

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

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PROSPECTUS OF THE "SIGNS"

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." John 1-8.

The absolute predestination of all things.

Eternal, unconditional election.

The total depravity and just condemnation of fallen man.

That the atonement and redemption of Jesus Christ are for the elect only.

The sovereign, irresistible, and in all cases. Effectual work of the Holy Spirit, in regenerating and quickening the elect of God.

The final preservation and eternal happiness of all the sons of God, by grace.

The resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement.

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.

That there is no connection between church and state.

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EDITORIAL



ELDER J.R. WILLIAMS

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph. Chp.1, ver.11.

Trusting my mind will be directed along spiritual lines as I attempt to write a few thoughts in connection with the above reading, as some of our readers have desired.

The reader must first consider who is being addressed, and by whom are these precious promises being made, as the apostle writes. Ponder,

if we are not the saints at Ephesus, which we are not, can we claim by hope to be the faithful in Christ Jesus. These two groups are all that the apostle is speaking to. I believe at times, anyway, the Lord's people can express this claim. This being the case of a promise to us, then, and made by God to each of His people, how can the promise fail! All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

I can at times rejoice in this hope of being included in that inheritance left for all His people. Paul states, have obtained, not will be, meaning it is already accomplished, not might be, or any effort put forth to receive or earn by the work of the receiver. "By grace are ye saved."

My mind follows to express, if by grace, then no more by works. I think this saved by grace reaches farther than just eternal salvation. Our hope is sustained or revived daily by this grace, poured out to His dear ones, saved by grace through faith ready to be revealed at the last day. Unmerited favor of God daily, is all that keeps us here, also in a lively hope, if indeed we are in that number.

Then again we are strengthened as we read predestinated according to His purpose, no one else. How could the inheritance be worth anything if it wasn't predestinated, this meaning fixed or predetermined before hand. The final outcome of any cause can never be determined unless some power can govern all events that could effect the disposition of such. We find this true if He then, predestinates all things to work after the counsel of His own will, who can change or disannull. What could possibly prevent any of His in-

heritance from falling to those to whom it is promised.

We could never rejoice, rest from laboring or cease from working, unless we can see Him as having all events under His control.

The heir of an inheritance could never feel secure, in nature that is, if the thought arose, that someone else may inherit his portion, but it reads have obtained, already as sure as it will be at the last day. Can any other than His people claim that inheritance?

If every man's destiny wasn't already prefixed, predetermined, or prearranged, which ever you like to call it, would not there be confusion in the last day, according to the manner of men, to decide who was the rightful heir. I truly believe, and the Bible teaches, He has already predetermined all men's destiny or no man's is fixed or will ever be. Already written in the Lamb's book of life, none added none erased.

What ever His will it comes to pass or has already and it will continue, whether we like it, deny it or believe it. On this precious truth, His people have, do now, and will continue to praise Him from whom all blessings flow,--- because all things are working after the counsel of His own will, therefore, they have no reason to work or worry. He works and none can hinder, hinders and none can work. Thank God it's so.

Submitted in love,
Elder J. R. Williams

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Brother Cannaday,

I know that you have never met me before, but just knowing that you have been given to believe in the precious doctrine of grace makes me feel as though I do know you. How truly blessed we are to realize that "Salvation is of the Lord," and that he does indeed do his will in the army of heaven and upon the inhabitants of the earth. My father and mother told me a little of your situation and I felt a desire to write to you. If I am given anything that is of comfort to you, please give the Lord the praise for he alone can apply the promises in His word to the heart. In His Holy Word there is something that will meet every need whether we be carried up to the mountain or down to the lowest valley.

I can not say that I know and feel what trial and tribulation that you are going through; yet, we are to: "Bear ye one another's burdens." and my heart does go out to you. I think a beautiful scripture concerning tribulations is found in II Cor.1: 3-11. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." Yes, God alone comforts His little ones and then they can go and tell others, what good things that the Lord has done. When we go through trials, creature strength and dependence on others is

torn down, and we must cry unto the only one who can help us. v. 9 "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." Daddy mentioned that he was given to pray for you and verse 11 addresses the subject of prayer. I don't know what was said in the prayer, but I imagine it concerned a request that you would be given peace, comfort, strength, and a heart to look unto him. I'm sure that many others have prayed for you also. As the Lord sees fit to answer these prayers, thanks may be given by many on your behalf as verse 11 states.

In I Cor. 10:13 there is such a wonderful promise: "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." I don't think that this necessarily means that the trial will be taken away, but that He will give strength to bear it. "My grace is sufficient." "...and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. 13:5 "... cast down, but not destroyed; II Cor. 4:9. Any affliction that we are called to endure is but light and "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Our walk must be a walk of faith-- "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (II Cor. 4:16-18) There are two petitions made unto Jesus which should also be on our lips: "I believe,

help thou mine unbelief" and "Lord, increase our faith."

I'm sure at times your soul does feel cast down. David felt this way, too. He talks to his soul and questions himself as I think we should do also. In Psalm 42:5 he says, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why are thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. "In verse 6, David reflects back upon a time in his experience when the Lord helped him. Can we not draw comfort from the waymarks along our life's journey? David even though cast down knew that he would yet praise the Lord. Our hope is in God and "Yet the Lord will command His loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." v.8. Our souls must wait only upon God for our expectation is from Him. He is our rock and refuge. "Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us." Ps. 62:5-8. Have you not felt such sweet peace and comfort when given to fall upon your knees and pour forth your heart? This is the peace that passeth understanding.

As we sojourn here we shall have storms in our lives. Many times in the very midst of the storm, Jesus speaks to us as He did to His disciples in the ship, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" He speaks and there is a great calm, and we like the disciples marvel saying, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" It is as though He tells us, "Peace, be still."

What a blessing it is to believe in the Lord! "Whom have I in heaven but

thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. "Ps. 73:25-26. "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord." Ps. 104:33-34.

The natural man does not care for the things of the Lord and has no spiritual appetite. It takes the power of the Lord to give spiritual life -- to make the blind to see. In II Cor. 13:5 we are told to examine ourselves. The love of the brethren is mentioned in the Bible as a sweet evidence. Have you not felt this love swell up in your heart? Have you been given new desires? Have old things passed away? Do you not love the Lord? Have you been given a broken and contrite heart? Have you been given faith? These are all gifts of God. One promise that has been of comfort to me is found in Phil. 1:6 "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: You have been brought to see that only in Christ Jesus is your hope of salvation. To me this is surely part of that good work that He has performed in your poor soul.

May we ever praise the Lord Jesus for "Worthy is the Lamb." "Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord." Ps. 31:23-24. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God; and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you.." II Cor. 13:14.

Count your blessings; so goes the sayings:

Dear Editors of the Signs of the Times:

In looking back in mind, upon my past seventy-five (75) years upon this earth, and considering to some small degree, of blessings I have received all the days of my earthly life; I would say to one and all, it would be just as possible for me to count the grains of sand upon the seashores, as it would be possible for me to count the blessings I have received from my Lord and God of all grace and mercy. It is like a steady flowing stream of water, with each drop being a separate blessing unto this poor undeserving feeling sinner.

Knowing what I am by nature, it sometimes seems a wonder of wonders to me, of still receiving His grace and mercy. Oh what a merciful God is He. He said, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. Surely it must be simply by reason of His will alone; for without a doubt, I know that I have done nothing of myself to deserve them. I am a sinner here below, of that I surely do know, and so it follows that whatsoever of His grace I receive, it must be and is free grace. Thanks be unto "God" it is not for sale; for if good deeds on my part, determined my portion, then I never would have received any at all but condemnation from start to finish. Free grace and mercy is my only hope, that I might die in the presence of the Lord; if that be so, then all is well with me. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Praise His Holy name. He is my only hope, my only salvation, in both this world and that world to come. Salvation is of the Lord. I do hope and feel, I'm not

PSALM 25:1

Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

ashamed to own my Lord nor to defend His cause; not that He is in need of my defence oh no not that; for the Lord in whom I feel and hope is my trust, is in need of nothing, and most assuredly not from puny man. For anyone whom I or any other of mankind could help or assist in anyway, shape or form; could never be any God at all, except one of the god's many in whom I have no trust at all. For if I know my heart, I have absolutely no confidence in the flesh of poor puny fleshly sinful man, he who's heart is deceitful above all things, he who even comes forth into this world speaking lies. When we are in remembrance of what fleshy man really is, we no longer wonder at the flesh profiting nothing from the Holy Spirit. It (the flesh) will not seek it, for it does not want it; for it does not seek or want self condemnation, or condemnation of itself. But what it always and in every instance wants is, praise, praise and more praise. While in Holy truth, the One and only true and living three-one God of all grace and mercy is the only One to ever be worthy of any praise, honor and glory for anything whatsoever in both time and eternity. Some say that the absolute predestination of all things by the almighty God and Creator of all things, could not be gospel, by reason such would accuse God of being the author of wickedness or sin ; but without malice may I ask both you and I, have we ever committed an evil or wicked act that were not completely and totally voluntary on our part? and also, did not that sinful or wickedness drive as a result of our wicked intent and own purpose while performing that act? I believe so. God forbid, I should attempt to lessen the

awfulness of mankind's sins against our Creator God. But only as an attempt at stirring up our mind ; God willing, let us think upon these things, —had not sin entered the world by man, what purpose would grace, mercy, forgiveness, Salvation, or Christ suffering, bleeding, dieing and arising serve? If we had never sinned, and been shown how exceedingly sinful we had sinned against our God, and then been given a feeling of deliverance out from that awful condition, through that feeling of God's forgiveness, how could we ever in truth feel to say—He is my all in all; or though my stay be in hell, His Righteous Law approved it well. Without our feeling to be nothing and less than nothing, how could we see and feel His greatness, or feel the need to pray and beg for His mercy and grace. And so, God did and does have His good purpose in and for suffering and letting sin by mankind enter into this world. Oh no there could surely be any good in the commitment of sin itself; and yet still, can we deny that it was good for us, for it to be made known to us that our sins were exceedingly sinful against our God? I think so. I somehow am persuaded that the entirety of all our sins commitment, derives from none other than our wicked and sinful intent and own fleshly purpose in and for so performing an act, either in thought or action. Dear child of God, all my doubts are concerning myself. I am not aware of ever having a doubt of God's absolute surety and certainty of all things whatever has been or will be in every instance of all times, places and mannerisms, throughout all time and eternity. As when He said—Let there

be light, and there was light; except He Let it be, it just simply is impossible for it to be. The very existance of this earth and all worlds and all they contain are simply and only by reason His furnishings of all what make that a possibility, keep it in a continuing existance; and ending any part or portion or all of it in and at His already afore appointed time, circumstance, place and manner in which it did, does and shall surely come to pass. For with "God" uncertainty is non-existent, even the falling or landing of a drop of rain or a leaf of a tree; the thought of a brain, or that action or reaction whatever follows after that thought. If I have any knowledge at all (and I feel and hope I do by the grace of God) of the way and greatness of the all wise three-one God of all power, grace and mercy, then with everything that in me is, I declare to one and all that it came to me as a free (and unmerited on my part) gift from God. If not deceived in my heart, that gift of knowledge has confirmed me into not accepting anything one iota less than the absolute predestination of all (all) things by the almighty God and Creator of all things whatever has or do or shall exist. Man of himself (I conceed) does do two things, 1. sins against his Creator and 2. then brags or boast about it; even in the name of Religion. Now let me give just one instance of what man of himself has done, and most probably will do again; men will get together and gather up material such as dead timber, dead stone, dead brick or dead rock, and put together a building with mortar and or nails; and when finished, they and others will point to that building and say—that is the Church. Oh the wind or fire may come

along and destroy that building, or as they say the Church; then they go back again and construct another building of that same like dead timber etc. and once again call that the church also. Now let us prayerfully ask ourselves; Is that man constructed building worthy to be called the Church? or is that where the Lord said—upon this rock(Himself) I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, or is this worthy of being called the Church? Dear brethren, I believe you know the right answer, for I believe you in truth feel certain in your mind and heart, that no wind nor fire could ever destroy that Church the precious Lord builds. Now it surely is not my place, nor do I desire to condemn anyone, for calling a man constructed building the Church. I can (God willing,) only give my feelings concerning this, and that is—if man of himself taken any part in the building thereof, then I have no desire to be any part thereof. For my desire and hope is that I could be a small part of that Church the Lord builds.

Troy G. Shepard
Kitty Hawk, N.C.

Rt. 1, Box 145
Hampton, S.C. 29924

Dear Elder Key:

I tried to write and let you know a little about our church. We have been having some good meetings lately.

We are known as the Prince Williams Association. At one time we had nine churches, now only two. In 1948 we had a split that left us with five churches. Later on three have

disbanded leaving only two. We try by the blessings of the good Lord to carry on where our forefathers tried to. St. Paul Church now has only 47 members. My father, Elder Newton W. Terry served this church for 30 years. He passed away in 1959, my uncle, Philip Terry served until his death. Then we had to call Elders from other Associations to fill in. Then by the grace of God he gave us two young gifts. We are so thankful for them. They are well blessed to preach and we enjoy them very much.

Our church is located in Hampton, South Carolina in Hampton County.

Ninety miles from Columbia, South Carolina; 80 miles from Charleston, South Carolina; 60 miles from Savannah, Georgia and 60 miles from Augusta, Georgia.

