes when someone we love dies, we reflect on just how they died. It seems to be a great comfort to the remaining to be able to say, "I'm so glad they didn't have to suffer". Dying seems bad enough to our weak nature, but suffering in death is worse. Many people die without suffering, and their families are greatly relieved. It is the desire of most, knowing that they must die, to hope that the Lord will spare them from suffering. "Lord, please don't let me suffer. Deliver me from pain", is our petition. Also, we don't want to be a burden on our families, and dread the thought of a long stay in the hospital or a nursing home. There are so many things we dread and fear regarding the subject of growing old and dying, and the suffering aspect is no doubt the greatest. But notice now that nearly always throughout the writings of the Epistles, the dying of Jesus is associ-

ated with suffering. He suffered first, and then He died. Jesus didn't just die, but He died suffering. He is truly the suffering Saviour, and He suffered for His people. A suffering Saviour, indeed! "We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death". He came for that express purpose. God prepared Him a body that He might suffer in when He died. Now brethren, can you enter into that thought. Jesus died of suffering. He didn't suffer because He needed to for Himself. He died suffering because you needed to. He died suffering because God's justice demanded suffering according to the Holy covenant. Jesus had entered into a covenant agreement with His Father from everlasting on our behalf. He came in order to be made lower than the angels so that the whole of His dying might be suffering. And we might add that the whole of His living was also suffering. A suffering angel could not even save himself much less the whole elect family. Thus Jesus must he made a little lower than the angels so that He might learn (accomplish) obedience by the things which He suffered. (Heb. 5:8)

From the time Jesus entered into this world He suffered. He suffered at the hands of Herod, so much so that His family fled with Him to Egypt. He suffered at the hands of the self-righteous Pharisees when they saw His works. He suffered the disbelief of His own family when they thought He had gone mad. He suffered untold agony in seeing His people commit sin. He suffered grief when He looked upon Jerusalem and so wept over it. He suffered when He saw the temple of God being desecrated by money changers. In everything about the life of our Lord, we see His suffering. He suffered an untold life of suffering. The whole of His life was filled with one unending amount of suffering. He was and is despised and rejected of man. "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief". (Isa. 53:3)

“But we see Jesus,” also in the following Old Testament scripture, “And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived”. (Num. 21:8, 9) What is the lesson here? Simply stated, it is look and live! They saw the serpent lifted up. They had been bitten by fiery serpents in the wilderness and a death sentence was pronounced upon them. They needed deliverance. God instructed Moses how to provide that deliverance. In this we see a figure of our great salvation as the Apostle John recorded it in the 3rd chapter of John. Observe first; was anyone told to go forward and lay hold of the serpent? Was it said that they should gaze for long periods to be delivered? Could they be rid of the poison by praying to the brazen serpent? No! Did they need perfect vision so that they might make out every detail of the serpent? No, when they looked they lived. You may say, “Well it was left up to them whether they looked or not”. Again, No, Never! Let me ask you this. Is it reasonable in natural things to say that a man dying of poison would refuse a remedy set before him? Would he say, “I will not have the remedy”? A dying man will grasp at most any straw. It is the nature of the case. How much more a poor sinner who feels the need of salvation and who has been made to feel the need of salvation by the power of the Spirit of Christ, will look to the Saviour when He manifests Himself to him, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness for those who were bitten by fiery serpents? It is the nature of the case because He makes them willing to look. He makes them long to look, and by faith they see their salvation. Truly, they may say, “we see Jesus”. He makes them realize that they

must look. That they have to look. And they will look. This is what the song writer meant when he said, “I can, I do believe”. He can believe because his God has given him power to believe, and he does believe because he couldn’t do anything else. He could sooner make a moon than fail to believe. We see Him as Moses lifted up a brazen serpent. We see Him made a little lower than the angels (for suffering), and all this that He might take all the elect family, and show them a saving view of Himself lifted up from suffering to be a complete Redeemer.

“That He by the grace of God should taste death for every man”. Lest our article swell beyond its bounds, we will conclude with this expression, “that He by the grace of God tasted death for every man.” It would appear that the “every man” is in contrast to the angels. Our Redeemer did not die for angels. He died for men. We would observe that the men that He died for will surely be saved. There can be no question about it. Would He suffer needlessly? Would He suffer only in anticipation? Could we dare believe that Jesus would come from the regions of Glory and lay His life down a ransom for many without the sure realization that all for whom He would die would certainly comprise His elect bride in Heaven? A thousand times, no! We cannot believe such a view as that. It appears very plain in the context that the every man referred to in Verse 9 would be the same as the many sons referred to in Verse 10, and that they are the same as the ones that are sanctified in Verse 11 and become of the “all one”. They are also in Verse 11 called brethren of which He is not ashamed to be identified with. Further in Verse 12 He says that He would declare His Name unto those brethren in the midst of the church so we would conclude also that the “every man” from Verse 9 is the same as the church in Verse 12. And then finally in Verse 13 when He says, “Behold I and the

children which God hath given me", we find the complete number there. All those who are children, children of God, those which God has given Jesus from everlasting are those for whom He tasted death and that by the grace of God.

What a marvelous doctrine we have. What a more marvelous salvation we have. And even above measure, what a wonderful Saviour. May our great God bless us to daily cry "Jesus, come quickly". May He bless us to long to see Him who is our Salvation, and may we be able with Paul to say, "But we see Jesus". What a sweet life it would be if we could see Jesus at all times, but we know that it is not intended. May we rest then in the sweet assurance that if we have seen Jesus, even a glimpse, we shall everlastingly see Him with a pure unsullied gaze in the world of glory.

(Elder) James F. Poole

Eden, N.C.

Dear Editors,

I am enclosing a check for another year's subscription for the *Signs of the Times*. Please use the remainder as needed. I enjoy the contents very much, especially the experiences and the trials and travels of the children of God.

May God bless the Editors and writers to continue sending the good news.

A Sister in Christ, I hope,
Lessie Wray Tilley

Troy, N.C.

Dear Editors,

Enclosed find a check for \$10.00 for the renewal of the *Signs of the Times* for another two years. The remainder is to be used as you need it most.

The dear *Signs*, with its contents, has been coming to me for a long time, and I look forward to each copy. May you be blessed to continue the publication.

In Christian love,
Mrs. Esther B. Cole

VOICES OF THE PAST

"He being dead yet speaketh"

SOUND INSTRUCTION

New York, N.Y., Feb. 11, 1918

Dear Brother Dodson:—Your letter of yesterday just received, and I will reply at once. Today and tomorrow are "workless" days, and I propose to employ most of the time in writing to members whom I have sadly neglected in correspondence. I am so far behind, however, so deeply in debt, that I cannot hope to write them all at this time. Perhaps I should give attention first to my longest outstanding obligations, instead of beginning by replying to the last letter received, but your letter is before me, my thoughts are of you and of the way of life you confess to, and I am impressed to write you first. We missed you yesterday, far more than you think. Our gathering together seemed incomplete without your presence; and to me especially was your absence noticeable, for your close attention and evident interest in the services is helpful and encouraging to me. Often there is comfort in feeling that within our measure, in preaching the gospel of Christ, we reach unto others. Your letter stirred my mind again to remember how dull in understanding I have been, from the beginning, of what be the first principles of the oracles of God. It passes understanding how the church could have continued for the past nineteen years to recognize me as a gospel minister, while I have been so indifferent to the fact that the gospel of the grace of God is in demonstration of his Spirit—the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, quickening our mortal bodies to newness of life, that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again. How presumptuous I have been all these years to indulge a hope that perhaps the Lord had set me apart

to minister spiritual things unto his saints, to be a helper of their joy, while I was barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Some time ago there appeared in the *Signs* an editorial on "Bible Reading." It has occasioned much thought and some comment among the brethren, especially the suggested possibility that, in the course of time, the name "Old School, or Primitive Baptist," may cease to be the name of our faith and order. That many of our churches are weak in membership is undeniable, but that fact is no reason for fearing the eventual loss of our name. I am persuaded that such loss will result sooner from failure to hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. It is not unusual for members and pastors of dying churches, in lamenting existing conditions, to excuse themselves of responsibility by making mention of their own righteousness in having maintained the order and good works of a gospel church. But in this the word of the Lord: "Hast thou not procured this unto thyself," &c.,— Jer. 2:17-19, does not speak by them. There is a cause and a reason for everything under the sun. "Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us."—Eccl. 1:10. The Scriptures testify of all that has, is now, or ever shall come to pass in the life of the church. They are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."—2 Tim. 3:16. Self-justification is denial of the faith once delivered unto the saints. Taking heed unto ourselves and our ways, that we sin not with our tongue, looking diligently lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble us, and thereby many be defiled, is holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. (2 Tim. 4:16; Psalms 39:1; Heb. 12:15; 1 Tim. 3:9.) Where there is great profession of zeal in mainaining order in churches there is usually manifest bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and