I enjoy the Signs of the Times and wait for it. It makes a poor sinner like myself feel good to read of the goodness and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May the good Lord bless you that you may keep up the good work you are doing.

A Brother in Hope,
Newton W. Terry, Jr.

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



ST. PAUL PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

St. Paul Primitive Baptist Church was organized in 1874. It is located inside the City Limits on Highway 601, North Hampton, South Carolina.

Meetings are held on 2nd Sunday and the Saturday before - Saturday at 12:00 and Sunday at 11:00. Also, 3rd

and 4th Sundays at 11:00. On 2nd Saturday and Sunday we are served by Pastor Elder Terrell Harvey and on 4th Sunday by Pastor Elder Robert Dobson - 3rd Sunday by both.

We commune and wash feet two times a year, April and September.

 ARTICLES

 THE RESURRECTION
OF THE DEAD

In presenting our views on this subject, as in all other of our writings, we desire to adhere strictly to what is taught in the scriptures. The Apostle Paul realized that a great mystery enshrouded the Resurrection of the Dead; therefore, we hear him saying, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended," Phil.3:13. Evidently he meant by this that he did not fully understand all that there was to know about it, and we would do well in this day and time to follow his example, as well as to give earnest heed to his admonition concerning this matter. In the second verse of this same chapter, he says, "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." The great apostle is here warning against those who fight, who would stir up strife among the brethren on this issue, or cut off those whose views do not coincide with their own. Paul urged his brethren to "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. He says, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be

fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. 3:20-21. If our vile body has to be changed in order to be fashioned like unto his glorious body, it is quite evident that in the resurrection it will not be as it is now. There is abundant scriptural evidence to show that there will be a change. Consider for instance 1st Cor. 15:44,46 and 49: (1) "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." (2) "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual." (3) "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

While we affirm most emphatically that Christ arose from the dead and that the identical body which went into the tomb was the same body which came out of the tomb, we do not understand that the body is anywhere in the Scriptures declared to be "his glorious body". On the contrary, the record is that the body was especially prepared for him here in this world: witnesseth, "wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." From the record, again, we read: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him

that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people." Heb. 2:14-17. It was absolutely necessary for the Savior to come to where his people were—in the flesh—in their lost and ruined condition, in order that he might deliver them. It is written, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:3-4. John says, "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." John 1:14. Paul said, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," so Jesus came, as it was written of him, to do the will of God, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Heb. 10:10. It was, therefore, of the utmost importance that he should demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt that he not only had power to lay down his life, but most of all that he had power to take it up again. He had said to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it

up," and in order to verify his word, which could not possibly fail, whereby he was to put to open shame Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Roman soldiers, and all others who took part in crucifying him with wicked hands, it was absolutely necessary that the identical temple, or body, in which he had appeared before them here in this world should be the one to come forth from the tomb victorious on the third day, otherwise there might have been some semblance of truth in the false reports which they circulated by saying, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while he slept." Mat. 28:13. There were many infallible, or unmistakable proofs, which could not be gainsaid, of the fact that Jesus actually arose from the dead. He was seen by many of his disciples, by Cephas, then the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred at one time. These things we verily believe with all our heart and soul. The Scripture must needs have been fulfilled which had declared, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." This is the very essence of our faith, or the foundation upon which it rests, and without it all would be vain and we would yet be in our sins. And, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

There are some, however, who claim that Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high in a body of flesh, blood and bones, and that in the resurrection the bodies of the saints will be the same as we see them now; therefore, it is claimed, we will recognize each other in heaven. We have not yet found any scriptural

authority to support such an idea, and until we do we shall refuse to accept it. If not dreadfully mistaken, we have beheld him, by faith, the same as the prophet Isaiah did. He asked, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?" The one answer is, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." We understand that "Edom" means earthy, or fleshly, and so Paul comes along and says, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." He then goes on to say, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2nd Cor. 5:16-17. When Jesus had finished the work assigned to him by his Father here in this world, he himself prayed, saying, "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. The glory which he had with the Father before the world was did not consist of a body of flesh, blood and bone, for that was not assumed until he came into the world. John declares that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4:24. In the very outset of John's record he says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was the beginning with God." If God is a Spirit and the Word in the beginning was God, then the Word was Spirit, and if God heard his prayer, and he said, "The Father heareth me always," he must have glorified him with the same glory which

he had with the Father before the world was. We must conclude, therefore, that he is now with the Father and that they both are spiritual. Paul could very properly write to his Corinthian brethren then as follows: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." 1st Cor. 15:50. We have no less an authority than our Lord himself for saying, in substance, that earthly relationships cease in the resurrection. When the Sadducees came to him with the case of the woman who had had seven husbands, and asked whose wife she would be in the resurrection, he reproved them by saying, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Mat.22:29-32. Shall we question the fact of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob being alive with God in heaven today, and can anyone even attempt to describe the kind of body possessed by the angels of God? John could not describe the bodies to be possessed by the saints in glory, and we feel it would be wise for ordinary men not to undertake that which John could not do. He said, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth no 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." 1st

John 3:2. By way of emphasizing these words, let us repeat them: 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—not as he was when he was here in flesh. If Jesus is now as he was when he was here in the world, and we are to be like him, it would appear what we shall be, but this is contrary to what John says about the matter. It would seem to us that it should be sufficient for every saint to be assured of being like Jesus. The Psalmist said, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." Psalm 17:15. But Paul said, "Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" He answers his own question by saying, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest, is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare (or natural) grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it has pleased him." 1st Cor. 15: 35-38. In this connection, the same apostle wrote, "Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in vic-

tory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1st Cor. 15:51-58.

So far as we are concerned, no better illustration of this glorious mystery (and it is a mystery, regardless of what any man may say about it) can be found anywhere in the Bible than that given by Jesus, who 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. Do we not see typified here the very change which the apostle has been setting forth as that which is wrought in the grain of corn when it is put into the ground and comes forth anew? The grain of corn is composed of two parts, representing the two bodies—the natural and the spiritual; one sees corruption and returns to the earth from whence it came, but that which cannot be holden of death appears in a more glorified state. It does not by any means, however, lose its identity. It is corn when it is planted and it is still corn when it comes up even though it has a different body given to it. We verily believe that the creature who is known here in this life by his brethren and friends as LESTER DODSON, if indeed he be a subject of divine grace, will beyond all peradventure of a doubt be the one to sing praises eternally to God in that world which is

beyond this vale of tears, but he will then be bearing the image of the heavenly, and not the image of the earthy. Peter said, "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." Paul said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not, For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Phil. 1:21-24. After relating at some length to the church at Rome the corruptness of the flesh, he says, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He evidently expected to be delivered from it, and by giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord he tells us how this deliverance is to be brought about. Then, in writing to the Corinthians, he said: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing

that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight;) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." 2nd Cor. 5:1-8

The Scriptures all harmonize with each other, and there is not a single solitary Scripture in all of the Bible, when it is properly understood, that is not in full accord with the foregoing quotations. To literalize and physicalize the resurrection, in our humble opinion not only does not harmonize with the Scriptures, but belittles and detracts from the resurrection itself. It was a great condescension for our Lord to forsake the glory which he had with the Father before the world was and assume a life of humiliation, which subjected him to ignomy and shame, but it will be the GLORIFICATION of his people for them to appear in his likeness and be with him in glory.

Let us earnestly urge those who prefer to take the word of God as the man of their counsel, rather than accept the traditions of uninspired men, to diligently read their Bibles. Surely a matter as important as this one is to the Church was not overlooked or neglected by the Great Head of the Church and his immediate disciples, who both laid the foundation and builded thereupon. Both Jesus and his disciples frequently used the expression "the resurrection of the dead," but neither he nor they made use, at any time or place, of such expressions as "the resurrection of the dead bodies of the saints," "the resurrection of flesh and bone," or even "the resurrection of the body," Nor do we find any such ex-

pressions by any of them as his raising up dust bodies on the General Resurrection Day and reuniting them with the Spirit. On the contrary, they said something entirely different, according to our way of thinking, Jesus said, in the resurrection they shall be "as angels of God in heaven." Paul says (Heb. 2:16) "Verily he (Jesus) took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." We see here that the nature of the angels of God in heaven is not the same as the seed of Abraham here on earth, and since Jesus says in the resurrection they shall be as the angels of God in heaven, it is definitely certain that they will not be as the seed of Abraham, which possesses an earthly nature consisting of flesh, blood and bone. This should settle the matter for all time to those who prefer to accept what Jesus and Paul says rather than what any mere man may say. He gave another illustration which is more common and more readily understood by earthly creatures by citing what takes place when a corn of wheat is put into the earth. Very little is said by some who like to quote from 1st Cor. 15th chapter, about that portion of Paul's testimony where he said, "thou sowest not that body that shall be." He follows that up by saying, "But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him." Later on he says, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." It should be noted that the apostle says "there is a spiritual body," and not that there will be a spiritual body. Elsewhere we are quoting the words of Jesus to show that a spirit hath not flesh and bones. If the natural and the spiritual

are the same of what need would there be for the apostle to distinguish between them? They are separate and distinct, suited for separate worlds entirely, and Paul makes a very definite statement in 2nd Cor. 5:16 where he says, "though we have known Christ after the flesh (here in the world), yet now henceforth know we him no more." John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and doth not yet appear what shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." 1st John 3:2. This should suffice us, without quibbling over the matter. We are reminded here of what Joshua said to Israel: "If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the side of the flood (before regeneration) or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." If the unregenerate religious world is correct in their version of the resurrection, important as this matter is, may they not also be right about the rest? Years ago, we recall talking with the late Elder John McConnell, former pastor of the Ebenezer Church in New York City about having listened to some Minister speak what he felt was the truth, and we were somewhat puzzled to understand how he could preach what he did and remain where he was. Elder McConnell said while he may have spoken the truth to us he doubted that it was the truth to him. It was like God commanding the raven to feed the prophet. He did not feed the prophet with raven's food, but with

bread and fish which was what God had for his servant, and neither did the raven feed upon the prophet's food. Jesus said to the Jews which believed on him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Anyone can quote the Scriptures of eternal truth, but they are TRUTH only to those who are given to receive and understand them. We should be very careful about accepting a doctrine believed by worldly men, rather than clutch it to our bosom as gospel truth. We like to believe that the vast majority of those who have been called to follow in the footsteps of our Lord, sincerely desire to conform to the pattern laid down by Jesus and the Apostles. The Good Book is a model and it should not be emasculated, and neither should expressions be attributed to it which it does not contain. The prophet Isaiah said, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

One was asked how he arrived at a certain interpretation of a particular Scripture. He replied, "according to the rule of Greek Grammar." Another says in substance, "There is no mystery about the resurrection; it can all be explained by the use of the Dictionary." Still another says in effect, he will make certain of explaining the mystery by going to the root of the various English words which are to be found in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, etc. If the Lord's people are going to be dependent upon any such methods as these for a proper interpretation of the Scriptures, they are in a most pitiable condition. We

are persuaded that such is not the case, but instead God will reveal to them whatever is necessary for them to know.

Before concluding this part of our treatise, we wish to revert to Phil. 3:13. After Paul said, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended," he went on to say, "but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." If we correctly understand him, he meant to tell us that he had turned his back upon the things which he formerly believed in and practiced. Having part with Christ who was the first fruits of them who were to arise from the death and condemnation of the law, he saw the legal dispensation at an end; he was in a new world and was contemplating to some extent, at least, the things which pertain to the kingdom of our God. If we have been delivered from the powers of darkness and brought into the marvelous light of the gospel of his blessed Son we, too, should forget the things which are behind which we clung to in our unregenerate state, and press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Elder R. Lester Dodson

Experience of Elton C. Adams, Sr.

The year 1979 has come and gone but the memories still linger on. It was in that year that my heart stood still. I saw the sun shine in

seventy-nine. I saw it rain and saw it snow. I heard the wind blow. I went up high and was brought down low. I went real fast and was brought down slow. But thanks to God I'm still able to go.

I have many things on my mind. It seems like I have trouble talking about them, so maybe I can just write it down. I think when God has done so many things for a man he should tell his friends. But I just can't hold up and do it, so maybe I can just write it down. I have thought many times about Elder Tench coming to see me before I went for surgery. He asked me if I was not worried or afraid, I said no. He pointed up, I said that's what I mean. I just could not tell him all I would have like to that day.

Now going back a few years, I was riding on the car with another man going to work one night. We had to cross a railroad, when the car got on the track, it stopped. He could not get it cranked. Then the sound of the train whistle. I looked around and the train was so close to me I had to look up at the headlight. I could not move. Then the car cranked and off the track we went. Was that not the work of God.

It was not long after that, I was sitting out in the yard one night and was looking at so many stars. When the thought just went through my mind—God if you are up there, show me a sign. My eyes on one little spot, out came a star or meteorite and went streaking across the sky. Was that not the work of God. I heard a man say one time prayers are answered before asked. In this case that night looking up it sure looked like it to me.

Another incident. I had a few bad words with my wife. The next day when I came off from work, it was a

bad storm. I came out into the street in town. The lightning hit the light pole I was passing and then hit the next one in front of me. Stopping in the middle of the street the day before was the first thing that came to mind. We do have a Father to rule over us.

I was going to a school at the plant one time with only a sixth grade education. I felt a little behind most of the men in there. Most had finished school, some college. On the day for our last test, I sat at the table and silently said if God be with me I can pass. When the tests were finished, the teacher told us to switch papers with each other, then we would check them. After the answers were called out, the teacher asked if anyone had a paper that did not miss any, one man raised his hand. "Whose name is on your paper", the teacher asked. When he said E. C. Adams, my blood ran as cold as ice. Then after we went out on the job, around one hour later, the teacher came to me and said, "You missed one question on the test." I looked at him and said that's good.

I heard a man say one time that he was listening to a preacher and that he knew what the preacher was going to say before he said it. I thought that just did not sound right. Then one Saturday night at work, I was talking to a man, he said there was a Lambs Book of Life and on judgement day you would be shown where your name would have been if you were not saved. He said that you had to be baptized to be born again. He said you had to know you were saved. Then I told him I did not see it that way. There is a Lambs Book of Life that no man has been worthy to open it. But if your name was in it at the beginning, it would be there at the end of time. I

asked him if he would not consider a man that had been brought to the truth that he knew there was a living God. Would you say that man may be born again, but yet that man won't say that he knows that he is saved. Because he will have to wait until judgement day to know.

Then he looked at me, and said, "In other words, you give God full power." I said, "I do." Then he said, "You know, that does make sense." The next day I went to church, Elder Goad was speaking, he preached on everything we had talked about the night before. So I found myself sitting there knowing what the preacher was going to say before he said it. It can happen.

A few years back I was smoking 2 to 3 packs a day. I wanted to quit and did try several times but after a few hours, I thought I would go crazy or smoke. So back I would go again. It was in 1976, I was having bad pains in my chest. The doctor said they would have to do an exploratory operation. But I would have to wait two weeks before I could get in the hospital. I sat around and worried about a week and a half. Then late one evening I walked around my house. I was down on the east side when I looked up and there was a perfect white cross in a cloud. I called my wife, she was in the house; she did not hear me. Then I started to get her, I looked back and the cross was going away fast, then I thought well maybe it was just put there for me to see. Then it came to me, I am not alone. God knows what's going on. It's not right to worry about this. It is in God's hands now. There is only two things I can do and that is die or make it. Either way, it will be what God wants and that's good enough for me.

So I did not worry about it anymore. I did promise God or he told me, that if I made it I would never smoke any more. So the night before my surgery, I ran out of cigarettes. There was a man I knew in the next room. He came in to see me, I asked him for a cigarette, he gave me a pack and I smoked some of them. Then they came and got me the next morning for surgery. The next thing I knew, I could not set up, I could not fall over, I could not half breathe and could not see. I said my God help me! The nurse said Mr. Adams what is wrong. I never answered her. If anyone gave me a shot, I did not feel it but I did not suffer like that anymore. Then my wife came in one day, I told her I wanted a cigarette. She said you can't smoke in here. I told her no I would never smoke anymore. Till this day, I have not.

Then comes 1979, more pain in chest and down the arms. The doctors say I should go to Duke to get some test run. So when they rolled me up to the table they would do the test on, it was high on each side and down in the middle. I said silently God stay with me and guide these doctors hands. I had to be awake for them to do the test. Then I got on this table, they covered me with cloth and strapped me down. They went to work, I could see what they were doing on a TV. I could see the tube hanging down. I thought the love of God is there but you can't see a thing but walls and blood vessels. I had made it pretty good till now and then burning like I was on fire. I did not know till later they had gotten the tube hung in the muscles in my heart. They rolled the table up on one side and then the other. I don't think it could have burned any more if they had put red

hot coals in me. I screamed to the top of my voice and then could not get my breath back in. For a while like this then the pain was going away. I knew I was passing out or dieing I did not know which, but never was I afraid. God had to be with me that day. Then the doctors gave me oxygen and brought me back again. After two hours of this, the doctor said we are finished. They put me back on the stretcher and carried me back to my room. I was so weak I could not raise my head off the pillow. As going in my room, my wife walked beside me and said hi sugar. Well that hit the bottom of my heart. I could not speak, but cried I did to the top of my voice. Then the nurse said you are crying for joy aren't you. I bowed my head a little. I have dreamed many times of flying in the air over the mountains and houses. So after this, I can truly say I have been up high and been down low, but thanks to God I'm still able to go. I came home to stay two weeks before my surgery. It was in this time Elder Tench stood by my bed and asked me was I not worried or afraid. I did not miss one hour of sleep in the two weeks thinking about the operation.

On 4/30/79, around 6 a.m., they came to get me for surgery. I asked the nurse could I shave and brush my teeth. Then on the stretcher for surgery. After some eight hours in surgery, my heart had been stopped and started back. A machine to do my breathing, four artery's by-passed. Around 100 stitches put in my leg and chest. Then on the same day, I don't know the time maybe around 7 or 8 p.m., I had my brother say to me, I called mama and told her you were doing okay. It came to me then, they

have finished the operation, I had no pain at all, but could not speak or see. I raised my right hand and shook hands with my brother. I heard him say as he walked away he not only shook my hand he squeezed it. Then a few days later Elder Goad and others came to see me. I must have been asleep, my wife said you have company then I looked. There was Elder Goad standing in the prettiest dark blue water up to his waist. I batted my eyes and the water was gone. Was this not the work of God. When I came home, my wife went to town one day, she brought me back a book. She walked in beside my bed and said, I brought you a book Miracles Do Happen. I turned over on my face and cried to the top of my voice. I never looked at the book, we never talked about it anymore, but the thought that came to mind that I don't have to read about miracles in a book. I know they happen, they have happened to me.

I don't know where I may go when I die. My sins are many, but my blessings are too — all I can say is God I hope to see you. To all of you that have troubles and sickness, it is no need to worry all that will do is make things worse. Put your trust in God, he can take care of you. I don't know to whom I write this to, all I know is that it is on my chest and some of it has got to go. Many times in my life, I have been faced with problems and knowing not what to do. By not doing anything, I set and watch things be worked out. I could write much more but I think this will do. To you in the family, you may think I have lost my rocks. I feel fine, I know my days are numbered. No one can add an hour to them or take one away. I look forward to each

day.

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Editors

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

THE SEVENTH DAY

I am in Baton Rouge, and for some reason I felt impressed to write on the following subject. I have no doubt in my own mind, but what it is scripturally and experimentally true, but I find myself so very imperfect, sinful and defiled, I want someone else to pass on it.

It needs many corrections in language and punctuation, but before I would have time to do all this, I might destroy it as I have other writings; which might be better in this case. I don't know why I've stayed up till after midnight to write it, as I needed rest very badly.

We seemed wonderfully blessed at Rehobeth Sunday, if I'm not deceived, and we tried to use this subject. I feel we were blessed to go into it more extensively than this writing.

I hope the Lord will see fit to bless us with true righteous Sunshine and Spiritual exercise in this dark, cloudy and evil day of deception and degradation; when the spirit of anti-Christ is ascending out of that dark, bottomless pit. We are entirely dependent on Him to give us light and to keep us in it. Oh, how I do hope we have been called out of darkness into his marvelous light and glorious liberties of the children of God. We know all things work together for good to them that love God (I hope I am one of them) through his goodness and mercy. If so, no weapon that is formed against me will prosper, and every tongue of accusation will be condemned; because that wonderful Counsellor, who bore my sins, represents me, having died in my stead.

I have had some desire in the last few hours, to write a few thoughts, that have been presented to my mind relative to the subject, as presented in Exodus 20:8,9,10, and 11. Please read these scriptures, before proceeding to read this writing.

The Sabbath Day, literally in this instance, no doubt, is the remaining day of rest, after all the work was finished. It would readily stand to reason, that if the Lord had finished all his work, there was nothing else for Him to do but to rest or to cease from his labor, as is stated here and elsewhere in the scriptures.

Human minds, unless divinely enlightened, cannot begin to conceive of the greatness, glory and wonderfulness of all God's work in creation; of Heaven and earth and all the hosts thereof, to say nothing of the righteous, holy, divine and wise purpose for which they were created,

and which they all fulfill to a jot and tittle, to his glory and praise, and to the good of his people.

God gave his people the seventh day, as a day of rest, but gave them six days, before the day of rest, and commanded them to do all their work in these six days and to do no work on the seventh, but to rest or keep it holy; even as He had finished all his work in six days and rested the seventh. They were commanded under strict penalty of death, if they were found doing any work on that day, even as much as gathering sticks to kindle a fire.

Now, dear reader, I am sure our finite minds are far too inferior, and our understanding is insufficient, to be able to express this wonderful, deep and solemn subject, but I desire to say, that I believe that every phase of each commandment and ordinance, was written aforetime, and was written for our learning, that we (even at the present) might have hope and consolation. Therefore, there is a sense in which all these scriptural laws and ordinances are applicable now, or at least, that is my humble opinion. For example, the Ten Commandments were spoken by the Lord, himself, in fact they are his word. The scriptures say the word of the Lord endureth forever, from generation to generation.

In another place it says, whatsoever he doeth it shall be forever. Then his words, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," is as much in effect today, in an anti-typical sense, as it was in a typical sense, when commanded by the Lord to Israel.

I want to be understood. I don't feel that we are under the literal commandment to abstain from all

literal physical labor on the Sabbath day, as the Jews then were. We are not faced with that punishment of death in the literal sense as they were. There is a sense through Christ, after the inward man, that the children of God are still under command to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. It is always they have done fully six days' work, after which they are always weary, faint or tired. In other words, it is after they have worked themselves out of tools and timber, and have fallen flat on the mercies of God, who through Jesus, has finished the work of redemption and salvation.

Now, it seems clear to me, that this great subject is amply verified in the old and new covenants as expressed in the 8th chapter of Hebrew; (read it). In the old covenant it is implied that they were taken by the hand to be led out of literal Egypt. They transgressed and were subject to the most serious punishment as a consequence. The new covenant was not according to the old. The Lord gives them a new and soft heart, and He makes a new covenant with them. He writes his law in their hearts and puts it in their minds in such a way, that they are safe from violation. They are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Also, in John's language it says. "He that is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Then if it was sin for the children of Israel to work on the Sabbath day literally, so it also would be, for God's people to work in this Gospel Sabbath day. Wherein Jesus

came to seek and to save that which was lost (not lost now, but is saved), so Jesus finished the work which his Father gave him to do. It has been the Sabbath of rest, from that day till now and ever will be to his people, because the work is finished.

When the Light of God's blessed Spirit is revealed from Heaven, in our poor benighted souls, then we are brought to see our lost and ruined condition before him. After six days of hardwork, we are brought to our wits end, or to the ends of the earth. Then the blessed Saviour says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," Mark the word rest in this text. The six days are over, when the blessed Lord gives us this sweet rest, in foretaste.

The opposite doctrine to this is that Jesus gives poor sinners a job; but not so. He gives them rest. At his command, they take his yoke upon them, not voluntarily, as all legalists believe, but through the constraining love of Christ which is shed abroad in their hearts. And Oh, dear reader, how easy is that blessed yoke that Jesus gives his poor, humble and bewildered ones, who are weary from a full week's work!

This yoke Jesus gives them off from their own works and constrains them to cease from them and their burdens. They learn of Him, that He finished all the work of their salvation and their entire six days' work is in vain, so far as saving them is concerned. How light is the burden of the precious Saviour to a poor, wayworn pilgrim. His thoughts and burden have been that he must do something. When he learns of Jesus that the work

is finished, Oh, how light is this precious burden and how easy is this yoke. The customary way to fit an animal for work is to yoke him to it, but in this case they are yoked off from their works, and are given to rest. It is the Sabbath and they are yoked to keep it. That yoke is quite different from any yoke formed by earthly wisdom and skill, for they are yoked to rest. David described this when he said, "He leadeth me beside the still waters; he maketh me to lie down in green pastures." Many others also described this beautiful, easy yoke and light burden of Jesus, the blessed Saviour.

In the 4th Chapter of Hebrews it is said, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Just the opposite to what blind nature believes and advocates. They all believe and advocate works as essential to salvation. It is positively declared that it is rest that remaineth to the people of God. When you see people working in order to save themselves, or someone else, you may know they are not remembering the Sabbath day; and by this you may know, it is Monday, so to speak, with them. And to clearly show this same doctrine, it is almost universally believed that anyone can help in the salvation of sinners. It must be remembered in the anti-type, no man, nor his man-servant, his son nor his daughter, nor his ox nor his ass, is to do any work on this holy day. That is why we advocate that the sinner cannot do any work for himself, neither can all his closest relatives, nor his ox, which all have their anti-typical place and meaning.

Now there is quite a difference in the old and new covenants. Under the

old so far as Abraham and his seed were concerned, after the flesh, it was impossible for them to keep the law. The new covenant is exactly opposite. He that is born of God doth not commit sin. He remembers that Sabbath day to keep it holy, not through the carnal or Adamic efforts of nature, but after the inward man or the new man. "For if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature." He has the new covenant of Grace. He has the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus and is made free from the law of sin and death.

He believes in his heart, although when delivered to the fleshly mind, he will at least to some extent, practice works just like anyone else. But as Paul said, "It is no longer I that doeth it, but sin that dwelleth in me." So then, the being, soul or spirit that is in the child of God, or that he possesses, sins not, and he always remembers the Sabbath day and keeps it holy, through the light and influence and yoke of the blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, who works in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. "They are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before ordained that they should walk in them." So it is a good work that is worked in them to remember the Holy Sabbath of rest, of the finished work of redemption and salvation.