evil speaking; but bitterness against the persons of men is no part of the nature of the zeal of the Lord's house; quite the contrary. Its opposition to sin is chiefly against the iniquity of our own hearts. There is nothing in true christian zeal opposed to the spirit of meekness, gentleness and love—the spirit of a little child. The Scriptures expressly and clearly assert the absolute necessity of mercy, forgiveness and love, as exercises belonging to the character of the Child of God. They are positive in asserting that none can be truly saints but those who are of a spirit to pity and relieve the poor and needy. "The righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth."—Psalms 37:21. "He is ever merciful, and lendeth."—Verse 26. "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor."—Psalms 112:9. "He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the Lord."—Jer. 22:16. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."—Matt. 5:7. "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy."—James 2:13. And Christ, in describing the day of judgment, represents the different sentences as being passed, according as men have been merciful or otherwise. His design is to convince us that, unless this is our spirit, we can have no hope of being owned and accepted by him. The last day, or final judgment, will not be a trial of our hearts for the satisfaction of God's mind, but a declarative judgment, a manifestation of the justice of God to our own consciences. Hence the day of judgment is called the day of the "revelation of the righteous judgment of God."—Romans 2:5. In Scripture the terms, a righteous man, and a merciful man, are synonymous expressions. "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."—Isaiah 57:1. And a forgiving spirit, a disposition to overlook injuries,

Christ urges both negatively and positively. He expressly declares that if we are of such a spirit it is an evidence that our sins are forgiven, and that if we are not of such a spirit it is proof that we are not forgiven. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," is the manner of prayer he taught his disciples, and then he adds, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses."—Matt. 6:12, 14, 15. The Scriptures know nothing of a merciless, unforgiving, ill-tempered, contentious, malicious christian; a greater contradiction does not exist. The grace of God that bringeth salvation teaches us the denial of these things as having any place in a new creature. A remarkable change is confessed to by the subject of grace. "For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."—Titus 3:3-5. "In the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."—Col. 3:7, 8. Ministers are not altogether blameless for the hurt many churches have suffered. It cannot be denied that much of the evil deplored has been the consequence of failure to study to shew themselves approved unto God, as workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. The inevitable result from lording it over God's heritage, striving about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers, thinking we know anything, when we know nothing as we ought to know, is confusion and hurt. However steadfast we may be in main-

taining good works, we can never glory in our profitableness, for Jesus said unto his apostles: "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Is it not true that all who are contentious for their own judgment and understanding of order in the church, denouncing as corrupt all who, for conscience toward God, cannot walk according to their rule, are denying the faith of God's elect? "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."—I John 5:16. The spirit of true prayer is in fellowship with Christ—a fellowship of life; and that which is the animating principle of our life must be the animating principle of prayer. The prayer of love is that which esteems others better than ourselves, desires the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem, and is expressed in endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The sympathy of brotherly love expresses itself in prayer. As our chief concern is our own spiritual poverty and need, and as such neediness arises from sin, our sympathy for a brother will have special reference to the same need, which we feel to bear with him. In consciousness of our own weakness, our own need of continual redemption, we will be pitiful, merciful and kind. It is perfect love which feels as its own a brother's need. Sympathy, fervent desire for the good of an erring brother, is prayer, intercession prompted by love—a service of love. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." There is a sin unto death—a cutting off of our life from the fellowship of them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Paul made full proof of his ministry in taking heed unto himself, fearful lest he be overcome through the deceitfulness of

sin. He is wise to the weakness of his flesh and the nature of its works (Gal. 5:19-21,) when he said, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."—I Cor. 9:26, 27. Surely, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."—Matt. 7:14.