Christ said, "I have finished the work." Then the six days are over, and when the light of the Saviour reveals this to us, we cease from our works. We enter into that rest the Saviour gives. How sweet it is to the poor, humble child of God, when this beautiful Sabbath begins to dawn from the darkness and toil to a full

week's work, which has been all in vain. When the Sun is above all the timber, and shining above the brightness of the noonday; when the blessed Saviour gives us that rest and trust in him as the Lamb that taketh away our sins, we are overcome with joy and gladness; and this is truly the Sabbath of the Lord.

The work is over, sweet rest is ours to enjoy. But as long as we are in the flesh, there will come other days of the week and we will still find ourselves entangled, through our fleshly mind. The light of this beautiful Sabbath will often be obscured and we will, to some extent, become burdened in our experience. The blessed Saviour visits us again and again and restores the joys of our salvation, and gives us rest and peace and blessed satisfaction in him.

The eternal Sabbath is in existence, so to speak, even as all the host of Heaven and earth are finished, but we are only given the earnest of our inheritance here below, which means the interest on the whole. So if the little seasons of rest that are manifested or given to us, are so sweet and glorious and precious here in time, what will the principal or the fullness of this inheritance be in that rest beyond the shades of death and the shores of time, when we shall have laid down this vile, corrupt and sinful body, wherein we groan and weep and mourn?

When we come forth formed and fashioned like our blessed Saviour, without sin and corruption, then we will always live, body and soul, in that eternal Sabbath. No more of the toil, groans and afflictions, as we are subject to in the flesh, but eternal,

glorious and peaceful rest, as is expressed in Revelation 14:13, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, sayeth the Spirit, they shall rest from their labors; and their works do follow them, are the works that God works in them, both to will and to do his own good pleasure.

Also in Revelation 7th chapter we find that John saw these same people (who are given to remember the Sabbath to keep it holy) stand before God in white raiment. So they have kept the Sabbath in the Spirit of Christ, and all the other commandments, and they have cried salvation be unto our God and unto him that sitteth on the throne. Notice what they cried; and look around and see who they are. They also have washed their robes, not in literal water nor human cleansing, nor in their own works, because they have remembered the Sabbath day and kept it holy. Therefore, they have ceased from their own works as God did from his. (See Hebrews 4th chapter.)

The best of Revelation 7 is where He said, "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Oh, dear child of the heavenly kingdom, how I humbly hope at times, if not deceived, that I am one of those that have been made to feel the sweet yoke and burden and rest of Christ the Saviour. And that some day all tears of sorrow shall be wiped away and I may be given to praise and glorify the blessed Saviour forever and ever, with all those who have come out of

tribulations.

Elder R.W. Rhodes

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR OCTOBER

Tim C. Barron, TX	12.00
W.B. Aaron, NC.....	7.00
E.B. Dotson, TX.....	2.00
Eld. Graydon Smith, LA.....	5.00
Mrs. Joel Alexander, AL	7.00
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Orville R. Beatty, PA.....	20.00
Mrs. Jessie Whaley, NC	2.00

OBITUARIES

ELTON C. ADAMS, SR.

With sad heart I will attempt to write the obituary of my Dear husband, Elton C. Adams. He was born August 24, 1934, the son of the late Charlie and Viola Adams. He passed away April 29, 1987. He was married to Eliza Brumfield Adams on July 3, 1954 and to this union two children were born, Elton Collin Adams, Jr. and Jennifer Wagman. Also surviving are four grandchildren, Ashleigh and Lindsey Adams; Brandon and Shannon Wagman; Three brothers, Lloyd Adams, Richmond, Virginia, Donald Adams, Gretna, Va., Larry Adams, Evington, Va. Also three sisters Elva Campbell Shipman, Va. Naomie Myers, Hurt, Va.,

Elton was a firm believer in salvation by grace, although he never offered to the Church, he was a precious borderline to Weatherford Church. On his death bed he said, "I don't feel I am good enough to belong to the Church." He talked to some of the brethren on Sunday before he died on Wednesday and told them he didn't know if he would go to Heaven, but he had a hope. Dear ones, I believe this is all we need in this life. On another occasion he talked with two brethren from Weatherford Church, Elder Raymond Goad and Brother Marvin Brumfield about one of his experiences. He told them the Lord spoke to him in a strong voice and called him by his name, "Elton this is the Lord speaking." Oh! how sweet this must have been to hear the

Lord call his name.

Elton had a battle with cancer from 1981 and was in and out of the hospital since October 1986. He never complained about his illness, but he believed there was a reason for it. He fought a good fight and kept the faith. The Lord made his dying bed as soft as downy pillows are. Two days before he passed away, he told me he was going to leave me. He was talking so sweet to the children and I, and the sweetest smile came across his face and he said, "Jesus it feels so good." He told us how much he loved us and said to tell everyone I love them. He said I am so happy but tired. I was sitting by his bed and he said to me, "Do you see the rainbow?" I didn't see it but I hope some sweet day I will.

Elton was a loving and caring Husband and Father. I feel he was loved by our friends and neighbors in our community. This spoke for itself by the Church being full the day of his Funeral. His Funeral was conducted at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church on May 1, 1987 by Elders O. K. Tench, Raymond Goad and Brother Marvin Brumfield. His body was laid to rest in the Church Cemetery awaiting the second coming of our Dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It would be hard to say how much I miss him for there is a vacancy that can never be filled. I can not wish him back, he has suffered enough. He believed his days were numbered. May the Grace of God give each one that feels the loss so great, strength to carry on.

Written by his Wife,
Eliza B. Adams

Signs of the Times

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THE VALLEY

I have been through the valley of weeping,

*The valley of sorrow and pain;
But the "God of all comfort" was with me,*

At hand to uphold and sustain.

As the earth needs the clouds and the sunshine,

*Our souls need both sorrow and joy;
So He places us oft in the furnace,
The dross from the gold to destroy.*

When He leads through some valley of trouble,

*His powerful hand we can trace;
For the trials and sorrows He sends us
Are part of His lessons of grace.*

Oft we shrink from the purging and pruning,

*Forgetting the Husbandman knows
The deeper the cutting and paring,
The richer the cluster that grows.*

Well He knows that affliction is needed;

*He has a wise purpose in view,
And in the dark valley He whispers,
"Hereafter thou'lt know what I do."*

As we travel through life's shadowed valley,

*Fresh springs of His love ever rise;
And we learn that our sorrows and losses*

Are blessings just sent in disguise.

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We suffer a great loss by the death of Elder Joe L. Hamrick of Route 4, Box 21 A, Winnsboro, TX. Elder Hamrick was an associate editor of The Signs of the Times and he pastored several churches in his area. He died December 21, 1987—a memorial for him will follow in the March issue of the Signs.

Editors

EDITORIAL



Elder W.D. Griffin

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

If you feel to do so, draw up a comfortable chair and let us behold the dealings

of the Lord with His children. It is true that I have not mastered the way of God to that depth that some seem to have been able to do, but I am living in hope of a fuller understanding some day to where that I might lay hold on eternal life to such a depth and height that I can say, I know in whom I have believed and that I shall yet see Him as He is, and be like Him.

I would hope for each of us that we might be given grace to examine the text in the light of divine revelation. To the law and to the testimony; if their interpretation of the text does not match and correlate with the text, it is because there is not any light in them. The text interprets itself, but it will not bear any explanations nor interpretations. It is the truth just like it is recorded.

Again I say that I want to know more about my acceptance in the covenant of grace, yet, I would not exchange my hope in this promise of God, which is the allegory of the two covenants. Let us remember that each and every apostle wrote the truth; in fact, all that each of them wrote was the truth. One part, or any part, or all scripture was, and is, truth. Therefore, the text is the truth. Not only were the brethren at Galatia children or promise, as was Isaac, but all the children of God who were addressed by any sacred writer were as much children of promise, as was Isaac, wherever they sojourned when they were written to, but they were then as they still are, children of promise.

Every promise of God to His children is kept. His children are confident of this truth (Phil.1:6: Psa.138:8). Everything that God ever introduced

to any one of His children, He kept that promise. He did not get side tracked from His intention and leave it in the hand of a prophet, or an apostle, or some other subordinate official. We are assured that He that begins a good work will finish it, for there are not any unfinished projects left standing anywhere in the world that God started and did not finish. That is worth remembering as we contemplate the beauties in our text. Now who did begin this work with Abraham? Did Abraham? I would like to have an answer from you. If Abraham had an original thought like unto the narrative laid down in the Bible, then the Old Primitive Baptist people had as well close their meeting house doors and go home. Did Abraham initiate the movement? Did he hunt up God and make Him a proposition? You say that he did not. Good. We have a good text. It is about that which God originated. It has some good things in it. Let us, as blessed of God, look further into the matter.

Before we leave the beginning of the relationship between Abraham and God, let us look back for a moment. Suppose God had listened at Abraham and had recognized the work of Abraham, Hagar and Sarah? This would have necessitated the closing of every Primitive Baptist Church in the land. Let us remember that not one thing of all three of the three conspirants had a thing in the world to do with Isaac's being born of Sarah. How did he get to be? It is not a case wherein the most of the credit goes to God. It just is not that way for anybody to be a brother to him except by the direct and immediate work of God. If there is more than one way for

a sinner to be saved other than by the sure promise of God, let us hear how it comes about.

God did not recognize any of Abraham's work. Especially notable is the fact that his son by Hagar, his wife's handmaid did not heir. Only an heir would be counted that was Abraham's own child. Yet, according to nature, there was not any way for Abraham to beget one child much less the numerous mentioning of his seed being as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands of the seashore. Let us remember the text says rather distinctly, and we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. God promised this many heirs to Abraham and Sarah. He promised them after they were too old to get children or to conceive them. As Brother Shockly, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland used to say, God clinched the doctrine of God making a promise to give Eternal Life to as many as were chosen to salvation. No man, nor no set of men, not no nation of men, no, and not even a world of religious zealots can promise one addition to the number of God's children and be able to deliver it. I am not afraid to make that assertion. Nor am I afraid to make the assertion that of all that God promised to save, that every one of them will be saved. The doctrine of God's sovereign election clinches the safety of each and every one of them.

The promise of God to Abraham was the greatest promise ever made to a married couple. God knows everything about everything. It is the height and the depth of all things at the time of promising such a numerous seed. AND HE KNEW THE NOR-

MAL INCAPACITY OF THEM HAVING ANY SEED AFTER THEM. Yet He make the promise. What were the premises that supported God's promise? What, if anything, was lacking in His promise that Abraham should beget, and that Sarah should conceive and start this lengthy number of heirs? Have we been led to believe that a single promise that God has made His people has ever failed?

Banish the thought. The same God inspired each writer in the New Testament. It was truth that Paul wrote to the church at Galatia, and it was truth that Peter wrote to the elect family of God. As Isaac was a promised elect heir, even so is the one promise that brought the birth of Isaac to full fruition brought every one of that numerous host of heirs.

Although, had the plan of the members of the first aid society worked it would have put the mocking Ishmaelite as the rightful heir, yet, as in all man made plans, it failed, it did not deter him from mocking the promised child. I write plain things but they are sacred matters, and will do you good. Sarah laughed when the news was told here that she would, at her great age, conceive and bear a son. There is not any doubt that many of my readers have been jeered at and sneered at because, as the mocking Ishmaelite has sneered at the wrinkled and aged and decrepit condition of the old order of Baptists. In my mind I have heard his remarks as Isaac nursed the wrinkled breast of Sarah. Spiritually speaking, people of the Ishmaelite stripe have sneered at the Lord's humble followers as they gathered together in our little church abodes and enjoyed the simple gospel truths

brought to them by divine grace.

The works of the creature, originated in his or her mind, executed by them, regardless of how pious they may be, have never, and will never, bring salvation to a son or daughter of the Adamic race. Salvation is not attained by works of righteousness, but it is attained by the mercy of God (Titus 3:5). It seems like that such a statement should forever settle the matter. Moreover, salvation is not attained by the works of the creature regardless of the kind that they are (2 Tim.1:9). Therefore, it is a settled matter that the scheming endeavors of all that had a hand in the birth of Ishmael was of no avail of making him an heir of Abraham. If their deeds had of contributed to that end, the text would not be in the Bible. The well laid plot to put Ishmael in as the legal heir would have been heralded from one side of the Bible to the other. But instead he was put out of Abraham's household, and certainly did not heir as the seed of Abraham.

The failure of this scheme sounded forever the death knell of the creature salvation theory. It fell then and there. It having fallen in execution, from that day until now the gospel news has been sounded throughout Christendom to every poor sinner that they are members of the body of Christ by promise, as was Isaac.