Your unworthy brother, in hope of life in Jesus,

JOHN McCONNELL

CIRCULAR LETTER (1884)

To the Church of the Smith River District Primitive Baptist Association -- We once more make the feeble attempt to address you with a Circular Letter. We call your attention to the Gospel recorded by Luke, 21st Chapter and part of the 36th verse. "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always". We understand this as addressed to the Church of God; we learn that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. In ancient times the Lord was sought unto for His blessings by some of His people, seeing the need of the same. Not only national but individual blessings. The children of God have been a dependent people in all ages of the world, and this is the reason why they go to the Lord for blessings. As far back as the days of Daniel the prophet, when the children of Israel were in bondage and he sought the Lord to bless that people, and God heard his supplication and sent an angel to inform Daniel that the time was drawing near when he would deliver His people and when they returned to Jerusalem God was glorified. Dear brethren and sisters, this ought with many other things that we find in the Scriptures to encourage us to go to the Lord when we feel cast down and forsaken. God's people not only seek in word but in deed and in truth. Christ said unto His

disciples, "seek and ye shall find". We believe one cause of the Church being established in her militant form is to show forth the praise of the Lord. Saints oftentimes feel like they can't praise the Lord. The Lord is not only praised in word but in deed, and one of the deeds is to assemble ourselves together. When the Church is in peace each one filling their seats there is no greater praise that ever ascends to the Lord. We believe that many of the chastisements of the Church is for neglect of assembling together in order to worship God. Dear brethren and sisters we remember the time when we thought our souls must go for our sins, and we hope the mercy of the Lord came to our relief at a time unexpected to us. Then we desired to tell God's people what the Lord had done for us. Let us call these things to our minds and not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another. When God's love dwells in our hearts our love is strong toward the union of God's people, and it does not stop here, for we desire to live peaceable with all men. When the love of the Lord sways our feelings then we can do as God's people anciently done, where it is said, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name". So God's care is the same towards them that think upon His name as it is towards them that speak. So dear saints let us try to honor God both in our bodies and our spirits which are His. So the saints don't feel worthy to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. The worthiness is not in the saints, but in Christ; for thou art worthy who hast redeemed us from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

May the God of peace be with us while we remain here on our pilgrimage, and at last bring us off more than conquerors through Him that loved us, where

God will be praised in a world that shall never end. Amen.

1884 Asa D. Shortt
(Submitted by Elder N. F. Conner)

The Gospel is a box of most precious ointment; by preaching it the box is broken and the fragrance diffused.

Romaine

OBITUARIES

SISTER RUTH TRAVIS

There is no power greater than love. It would be inhuman not to mourn the loss of one near and dear to our hearts. We deeply feel the loss of a precious one, Sister Ruth Travis.

The Lord called her spirit home on April 8, 1979; and we feel that she is now sleeping that peaceful sleep in Jesus. She was born to John and Dillie Smith on February 3, 1892; and most of her 87 years were spent overlooking the rolling hills of Caswell County, North Carolina.

She took the marriage vows with Brother Robert Travis in 1912; and after his death parted them in 1951, she faithfully remained his widow. This union was blessed with eight lovely children to whom she was a mother indeed.

Four children preceded her in death leaving three daughters, Mrs. Mable Redding, Mrs. Ola White, and Mrs. Lillie Somers; one son, Brother William Travis. They mourn the loss of a mother's love. Also, she leaves four grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Our precious Sister in hope united with the church at Bush Arbor in July, 1937, and was blessed to be a humble and faithful sister as long as she lived. She spoke of being the last of a group of elderly widows who sat together so many times.

Her funeral was conducted at her home church by her pastor, Elder Wallis Smith. She was laid to rest in the church cemetery beneath a mound of beautiful flowers that bloomed out and soon faded away, just as life on earth.

We believe that Sister Travis will be raised in the likeness of her Saviour and blessed to sing His praise in that house not made with hands eternally in the sky.

Written by request of the church at Bush Arbor. Clifton Robertson.

Elder Wallis Smith, Pastor
Brother Earl Rudd, Clerk

SISTER NORA CREWS

Sister Crews was born August 26, 1906 and died March 7, 1979, which made her stay on earth 72 years, 7 months and 19 days. She was married to the late Elijah Crews. To this union were born five children and four of them live to survive her passing.

Sister Nora was received in full fellowship to Cypress Creek on November 15, 1942, and was baptised by Elder R. P. Batchelor.

Sister Nora was faithful as long as her health permitted and was loved by all. She met everyone with a smile that only could come from our heavenly Father. I feel that she is sleeping, awaiting the return of Jesus to take her to that wonderful home where there is no sin and no parting. We are just waiting to meet her in that wonderful place.