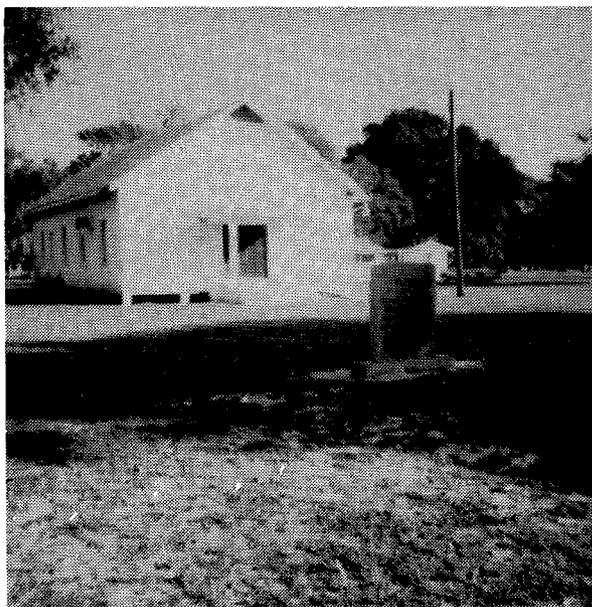
How clearly Paul reasons the matter. What divine force is interjected in this memorable treatise on the two covenants. Yet, with all the force of God's hiding power, the veil is still secluding the beauty and the freedom from those that would follow Ishmael. Although he was driven out with gifts that perished with the using, yet the

mass of the religious world is paying homage and adoration to him and to the law (Hagar), and will continue to do so until such time as the Lord is pleased to remove the veil from before their eyes. One, if not the most important of all, of the blessings accorded the brethren of Isaac is that God has granted them seeing eyes to

see the fallacy of the law for salvation as exemplified in the case of Ishmael and his mother, Hagar. People at large do not see, and even do not want to see, that all those trusting in the law are perishing by the law, as far as gospel blessings go.

Elder W. D. Griffin

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



MT. ENON PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

The church was constituted in May, 1867 and called Elder James Moseley for her pastor. Other known pastors were Elder John W. Futch, Elder E. J. DeVane, Elder W. O. Futch, Elder E. P. Stott and at the

present you unworthy servant, Elder Fred B. Neikirk. The meeting house is located near Plant City, Florida off I-4 between exits 14 and 15. Our regular meeting time is the second Sunday in each month and Saturday before.

 ARTICLES

The Resurrection of the Dead

ROMANS 8:11

“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

We do not understand this Scripture as applying to the raising of our dust bodies on what is termed the “General Resurrection Day”, but rather that its application is to the militant church here in this time state. We shall, therefore, undertake to present the evidence, as we see it, which supports this point of view. In the very first verse of this chapter the apostle says: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.” We will all doubtless agree that so far as that life which is beyond this vale of tears is concerned, there is now no condemnation to those who were chosen in Christ Jesus, but according to the language as we interpret it, there still is condemnation here in this life to God’s people who walk after the flesh. Both our experience and the Scriptures bear testimony to this truth. Paul says, “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour

the adversaries.” Heb. 10:26-27. Following on in the chapter containing our text, the apostle shows how the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, which is attributed to the fact that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death. He points to what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, and this necessitated God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh. He clearly shows that “they that are after the flesh do mind the thing of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” Continuing with this line of reasoning he says, “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Then he makes a positive statement to the effect that “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” His definite and final conclusion, therefore, is “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Here, again, we believe, all will agree that the natural man, as such, cannot please God. There must be first the work of regeneration wrought in him and faith given before he can walk acceptably before God. Paul, therefore, tells his Roman brethren that “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” Then he goes on to say, “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” We might well inquire, how are we to be made aware of these glorious truths? Here is where our text come in and explains it by saying, “But if the Spirit of him

that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." It was God who raised up Jesus from the dead, and we are persuaded that his Spirit must quicken our mortal bodies before we can have any part in glorifying God in our bodies and in our spirits which are his. Saul of Tarsus realized full well the necessity of this quickening in his own case, and after experiencing it Paul (for he was even given a new name) was qualified to speak with authority to similar characters among the Ephesians, saying, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Eph. 2:1-3. This is all applicable to the experience of the children of grace here in this world.

The verse immediately following our text reads as follows: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh." The conjunction, "therefore", shows conclusively to our mind that that which follows is inseparably linked to and becomes a part of that which went before, and this meant that those quickened characters whom Paul was addressing as brethren, "are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh," and he warns them of the result by saying, "For is ye live after the flesh,

ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." If these Scriptures do not substantiate our claim that the text deals with the life of God's people here in the flesh, we would not know what form of speech could be employed that would. The purpose of language, when properly used, is to convey what is meant, and in order to get the proper meaning we must not lose sight of that which surrounds the subject. Neither should we lift bodily a Scripture out of its setting and place it where it does not belong. It should be allowed to remain in its own native environment if it is to produce the results and serve the purpose for which it was originally intended.

There is such an abundance of evidence which follows on in this chapter to support our conclusion, and the importance of the subject is such that we feel compelled to present more of it here: (1) "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; (2) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together; (3) 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; (4) For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; (5) Because the creature itself also shall

be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body; (6) For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it; (7) Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." We repeat, if language means anything at all, it would certainly seem to us that these Scriptures deal with the children of God while they live here in this world.

Some years ago we recall reading an article written on the twenty-eighth verse of this chapter, which reads as follows: "As we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." In that article the writer maintained that what the apostle actually meant to set forth was that ALL GOOD THINGS work together for good, etc. We later wrote on the same subject through the Signs and said in substance that, since the apostle did not write these things of himself, but wrote as he was wrought upon and moved by the Holy Ghost, there could not possibly be any mistake as to what he said or what he meant, for his mind was even filled with the words supplied by the Holy

Ghost to express the thought intended. The most learned of mankind often fail to choose the right words to correctly express their meaning, but the Holy Ghost, never. We feel the same way regarding our text. Had the text meant to refer to the quickening of dead bodies, at some far distant future time, unquestionably the Holy Ghost would have directed the apostle to so declare, but since it specifically says mortal bodies, which means bodies that are subject to death, we must accept it at its face value, unless we are will to have the Scriptures changed, and this we cannot consent to or permit.

We said in the outset of this article that we understood the text to refer to the quickening which God's people experience here in this time state, but we would not for the world leave our readers in doubt or even have them suspect that our hope, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, does not enter into that which is within the veil, whither the fore-runner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. This eighth chapter of Romans is one of the most wonderful in all of the Bible to us. Not only does the Apostle Paul set forth herein the things both of the flesh and the spirit, but he shows clearly to our mind how we are to be partakers of spiritual things, which is by the very same quickening power of God which wrought in Christ in raising him from the dead. He then assures those of us who are thus quickened that all things shall work together for our good, and finally and best of all he declares in no uncertain terms that nothing, not even DEATH itself, shall

be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. While we firmly believe that our text deals with God's children in this life, we equally and just as firmly believe that the latter portion of this chapter deals with the hereafter, or that which is beyond this vale of tears. In this connection, we would like to invite the attention of our readers particularly to the expression of the apostle in the thirty-fifth verse where he asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" We have purposely italicized the plural pronoun US. Please note the apostle does not ask who shall separate our spirit from the love of Christ, or the Spirit of Christ, and neither does he speak of either the soul or the body. There must be a reason why he did not differentiate between and mention them separately. If these bodies of flesh and bones in which we live here, which were formed of the dust of the ground, and concerning which the Lord said to Adam, "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," (Gen. 3:19) were a part of the us referred to by Paul, death would at least separate this part of us from the love of God until we are raised, but the language of the apostle will not permit of any such conclusion. Incidentally, God is unchangeable and eternally the same, yesterday, today and forever, and we have never yet discovered between the lids of the Bible where he has revoked or altered in any degree whatsoever his decree or declaration to Adam that "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." To better understand what the apostle had under consideration, since the Scriptures are their own best interpreters,

let us bring forth some other Scriptures which bear upon this point. Job is a pretty good witness, so we will first call upon him. He says, "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews." Job 10:11. The personal pronoun "me" here refers to the real Job who was clothed with skin and flesh, and was fenced with bones and sinews. Peter also is a good witness, so he shall be heard: His testimony is, "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance: knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as the Lord Jesus hath shewed me." Peter was dwelling in a tabernacle which his Lord had shewed him had to be put off. Another outstanding witness is one that is familiar to all and is an unquestioned authority on these matters. We refer to Paul, who says: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart (from the flesh or body), and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you," who were still in the flesh. Let us have some further testimony from Paul on this point. Continuing, he says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Here he speaks of two houses, or buildings, and they are not one and the same, for one is an house for us to live in while here in this world, which will be dissolved, but, the other is a building of God for our eternal abode in the heavens which are beyond. Dr. John Gill, famous biblical commentator of England, quotes one, Philo, as

having said: "I am very little concerned for this mortal body, which is about me and cleaves to me like the shell of a fish, though it is hurt by everyone." Sometimes we hear brethren say, "If it is not my flesh, my blood and my bones that will be resurrected, it will not be me, and if it is only something in me that is to be resurrected, I am not interested." If they did but know it, it is just the reverse of what they seem to think. Instead of something being in them, the truth of the matter is they are in something, as we have undeniably shown by the three witnesses whose testimony has just been presented. Our real self does not consist of so many pounds of flesh, blood and bones, which varies but little with most of us here in this life. The greatest men of history were very similar in fleshly appearance to the great masses, but something besides flesh made them stand as peers among their fellowmen. Ordinarily the features by which men are identified and distinguished from one another are found in the face or head, and the recognition of the Lord's people is to be found in their head, the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not need pictures of Christ hanging on the wall, which are so popular with the religious world, to give us an idea as to what our Lord looks like. Having never looked upon his earthly features, we would not recognize Jesus if he appeared in our midst, but even if we had seen him in the flesh it would be no guarantee that we would recognize him if he appeared in the flesh again. Even his own earthly mother, Mary, did not recognize him a few hours after his death and resurrection, for it is said she mistook him

for the gardener until he spoke to her. His personality or identity as the blessed Son of God is what interests us most vitally. What he was, what he did and the principles for which he lived and died is what gives him the preeminence over all others who went before or shall follow after him. It was Jesus who said to Martha, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." He did not say, the spirit of whosoever believeth in me shall never die. He was speaking of the new creature who has part with him, and since Jesus destroyed him that had the power of death, not even death can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Is it any wonder that so many of God's called and qualified servants turn so often to this eighth chapter of Romans for solid comfort and assurance to the poor and needy. Not only are they told that tribulation, distress, persecution, famine and nakedness, peril and sword shall not be able to separate them here in this life from the love of Christ, but they are assured "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," shall be able to separate them from the love of Christ throughout all eternity. The reason why nothing shall be able to separate them from his love is that he has conquered all foes and will destroy for them the last enemy, DEATH.

Elder R. Lester Dodson

“Mine heritage is unto me as a SPECKLED BIRD, the birds round about are against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour.” Jeremiah 12:9.

I cannot see to read the Bible anymore, so I asked my wife, Ruby, to look it up for me. She did and read it to me. I felt already that the Lord had revealed to me sometime ago that the SPECKLED BIRD is a type of the church, Christ's, the Son of God's, inheritance. And lo and behold, it read, “Mine heritage is unto me as a SPECKLED BIRD, the birds round about are against her,” with the beasts of the field ready to devour, etc.

Heritage is defined as that which is inherited; inheritance; God's chosen people, or Israel, or the church of the true and living God. This is evidence enough that the scripture is referring to Christ's own who are His inheritance whom His soul loveth so much that He was willing to leave all the glory He had with His Father in the high court of glory, to condescend to the low estate of His heritage, who being lost in sin, shame, misery, degradation, darkness, death and eternal gloom, whom His Father had given Him before the foundation of the world, to purchase it with the shedding of His own blood and for His eternal and everlasting love for them He was made willing to do it.

Christ referred to this heritage as a little child. They are humble even so much that when we see one, it makes us want to take them up into our arms and kiss them. So it is with one of these little ones of the Lord's people. Christ said, “Among those that are

born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” Luke 7:28. Who is the least one? The Lord's people are made to feel little.

In the 18th Chapter of Matthew is recorded where Christ set a little child out in front of the people and said, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 18:3,4 When God has truly humbled one in His sight, that person, be he man, woman or child, is surely the least in God's kingdom. Little children are humble, and if they become angry, it does last only a few minutes. They do not nor will they hold a grudge.

This heritage of the Lord, which is the church, greatly feels her black spots, even also as the speckled bird. They are put on this bird in nature, but these little ones to whom Christ has referred to feel that their many sins have put them on them, and they cannot erase them anymore than can that speckled bird. The fact that all the other birds and beasts of the field are against her and are ready any minute to devour her gives one of these little ones, His little children, whom Christ has referred to as the least but also greatest, even more evidence. All that one has to do to get one of these big ones to walk away with a devouring spirit is to tell just how little he feels and what he believes. In most instances they immediately take off and their humor is not good. Paul is a good example.

He said he was the chief of sinners and felt to be nothing, yea less than nothing. One often wonders just what is the size and measurement of this garment, "less than the least," in which His heritage is robed and attired.

A good example of some of these beasts, assembling and coming together, as mentioned in the text, was when they placed Paul and Silas in prison. They whipped them with many stripes because they had been preaching just what these little ones, of whom the SPECKLED BIRD is a type. Paul said that he even fought with these beasts at Ephesus. See 1st Cor. 15:32. Paul felt those black spots on him of which the spots on this bird are a type of. Let us remember that the Old Testament scriptures are written in types and shadows.

That speckled bird cannot help being speckled. Neither can we help being sinners. Paul wrote, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do." "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelt in him.