Done by order of conference on Saturday before second Sunday in May, 1979. Three copies made, one for the church records, one for the family, and one sent to the *Signs of the Times* for publication.

A sister I hope,
Anna Simpson

FRANCES D. HARRISON

It is with a deep sense of unworthiness I try to write these lines in memory of Sister Frances Dupree Harrison.

I feel sure she was one of God's chosen little ones called by His grace. She was born September 22, 1889 the daughter of Julius and Mittie Dupree of Edgecombe County, North Carolina and passed away June 8, 1979 in a nursing home in Leonardtown, Maryland. Her funeral was conducted on Monday, June 11, 1979 at 11:00 at Pleasant Hill Primitive Baptist Church, by her pastor Elder Henry Jones.

Sister Harrison united with Pleasant Hill Primitive Baptist Church on the fourth Sunday in May, 1913 and was baptized by Elder George Boswell. She married Thurman L. Harrison June 2, 1914 and to this union were born twin girls, one died very young, the other, Mrs. Jessie Dare Green of Jackson-

ville, Florida survives, and one son, Thurman L. Harrison, Jr. of California, Maryland. Other survivors are two sisters, Mrs. Julia Stallings of Tarboro, North Carolina; Mrs. Orié Elliott of Norfolk, Virginia; eight grandchildren and thirteen great grandchildren.

She was laid to rest in the Dupree-Cherry Cemetery in Edgecombe County, North Carolina beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the coming of the Lord.

We at Pleasant Hill Church extend our deepest sympathy to Sister Harrison's family and friends.

Resolved that a copy of this obituary be sent to the family, one to the *Signs of the Times* for publication, and a copy be recorded on our church records.

Done by order of conference fourth Saturday, June 23, 1979 and submitted in love by:

Fannie Mae Harper

BROTHER JOSEPH RAYMOND PRIDGEN

By the request of the Mill Branch Primitive Baptist Church I will attempt to write a few lines in memory of our friend and brother, Joseph Raymond Pridgen. He was born October 1, 1903. He was the son of the late Debro Pridgen and Sister Bell Pridgen of Nash County. He is survived by his wife, Sister Myrtle Stallings Pridgen of Sharpsburg, N.C.; 4 sons, Al Joseph, Robert Elwood, of Rocky Mount, N.C., Jimmie Ray of Matthews, N.C., and James Warren of Sharpsburg, N.C.; 10 grandchildren; 2 great grandchildren; 2 brothers, Randolph Pridgen of Rocky Mount, N.C., and James Hubert Pridgen, of Wilson, N.C.

We knew him by his love and friendship. He will be missed in his family, and his friends, and in the community in which he lived. We, the Mill Branch Church, also will miss his presence with us. He attended our meetings whenever it was possible. He was blessed to have a hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, and asked for a home with us while he was in the Nash General Hospital in Rocky Mount, N.C. He was received in full fellowship in the Mill Branch Church in the presence of Brother Leon Griffin, Brother John Williams, Sister Betty Williams, his

wife, Sister Myrtle Pridgen, his son, Jimmie Pridgen, and Elder Harvey Holland, on September 21, 1978. In a few hours he passed from this life, we believe, to a home of eternal rest, on September 22, 1978.

Whereas it has pleased our Heavenly Father to remove him from our midst, we hope that our loss is his gain. May we be submissive to the will of our Lord Who makes no mistakes.

His funeral was conducted by Elder Harvey Holland, at Johnson's Funeral Home in Rocky Mount, N.C., and he was laid to rest in the Pineview Cemetery.

Elder Harvey Holland, Moderator
Sister Estelle J. Williford, Clerk

THEA WELLINGTON WHITEFIELD

My beloved husband, Thea Wellington Whitefield, passed away April 29, 1979, at the age of 83 years, and after years of afflictions. He was the youngest of ten children born to John Henry Whitefield and Cornelia Jane O'Briant of Person County.

He left behind to mourn our loss his wife, Esther Wilson Whitefield; one son, Clarence E. Whitefield of Durham; four daughters, Mrs. Iva Pearl Godwin of Okeechobee, Fla., Mrs. Foye Cole of Durham, N.C., Mrs. Esther Goetze of Raleigh, N.C., and Mrs. Lois Hanekamp of North Brook, Ill.; 21 grandchildren, and 15 great grandchildren, a large number of nieces and nephews, as well as Baptists in several states and friends.