The spirit of the greatness of the little ones that comes through their meekness is recorded in Samuel where David sent for and fetched into the King's palace Jonathan's son who was lame in both feet to eat at the King's table. David did this because of the love he had for Jonathan whom he loved as his own soul. This is a type of the same love that Christ has for His heritage of which this speckled bird is a type. It is not just any bird. It is a SPECKLED BIRD, and those black

spots represent the same ones on this heritage. Anything that is speckled contains specks and spots. Christ had to come and remove those black spots from off the ones His Father had given Him for an inheritance. Those spots and specks serve a good purpose for the knowledge of their existence upon them keeps them down at their brethren's feet because the feet are the lowest part of the body that one can get to. That is the reason Christ told Peter that He need only wash his (Peter's) feet.

Jonathan's son, who was lame in both feet, certainly showed how little the Lord's people are by type and example because he referred to himself as a "dead dog". He sat at the table in the King's palace in a way so that his lameness could not be seen. Here is the church, the SPECKLED BIRD. We may look out at a congregation of believers, collectively as an audience while in worship, and yet not literally behold this lameness, although it is there in large proportions. God sees this lameness in the hearts of His people. The world cannot see it. It is hid from them.

Even when it came down to it. His chosen disciples, yet being under the law of sin and death in their experience, fled and forsook Him. Peter denied Him three times, cursing and swearing that he had never known Him. This is the way all those other birds fly off and leave this SPECKLED BIRD. The very spirit that was in Christ is also in His people when He visits them and causes that Spiritual wind to blow. All the other birds will fly away when that Spiritual wind blows upon the Lord's people. May the Lord

comfort us when those other birds fly on and leave us. Surely, it strengthens one's hope when they fly away.

Those birds that fly off and leave this speckled bird are a type of those who had gathered once at a place called Calvary saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God." Luke 24:25. The one just to his left said, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." Luke 23:29. These are the ones who are a type of the birds that fly off and leave the SPECKLED BIRD. The one just to His right had the same humble spirit as the poor publican who smote upon his breast saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 18:13. The one just to His right, like the poor publican in God-given humbleness declared, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation. And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." Those who fly away are a type of those who spit in his face, struck (slapped) Him, nailed His hands and His feet to the cross, pierced His side, mocked and scoffed at Him until He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Then one named Joseph, whom the scripture says was "a good man, a just man," (See Luke 23:50) took His Body down from the cross and laid it in a new tomb. (See Luke 23:53).

Now concerning the resurrection, recently being burdened, I begged the Lord to give me some evidence that my hope might be strengthened. One night in a dream I was shown a body lying in a coffin in a grave with the man's head cut off even with his body. That worried me very much for a

while. Finally, it was shown me that the headless body, lying there in the grave, is a figure and type of the body collectively of all the Lord's people, the chosen, elect church and family of God, awaiting the first resurrection of the just at Christ's second coming. The Head that was missing was Christ, the great Head of the Church, who has risen from the dead and is now at the right Hand of the Father in Heaven.

The Lord has blessed me to see that truth of the resurrection many times since Paul wrote in II Thessalonians 4:14, "Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." Christ said to the thief on His right, of whom the speckled bird is a type, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Luke 23:43. Christ referred to the soul and spirit of that thief that was about to leave the body of that thief. This body of the thief is also a part of that same headless body that was shown to me lying there in the earth, peacefully awaiting the time when that great Spiritual Head, the Lord Jesus, will, as He promised, come back again to raise the sleeping dust of that same body and reunite it with soul and spirit in the same Paradise. The bodies of His saints are only asleep now in the grave or tomb or in the sleeping dust, awaiting the fulfillment of their election and redemption at that eternal day of endless life when the soul and spirit, now resting in the Paradise of God our Saviour, will again be reunited with that same identical body in which they resided while in this natural life and world.

When Christ was here in the flesh and upon earth, He restored life to the

twelve year old girl. See Luke 8:42. The power of the same resurrection was made manifest in Elijah's day when the widow of Zarephath's son had died. It says, "His sickness was so great that there was no breath left in him." 1st Kings 17:17. Her prayer to God was answered for the return of his soul and life when Elijah, at the command of God, stretched himself upon the child three times and cried unto the Lord, "O Lord my God, I pray thee, let his child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; AND THE SOUL OF THE CHILD CAME INTO HIM AGAIN, AND HE REVIVED." 1st Kings 17:21, 22,23. Here is proof that the soul, as well as the spirit (for the soul cannot live without the spirit) returns back to the body. Christ also raised Lazarus from the grave after he had been dead four days. All of these cases illustrate and illuminate the glorious truth in the resurrection of the body in the Trinity of God and of the trinity of man as taught by the Apostle Paul. He said, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole SPIRIT and SOUL and BODY be preserved BLAMELESS unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." 1st Thess. 5:23.

There is much discussion as to the kind of body with which they shall be raised. Paul made that clear. That same corporal body that was shown to me, lying in that grave, will be changed to a Spiritual Body when reunited with the great Head in the first resurrection. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is

raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a Spiritual body." 1st Cor. 1:42, 43 & 44.

The little birds here in time sing with all their power each clear morning without clouds just after the breaking of day when the natural sun is rising out of the east. But on that happy Morn of all mornings, these glorified ones at the coming of their Spiritual Son, the Lord Jesus, shall rise when He comes from the east to carry that Heritage of God, that GREAT SPECKLED BIRD, home with Him for whom He gave His life as a ransom. She will give a shout of praise and hallelujah to Him, resounding into that glory land, to Him who give her home of eternal rest and final victory over all her enemies, sin, death, hell, the grave and the devil. John tells us what that song of praise and triumph will be in a hallelujah chorus that man never composed as He opens the gate and portal of immortal glory where He will present them to His Father "not having SPOT, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN TO RECEIVE POWER, AND RICHES, AND WISDOM, AND STRENGTH, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY, AND BLESSING," forever and ever. Amen. (revelation 5:12)

The following verses come to my mind as I close this article concerning that great SPECKLED BIRD. I heard them quoted many years ago:

THE GREAT SPECKLED BIRD

What a wonderful thought I am thinking,
Concerning a Great Speckled Bird!
You remember her name is recorded
In the pages of God's Holy Word.

All the other birds flock around her.
 And she is despised by the squad,
 For the Great Speckled Bird of the Bible,
 Represents you, the great Church of
 God.

Always desiring to lower her standard,
 They watch every move that she
 makes;
 How they long to find fault with her
 teaching,
 But really they find no mistakes.
 She is now spreading her wings for a
 journey,
 That she is going to take by and by,
 When the great tribulation is over,
 She will meet her dear Lord in the sky.

I am glad I have learned of her teaching,
 Yes, I'm glad to hope my name's in her
 book;
 For I want to be one never fearing
 On the face of my dear Saviour to look.
 When He comes descending and shout-
 ing from Heaven,
 On a cloud as He writes in His word
 We'll be joyfully carried to meet Him
**ON THE WINGS OF THE GREAT
 SPECKLED BIRD.**

Geo. A. Fulk
 January 15, 1987

(Reprint from Zions Landmark)

"And when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples."—Mark iv. 34.

What is the exact meaning of the word disciple? It means properly a learner, one who is under a teacher, whose submissive and devoted pupil he has become, and from whom he receives continual instruction. And thus a dis-

ciple of Christ is one who is admitted by the Lord Jesus into his school, whom he himself condescends personally to instruct, and who therefore learns of him to be meek and lowly of heart. A disciple of Jesus is one who sits meekly at the Redeemer's feet, receiving into his heart the gracious words which fall from his lips. This was Mary's happy posture, whom the Lord commended for choosing the better part. Such is also the posture of all the saints of God, according to the ancient declaration, "Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand; and they sat down at thy feet, every one shall receive of thy words" (Deut. xxxiii. 3). But a true and sincere disciple not only listens to his Master's instructions, but acts as he bids. So a disciple of Jesus is one who copies his Master's example, and is conformed to his Master's image. A sincere disciple is also characterized by the love which he bears to his Master; so a disciple of Jesus is one who treasures up the words of Christ in his heart, ponders over his precious promises, and delights in his glorious Person, love, and blood. A disciple of Jesus is one who bears some reflection to the image of his heavenly Master; he carries it about with him wherever he goes, that men may take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus; and as when Moses came down from the mount his face shone from the reflection of the heavenly glory which had streamed upon his countenance, so does the true disciple shine before men with some sparkles of the glory of the Son of God. To have some of these divine features stamped upon the heart, lip, and life, is to be a disciple of Jesus. To

be much with Jesus is to be made like unto Jesus; to sit at Jesus' feet is to drink in Jesus' words; to lean upon Jesus' breast is to feel the warm heart of Jesus pulsating with love; and to feel this pulsation, causes the heart of the disciple to beat in tender and affectionate unison; to look up to Jesus, is to see a face more marred than the sons of men, yet a face beaming with heavenly beauty, dignity, and glory. To be a disciple, then, of Jesus, is to copy his example; to do the things pleasing in his sight; and to avoid the things which he abhors. To be a disciple of Jesus, is to be meek as he was; humble as he was; lowly as he was; self-denying as he was; separate from the world as he was; living a life of communion with God, as he lived when he walked here below. To take a worm of the earth and make him a disciple of Jesus is the greatest privilege God can bestow upon man. To select an obstinate, ungodly, perverse rebel, and place him in the school of Christ and at the feet of Jesus, is the highest favour God can bestow upon any child of the dust. How unsurpassingly great must be that kindness whereby the Lord condescends to bestow his grace on an alien and an enemy, and to soften and meeken him by his Spirit, and thus cause him to grow up into the image and likeness of his own dear Son. What are earthly honours and titles when compared with the favour thus conferred upon those whose foundation is in the dust? Compared with this high privilege, all earthly honours, stars and garters, titles and robes, sink into utter insignificance.

*“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”—
John xii. 32.*

Wherever Jesus is graciously and experimentally manifested to the soul, and made known by any sweet revelation of his glorious Person, atoning blood, and finished work, a secret yet sacred power is put forth, whereby we are drawn unto him, and every grace of the Spirit flows toward him as towards its attractive centre. Thus Jeremiah speaks of the saints of God as coming and singing in the height of Zion, and flowing together to the goodness of the Lord (Jer. xxxi. 12). And thus Isaiah speaks to the church of God, “Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear (or as the word rather means, shall ‘palpitate’ with love and joy), and be enlarged” (Isaiah lx. 5). This view of Christ by faith is what the apostle speaks of to the Galatians, as Jesus evidently set forth before their eyes (Gal. iii. 1). As thus set before our eyes, he becomes the object of our faith to look at, (“look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth”); “the altogether lovely,” to whom love flows; and the Intercessor within the veil in whom hope effectually anchors. As, then, the blessed Lord is revealed to the soul by the power of God, his glorious Person held up before the eyes of the spiritual understanding, his blood and righteousness discovered to the conscience, and his suitability to all our wants and woes experimentally manifested, the blessed Spirit raises up a living faith whereby he is looked unto and laid hold of, and thus he becomes precious to all that believe in his name.

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

**MEDITATIONS ON THE FIRST
CHAPTER OF THE EPISTLE
TO THE EPHESIANS**

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two things at once strike us as we open upon the first verse. Being a letter, it commences according to the custom of the period with, 1. The name of the writer. 2. The name of the persons to whom it was written. Both of these points will claim our attention.

First, then, the writer: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." The ancient way of putting at the top of the letter first the name of the writer, and then the name of the person to whom he wrote was a far more sensible plan than our mode of placing the name of the writer at the end, and that of our correspondent on the back, or, according to present custom, on an envelope. He, therefore, begins at once, "Paul." How clear, how simple, how distinct is this! How adapted to call attention at once to the writer! Let us for a moment endeavour to realize the meeting of the Ephesian church to hear read to them an epistle just arrived from Paul, their beloved father and revered Apostle, who for the space of three

years had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God, and ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. (Acts xx. 27-31.) One of the elders, perhaps one of the very men who had wept sore and fallen on Paul's neck and kissed him, when they parted at Miletus, would open and read the epistle. How still would they all be; and as the word "Paul" broke on their ears, with what reverence and attention would they listen!

But he immediately adds his commission and authority to address them in the name of the Lord: "An apostle of Jesus Christ." Apostle was the greatest gift and the highest office in the first visible setting up of the church of Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost. "And he gave some apostles and some prophets" (Eph. IV. 11.) "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets." (1 Cor. XII. 28) As this, then, was the highest office, so it demanded peculiar requisites, and possessed peculiar privileges.

The two chief requisites for an apostle were, 1. An immediate call and commission from the Lord himself; 2. That he had seen the Lord after he had risen from the dead, and was thus a witness of His resurrection.

The call and commission of the other apostles we have in the gospels, Luke vi. 13 gives us their call, and Matt. xxviii. 18-20 their commission; and from Acts I. 21, 22, we see the fact as well as the necessity of their being witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. These two points, then, we need not further prove.

But here comes in a difficulty in

the way of the apostleship of Paul, for he seemed to lack these two grand requisites: 1. He had not been visibly and manifestly called or commissioned by the Lord himself; 2. He had never seen the Lord personally, either before or after his resurrection. This is why he calls himself, "one born out of due time." (1 Cor. xv. 8.)

How, then, were these two difficulties obviated? Thus. The first by a special call and commission; (Acts xxvi. 12-18;) and the second by a personal revelation of the Lord to his soul. He, therefore, says, "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?*" (1 Cor. ix. 1.) In one sense, therefore, he received a higher commission than any of the other apostles; for his was from Christ in his risen glory, whereas they had received theirs from Christ in his grace. Theirs was given them when Christ was on earth, but Paul his when Christ was in heaven. Theirs was in conjunction with one another; his peculiar and special to himself.

This special call and commission he much insists on, especially whenever it was called in question. He writes, therefore, to the Galatians: "Paul, an apostle, (not of men,

Some of our best manuscripts, as the Alexandrine, the Vatican and the Sinaiticus, transpose the two clauses, and read, "Am I not free? Am I not an apostle?" which certainly better connects apostleship with seeing the Lord.

neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.)" (Gal. i. 1.) So he writes to Timothy: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope." (1 Tim. i. 1.)

So also, "According to the glorious gospel and the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." (1 Tim. i. 11, 12.)

And as he was called and commissioned in a special manner, so was he taught and qualified in a special manner. As to make up, as it were, for his not seeing Christ in the flesh, he had a special revelation of him from heaven, so to make up the loss, which he had of not receiving the oral instruction of Christ before and after the resurrection, which his fellow apostles had been favoured with, the gospel was in a peculiar and special manner revealed to him by Christ himself, after his ascension. He therefore speaks: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. i. 11, 12.) So in the Epistle before us: "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward; how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." (Eph. iii. 2-4.) Similar expressions may be found, 1 Cor. xi. 23; xv. 1-3.

It is very desirable to have clear views on this point, as it gives such weight and power to the Apostle's words. If one whom we could fully trust should assure us that he had seen the Lord Jesus Christ, personally in his risen glory, and that he had

received certain words and a certain message from his mouth, which he was commanded to communicate to us; with what reverence and attention should we listen to and receive his communication. This, then, we have precisely in the Apostle Paul, and in the Epistle before us. He assures us (and his whole life and labours prove how worthy he is to be implicitly believed) that he had seen Christ for himself, and that the gospel which he had preached had been revealed to him specially and particularly by the Lord Jesus.

Now, just as far as we are persuaded of this, shall we listen to and receive his words, shall we desire to understand them, to believe them, to enter into their true and heavenly meaning, to experience their power and influence in our heart, and to find them made spirit and life to our souls. This is the true spirit in which we should approach and read his epistle, drinking its words into our inmost heart, and receiving them as a special and personal message from God to us, as much as if Jesus Christ spoke to us himself from heaven.

He, therefore, adds, "By the will of God;" that is, not God's mere approval or ratification of his commission to be an apostle, but that eternal, sovereign good will and pleasure of his, by which all things were ordained, disposed and regulated. As it is this apostleship of Jesus Christ by the will of God which gave Paul all his authority to write this epistle, it may not be out of place to point out two peculiar features of this commission:

1. Its first feature is, as we have already pointed out, that it was given him by a special revelation. All the

Apostles were indeed taught and empowered by the Holy Ghost; (John xvi. 13-15; Acts. i. 8;) but they did not each receive an individual and separate revelation from the Lord himself in his glory, at least not in that direct and express way with which Paul was favoured. Peter was really as much commissioned, (Gal ii. 7,) as truly inspired, both to preach and write, (Acts x. 42; 2 Pet. i 12-16; iii. 1, 2,) and as much indued with gifts of miracles and tongues (Acts ii. 4; ix 32-41) as Paul; but he was not caught up to the third heaven, nor favoured with such revelations of the Lord as the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

2. But the gospel which Paul preached was also one of a special and particular character. He was emphatically sent to preach to the Gentiles, as Peter's mission and preaching was to the Jews; (Gal. ii 6, 7;) though, as a special act of favour, God made choice among the apostles that the Gentiles, by Peter's mouth, should first hear the word of the gospel and believe. (Acts xv. 7.) If you will carefully read Eph. iii. 1-11, for it is too long for us to quote, you will see how clearly and beautifully the Apostle there unfolds the peculiar dispensation of the grace of God given unto him, and that by revelation he made known to him a mystery, or heavenly secret which from the beginning of the world had been hidden in the bosom of God.

But what was this mystery? It was that the Gentiles should be "fellow-heirs with the Jews and of the same body, and partakers of the same promise in Christ by the gospel." Thus Jew and Gentile formed one complete and glorious body, the

church. Christ, as our peace, had made both one; and there was no longer any middle wall of partition between them, for the Lord Jesus had reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross; and having done this, he now came in the ministry of the gospel to preach peace to the far-off Gentile, and to the nearer, by external privilege, Jew. This was the gospel that Paul preached, and which shines as with a ray of heavenly light through all his Epistles.

3. But now for the persons to whom the Epistle is written.

What we have already said about the commission of the writer may the better prepare us to understand why he should write to the Ephesians, and why address them as "saints and faithful in Christ Jesus." They had been Gentiles and has "walked according to the course of this world, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others." But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he had loved them even when dead in sins, had quickened them into divine life; and as they had been freely and fully justified by the blood and righteousness of Christ, so were they sanctified by the Spirit of God. He could, therefore, address them as "saints," not only as sanctified by the will of the Father, and the blood of his dear Son, (Heb. xx. 10, 29,) but inwardly sanctified by the special operations, sealing and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. (Eph. i 13; ii 18, 22.)

The Epistle is addressed also to the "faithful in Christ Jesus." This seems to give the Epistle a somewhat fuller and wider scope, as if, in addi-

tion to the saints in Ephesus, it would comprehend "all the faithful in Christ Jesus" to whom it might come. The word translated "faithful" means also "believing," or "a believer," and is frequently so rendered, as Acts x. 45; xvi, 1; 2 Cor. xi. 15; 1 TIM. iv. 3, 10, 12; v. 16; etc. We might, therefore, so translate the word here, and read, "to the believers in Christ Jesus," as, indeed, would seem to be its preferable meaning, for the epistle is addressed not so much to those who are faithful in their profession as to those who possess a living faith in the Son of God. To the saints at Ephesus, then, specially, and the believers in Jesus Christ generally, is this epistle addressed; and as the first title made it peculiarly suitable to us. The Ephesian saints have passed away, and Ephesus itself is a ruin; but believers in Christ Jesus still live, and will live till the church is complete.

But we cannot leave this salutation without pointing out how grace adorns and sanctifies all that it touches. The usual cold and formal beginning of a letter in ancient times we may see, Acts xxiii. 26, where we have an original and authentic Roman letter: Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting." Preserving the usual mode, how the Apostle infuses life, as it were, into a dead formula. How cold, though respectful, is "the most excellent governor," and how bare is the word "greeting." But how warm, how full of grace and life, as contrasted with this cold dead salutation if "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace,

from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

But now a few words as to the blessings prayed for. These are “grace and peace” —grace the fountain, peace the stream; “grace,” as containing in its bosom all that favour which God the Father has towards his people; and “peace,” all that personal manifestation of it which could be realized and enjoyed from a sense of pardoning mercy. But we must not here enlarge, as much lies before us, and our progress at present has been but slow.

J.C. Philpot

MEETINGS

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union Meeting will be, the Lord willing, at Dan River Church on the fifth Sunday in January. Dan River is host church for this meeting.

We extend a cordial invitation for all who love the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and especially to all ministers of our faith and order to meet with us. Song Service will begin at 10:00 a.m. and preaching to begin at 10:30.

Kenneth R. Key, Pastor
Bro. Boyd Minter, Clerk

MOVED OR MOVING ?

To assure you of getting your “Signs” and without missing any copies, be sure to inform us of any change of address.

Editors

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR NOVEMBER 1987

Ballard Barker, VA.....	20.00
Mrs. Clyde Belcher, VA.....	2.00
Mrs. Elva C. Martin, VA.....	2.00
Mrs. Kenneth H. Mathis, VA.....	2.00
Mrs. Eva Warner, FL.....	5.00
Ferrell Bird, OH.....	20.00
Mrs. Geneva Pettis, LA.....	5.00
Oscar Pickral, VA.....	25.00
O.W. Parks, TX.....	7.00
Troy G. Shepard, NC.....	2.00
Mr. & Mrs. J.B. Blaylock, NC....	7.00
Mrs. Lawrence Holloway, MD...	2.00
Tommy Middleton, NC.....	2.00
Luther Gaskill, NC.....	2.00
Levie D. Goard, VA.....	5.00
Noel Lavinder, VA.....	2.00
Mrs. Elsie Moon, AL.....	2.00
Miss Clarisse Brooks, NC.....	32.00
Miss Justine Alexander, AR...	10.00
Mrs. Charity I. Dowdy, NC.....	2.00
Mrs. Lillian Davis, NC.....	2.00
Charles P. Hayes, AL.....	5.00
A.R. Potter, VA.....	10.00
R.C. May, VA.....	2.00
Mrs. Hattie H. Radford, VA....	10.00
Levi R. McGough, AL.....	2.00

OBITUARIES

ROBERT JOHN ADA

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

Brother Bob Ada was born January 11, 1916, in Cape Vincent, New York, and died August 14,

1986, in Salisbury, Maryland. He leaves to mourn his wife of 39 years, Sister Julia Ada; two daughter by previous marriage, Nancy King of Seaford, Delaware; and Betty Perry of Salisbury, Maryland; seven grandchildren, two great grandchildren, three brothers, Francis Ada of Sylvan Beach, New York, William Ada of Cape Vincent, New York, and Harry Ada of Providence, Rhode Island; four sisters, Lilla Bombard, Watertown, New York, Sadie Ihrig, and Cora May Ada of Rochester, New York, and Betty Cassentine of Fulton, New York. His funeral was conducted at Baker and Bounds Funeral Home, Salisbury, Maryland, by Elders Cleo Robertson and Julian Williams.

We, at Salisbury Old School Baptist Church, mourn the loss of a loved one, but we feel our loss is his eternal gain. We watched Brother Ada as he began to attend our meetings. We rejoiced as his interest and concern for the truth began to be manifested. We felt his pain as he endured his illness of cancer with patience and without complaining. Then, the first weekend of August, 1986, Brother Bob was unable to attend either Saturday or Sunday service. After service on Sunday, we visited him at home; and in tears, he asked for a home with the Salisbury Old School Baptist Church. The members gathered in his home and received him into the fellowship of the church. He was too ill to be baptized and died within two weeks. No more tears, no more pain, no more sorrows; he now awaits the glorious morning of the resurrection.

Read and approved in conference December 6, 1987.

Elder Cleo Robertson, Moderator
Phyllis Farlow, Clerk

SISTER DIXIE DUPREE

We, the church at Tarboro, trust it has pleased our almighty God to call our dear Sister Dixie Dupree home. She was blessed to live on this earth 79 years. We feel thankful to have had her as a part of our church for so many years. Sister Dixie was a kind and loving member and we all loved her. She was a firm believer of Salvation by Grace. Sister Dixie believed that all things were in the hands of God and whatever happened was the purpose of our dear Saviour. She was faithful to her church and was always willing to do her part whenever she was able. Sister Dupree was blessed to join Tarboro Church in September, 1946. We feel it was the purpose of God that she came to our church.

We trust Sister Dupree is resting in peace with her God and our loss is her eternal gain. We send our sympathy to her husband and family and trust God will send them the Comforter. He has promised to never leave nor forsake us.

We resolve that three copies of this respect be made : one for the family, one for the church records and one sent to the "Signs of the Times" for publication.

This done by order of conference.

Elder Henry Jones, Moderator
John H. Coker, Clerk

DEACON WARNARD C. LOCKE

Written in memory of our beloved father and husband, Deacon Warnard C. Locke, who was born August 6, 1910 and departed this life May 31, 1986. He was the son of Deacon Charles H. Locke and Sister Milena Perkins Locke, both deceased.

Brother Locke was united in marriage to Sister Grace Creason Locke on August 28, 1929. To this union was born two sons, Roy Lee and Charles Ronald, both of Benton, Kentucky. He is survived by his wife Grace, both sons, a sister, Imogene Creason of Benton, Kentucky; a brother John Vernon Locke of Lake Alford, Florida, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

On the 2nd. Sunday of June, 1968, while attending the baptism service of their eldest son, Brother Warnard and Sister Grace asked for a home with the Soldier Creek Primitive Baptist Church and were received at the water's edge. Elder Paul Poyner was conducting the services. The Soldier Creek Church asked for the ordination of Brother Locke to the office of deacon on October 11, 1969.

Brother Locke was a firm believer in the doctrine of Salvation by Grace and a staunch defender of the truth as it is in Christ. He loved the church and was always in attendance until the last few months of his illness. During his illness, he never complained but would only speak of the blessing he had received from his Maker and Saviour. Although, he loved his church and family, Brother Warnard was made willing to depart this life to be with his saviour, whom he loved.

Brother Locke was interred in the Lyles Cemetery on June 3, 1986, to await the second coming of Christ. Elders Rush Hendrix and Wayman Chapell conducted the services.

As a husband, a father and a Brother in Christ, we mourn his departure, but we know he has gone to a better place.

Written by his son
Roy L. Locke

ELDER W. T. POSEY

William Thurmon Posey, the third child of Samuel William and Lela Stamps Posey, was born near Gordo, Alabama, August 16, 1916. Both of his parents died before he was three. He and his two sisters were reared by his uncle and aunt, Frank and Trannie Farley Stamps, on their farm near Gordo.

Brother Posey attended local schools until his late teens when he began working for grocers in Tuscaloosa. He operated city buses in Tuscaloosa and Northport, did military service in World War II, and returned to Tuscaloosa. His union in marriage to Annie Bell Lancaster was blessed with four children : a son, William Ralph Posey, Colorado Springs, Colo.; three daughters, Carolyn Lee, Lake Charles, La.; Jewel Gay, Tuscaloosa, Ala.; and Teresa Dambach, Birmingham, Ala. He and his family operated highly successful restaurants in Tuscaloosa for more than thirty years.