His funeral was conducted in Durham Primitive Baptist Church on May 2, by Elder William Holland and Elder C. B. Davis. His remains were interred in O'Briant-Snipes Family burying ground in Person County to await the resurrection morning.

We were married December 23, 1915, by Elder J. A. Herndon in my Father's home, making our lives together over sixty-three years.

As far back as he could remember he had serious thoughts about death. His first spiritual trouble came when he was ten years old. He stayed in this trouble for about five years. Then he had a wonderful dream, and awakened by a trumpet which made him sore afraid. Just then he saw a bright light in the east, much brighter than the sun. Behold it was Jesus, in a purple robe with a crown on

His head. He felt himself rising, as singing was in the air with a promise that he would be carried there. He said it was the sweetest music he had ever heard.

Of course, this did not stay with him all the time. On Tuesday night before the first Sunday in June, 1914, he was cast down again. He felt like the children of Israel at the Red Sea. He got up and walked the floor begging God for mercy. Then he remembered his sweet dreams, which was some comfort. A strong impression came to him to ask the Church for a home, unworthy though he felt.

He promised God that if He would spare him until Saturday he would ask the church for a home. Then he fell across the bed and went to sleep. When he awoke his troubles were gone. On Saturday before the first Sunday in June, 1914, he went before the Primitive Baptists at Roxboro, telling a part of this and was received into their fellowship. After he had gone forward his aged Mother followed him and asked for a home, too. Both were baptized by Elder J. A. Herndon on Sunday morning. This was the happiest day he ever spent. All was love, peace, and joy.

Of course this did not last always. He had his doubts but loved to hear the gospel preached and the members sing the sweet songs of Zion.

He desired to be guided that he might not deceive the brethren, but be kept in the faith, giving all praise to His Holy Name, in whom we have righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, through His precious blood, which cleanseth us from all our sins and ever give all the praise to God to whom it belongs.

Remember me when at the Throne of Grace.

Your unworthy sister,
Esther W. Whitefield

ALICE SHOAF SNIDER

It is with a sad heart that I try to write the obituary of my Mother, Sister Alice Snider who was born June 9, 1891 in Davidson County, N.C., the daughter of the late William H. and Susan Sharpe Shoaf. She was the widow of the late Brother James A. Snider who preceded her in death 24 years. She departed this life on October 6, 1978, at the age of 87.

She is survived by five sons, L. Kern, G.

Reid, and J. Ray Snider of Charlotte, N.C., O. Leo Snider of Denton, N.C., and Philip L. Snider of Norfolk, Va.; one daughter, Elva Snider Crotts of Norfolk, Va., with whom she made her home for the last several years. Three sons preceded her in death, an infant son in 1934, Hal A. Snider who was killed by a car in 1974; J. Lacy, who passed away in May of 1978. Her last trip to Charlotte was to J. Lacy's funeral five months before her death. Also she leaves to mourn her passing 28 grandchildren, 33 great grandchildren, and one great great grandson; two sisters, Essie Swicegood, and Bertie Leonard of Davidson County, N.C. (Bertie has passed away since Sister Snider's death.)

Sister Snider was a member of the Norfolk Primitive Baptist Church in Norfolk Virginia. She attended her meetings regularly until the last several months when she was not able to go. Her Pastor, Elder Joseph Leggett visited her in her home and had prayer. She enjoyed his visits along with his wife and other members and friends who visited her. I feel the Lord was there. He is everywhere present and never leaves His people even though at times they think He is gone forever.

Sister Snider stood firm for the doctrine of election, salvation by grace, and the absolute predestination of all things. She was blessed to hold fast to that which was good. Her countenance, walk, and talk in life was to praise God from Whom all blessings flow.

Her funeral was conducted at the Davidson Funeral Home in Lexington, N.C., by Elder Amos Hash of Ferrum, Va., Elder Wallis Smith, of Burlington, N.C. Both Elders spoke so beautifully in the Name of Jesus. People of other churches said the services were so beautiful. The Lord does all things well.

Sister Snider was laid to rest in the Snider Cemetery in Davidson County, N.C., next to her husband under a beautiful mound of flowers to await the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Mother left this world with a smile on her face. How sweet it is to fall asleep in Jesus.

Written by her daughter who loved her and misses her presence, and has a precious hope to meet her some sweet day.

Elva Snider Crotts
Norfolk, Virginia