On the first Sunday in December, 1966, Thurmon and Annie Bell asked

for a home with Salem Church of which Elder W. L. Norris was pastor. They were received on confession of faith and were baptized by Elder E. E. McCool on Saturday, December 31, 1966. Brother Posey served as clerk of Salem Church for nine years, during which time he was ordained deacon on August 7, 1971, and began preaching in May, 1975. His ordination to the full work of the ministry was on February 2, 1980.

He served as pastor and as co-pastor of both Salem and Pleasant Ridge and quite often supplied at other churches in the Hopewell and Buttahatchies Associations. He and Sister Posey attended many of the associations and special meetings from Texas to Kentucky and Virginia.

Circulatory ailments necessitated a slower pace for him during the last three years, but he rarely missed an appointment until the fourth Sunday in September, 1986, when he had to enter the hospital in Northport. After two days, he was transferred to the DCH Medical Center in Tuscaloosa where he underwent surgery to replace four inches of an artery in his chest. He was apparently recovering well from this when one of his thighs was broken near the hip. That required more surgery for the insertion of a pin. He stood that operation well, was transferred to the Rehabilitation Pavilion, and seemed to be recovering satisfactorily after treatment to dissolve a blood clot which had developed in the affected leg. The second week-end in November he was eating and sleeping well (without special attention) and was expecting to be allowed to return to his home

shortly. In the predawn hours of Tuesday, November 11, 1986, (apparently without much warning to the staff), he began to bleed internally and passed on very quickly.

Besides his wife and children named above, he is survived by his two sisters: Luna Squires, Mobile, Ala.; and Laurine Nixon, Northport, Ala.; by ten grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and other relatives.

His funeral was conducted on Thursday, November 13, by Elders Albert Brock and Clovis Townley at Sunset Funeral Home with Burial in Tuscaloosa Memorial Park.

He is sorely missed among the Old Baptist Churches of west and north central Alabama and in other regions where he frequently visited. There was abundant evidence in his walk and talk that he trusted wholly in the grace on God and that he had good reasons for his hope in Him.

Written at the request of his family by one who feels that he knew him well.

Levert Howell

ST. JOHN 17: 1-4

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

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POEM

He Maketh No Mistake

*My Father's way may twist and turn .
My heart may throb and ache .
But in my soul I'm glad I know .
He maketh no mistake .*

*My cherished plans may go astray .
My hopes may fade away .
But still I'll trust my Lord to lead
For He doth know the way .*

*Tho' night be dark and it may seem
That day will never break :
I'll pin my faith , my all in Him .
He maketh no mistake .*

*There's so much now I cannot see .
My eyesight's far too dim :
But come what may , I'll simply trust
And leave it all to Him .*

*For by and by the mist will lift
And plain it all He'll make .
Through all the way, tho' dark to me .
He made not one mistake .*

A. M. Overt

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EDITORIAL

SALVATION IS OF THE LORD.

There are many, so called, plans of salvation rampant in the world today and millions of people to subscribe to them all around the globe. All of them are different, place varied demands upon their followers to qualify them to inhabit heaven and enjoy the benefits thereof for eternity. They are available to anyone that will accept their articles of faith and support their cause with their efforts and money, and I am fearful that the main requirement is their money. It is unbelievable how gullible people are to the doctrines of men that are declared, as the gospel, in the world today. It is fearful to listen to them loudly proclaim themselves as men of

God witnessing to a lost and dying world, and tell how God wants them saved, and how much of their money is required for them to help God perform his plan of salvation. It seems like anyone could see the greed and hypocrisy of these false prophets and their self serving schemes. Even after the recent scandal of a major T.V. evangelist was exposed the others continue to spue forth the same damnable doctrine and join in condemning others who are doing the same thing. Surely these are the ones spoken of in Jude, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. These ungodly men proclaim that the plan of salvation is effective only if man cooperates in the matter. Jude says, "These be those who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."

This is certainly not the plan of salvation that is spoken of in the scriptures. The one that is told of by the writers from first to last ascribe all of the glory and honor unto God who created the heavens and the earth. Jonah, after a very trying experience stated the solemn truth as simply and as direct as it can be stated, "salvation is of the Lord." He learned, the hard way, that the salvation of man is sure and steadfast and will be accomplished as planned with or without the cooperation of the individual. He was made to acknowledge that man experiences the work of salvation in their life, but that God is the author and finisher of it. God

originated the plan of salvation of all of the saints and the success of the work is not predicated on any uncertain possibilities. He declared how it was to be accomplished in the lives of the chosen generation and provided all of the events and circumstances that are necessary.

Jonah, was commanded of God to go to Ninevah and cry against that great city for their wickedness is come up before me. Jonah had other ideas and planned to go down to Tarsish, but, through many trials and sufferings he arrived in Ninevah at the time appointed of the Father and preached the message that God bid him to preach and I believe that it was the revelation that he had received enroute which was his ultimate lesson that, "salvation is of the Lord." It was on his journey when he had been cast down to the bottom of the mountains his heart fainted within him and he was made to remember and pray unto God in his holy temple and his prayer was heard. Then he knew that it was the hand of the Lord that had led him in all of the way to make him acknowledge that his salvation from beginning to end was of God and all his experiences were part of it from the beginning.

This is a place where all of God's children are brought from time to time in their experience to reaffirm in their heart and soul that salvation is the work of God alone. This was typified as the children of Israel were brought to the Red Sea and made to cry because of their hopeless situation in nature. The Red Sea was ahead of them, mountains on either side and the Egyptians close behind and pursuing them. They were ready to give

up and indeed cried unto Moses, "Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness," but this was not the plan that God had for them. How similar to Jonah's position this is, and in neither instance could the outcome be resolved by the efforts or abilities of man. "Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." and in the case of Jonah "and the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." The salvation displayed in each of these instances is by the same power and wisdom that is demonstrated in the deliverance of every child of grace from the law that condemns them to death and eternal ruin.

Joseph's experience was similar to Jonah's in the fact that neither of them could have delivered themselves from their predicament by their own personal wisdom or actions. From the time Jonah boarded the ship to Tarsish until he arrived in Ninevah he was never in a position that he had any choice regarding his next step. He was cast into the sea, swallowed by the great fish and was three days in the belly of the fish or as Jonah described it, "and he heard me out of the belly of hell cried I and thou heardest my voice." From the time Joseph was taken captive by his brethren, cast into the pit, sold into slavery, cast into prison and even while in servitude to the Pharoah he was never free to determine his own way or to select his own course of action. He was in bondage even as the children of Israel or Jonah but it was all to bring him to the place where he

would acknowledge the fact that his entire journey was for a purpose and that purpose was to save the children of Israel alive. He told his brethren that what they had done was meant, by them, for evil but that God who had ordained it meant the same action for good as it was on that day.

This same lesson is learned by all of the saints in their experience as they run with patience the race that is set before them. Peter went out and wept bitterly after he denied his Lord three times and then remembered that Jesus had told him he would even while Peter was standing and boasting that he would go with him even unto death. How many times they are all confronted by their weakness, their pride and vanity and are made to realize that if their salvation was not of the Lord then they would have no hope at all. Jesus asked Peter three times, "Lovest thou me," and the third time Peter answered him, "thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

The apostle Paul was brought by this same landmark in his travels. He was caught up to the third heaven and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter, and was given an abundance of revelations in things of the glory of the heavenly kingdom. He then said that lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelation there was given him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of satan to buffet him. Paul then prayed thrice that it should depart from him but the Lords reply was, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul was then made glad of his infirmities because

he saw that through the suffering Christ was manifest in his life. Paul was made to realize that salvation is of the Lord and that salvation includes this thorn in the flesh, therefore he gloried in tribulations knowing that tribulations worketh patience, patience experience, experience hope and hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given us. This is worth any amount of suffering and tribulations in the flesh, it sustained the three Hebrew children when cast into the fiery furnace, Daniel, Stephen and will support and enable all to face anything that they may be required to endure.

If I understand the scriptures and the truth that is set forth therein, and I have had an experience of Grace as I hope that I have, then the one thing that I can say that I am sure of is that salvation is of the Lord from the beginning to the end. God's children are born under the law and are in bondage to it as surely as the ones mentioned above were in their bonds til set free by the mighty power of God. They are all brought to the place that they see their ruined condition and there is no way out and then they are made to stand still, and experience the miracle of salvation as they are made aware of being a new creature in Christ. Then and only then can they sing the song of deliverance and truly worship God in spirit and in truth.

Jesus is the salvation of every heir of grace. On the isle of Patmos he told John, "I am Alpha and Omega the beginning and the end." and again, "Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and

behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death," Since Jesus came into the world to insure salvation to everyone chosen in him before the foundation of the world and prior to his death in his prayer to God he said, "I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," it stands sure and certain in the hearts and minds of all true believers that salvation is of the Lord. All of the recorded scriptures, as well as the experience of all the saints attest to the truth of this fact. You will probably find more agreement on this one point of doctrine than any other among those who are the recipients of this salvation. They know that in and of themselves they could never have attained to this blessed state.

For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. This is a beautiful statement and shows that the salvation of the saints is because of the love of God for them even before they were aware of Him. This is stated many times in the writings of the Apostle Paul but more directly in Ephesians where he declares that all of the heirs of grace were chosen in Jesus before the foundation of the world that they should be holy and without blame before him in love: because they were so predestinated of God according to his good pleasure. With all of this assurance it seems that they could rest on these promises, but the thorn in the flesh, as with Paul, is not if they are true or not but do they apply to them. I believe the thorn in the flesh of the Apostle Paul was the doubts that he had of the thing that was most precious to him. In the flesh man will

never have full knowledge of the fact that they are children of God, they have a strong hope but they also have doubts that they are included, seeing themselves as they are in the flesh.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness. To me this is the way of salvation, it is as much a path or trail that all of the elect shall travel. Certainly it is the way of holiness. It is designed and established according to the decrees of God for the wayfaring man, and surely this describes the pilgrim on a journey. There are no exits from this highway. All of the travelers will reach their desired destination regardless of the trials and tribulations that they may encounter in the way, and they will all acclaim that salvation is of the Lord, the Lord meant it for good as it is this day to save many alive, or it is by the grace of God that I am what I am. All of these are acknowledging the same basic truth that salvation is of the Lord.

In bonds of love,
Richard H. Campell

CORRESPONDENCE

Route 4, Box 21 A
Winnsboro, TX 75494
January 19, 1988

Dear Brother Kenneth;

As I was reading in one of Joe's books the other day, I ran across this sermon by J.C. Philpot that gave me much comfort. And as I

read it, I thought of others who are under heavy afflictions, too, who may receive a measure of comfort from it. I hope you may find space in some future issue of the SIGNS to print it.

I wish I could personally thank everyone who has reached out to my children and I from across the land, especially out your way, during our beloved husband and Daddy's illness and home going. We have felt your prayers. We have felt your love. If you could have been with us and the brethren here, you would have wept with us, too. But we do not weep, we sorrow not as those who have no hope. Although we are grieving and there is a great void in our lives, we are made to rejoice in Brother Joe's home going and we find happiness in what one precious little Sister exclaimed, "He's with the King, he's with the King!"

In bonds of that everlasting love,
Audrey Hamrick

(See Voices of the Past in this issue.)
Editors

Dear Elder Key,

At lunch on the day my daddy passed away, he charged me in no uncertain terms to write an article for the "Signs." Although he had on a few occasions earlier encouraged me to write, never before was he so fixed in his determination to see me get started. I promised him during that lunch period Monday, December 21, that Lord willing, I

would indeed write an article. Little did I realize that late that same afternoon he would suffer yet another heart attack and would be called home that night. I have endeavored to do what my daddy wanted. He was not only a loving and patient daddy to me, he was also my beloved pastor and friend. His departure has been a hard and painful blow.

After prayerfully selecting a text and having written a large part of a rough draft, I discovered an article in the January issue of the "Signs" which largely covered the same subject matter. I merely skimmed this article on the resurrection of the dead by Elder Dotson and went back to work on my own article. Having finished my article, I went back over Elder Dotson's article, reading it in detail. As you can see, we don't see eye to eye on all points. Surely Elder Dotson was a good editor of the "Signs" and was blessed to be a faithful minister among God's people. Therefore, whatever differences may exist between the views of this man of God and myself; it is my sincere desire will be confined to loving differences.

Elder Key, after writing the article, there has been a burden removed from me. It is neither my intention nor desire for you to feel a burden to publish it. Do as you feel best, knowing you have my sincere wishes either way. We thank you and all the brethren up there for your prayers and your expressions of sympathy during this dark hour for us. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." May our gracious Lord see fit to continue His rich blessings upon you.

In Gospel bonds,
Jimmy Hamrick

(See article in this issue.)

Editors

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



UNION PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH



Elder L. J. Brammer

Union Primitive Baptist Church, Patrick County Virginia, of the Smith River Association, Constituted in early eight hundred's or about 1815. This is the third building, present building stands just off highway

626, a short distance from where it was first built, two miles from Fairy-stone State Park.

Elder Leonard J. Brammer is our pastor and has served us for almost thirty years.

Services each fourth Sunday at 11:00 a.m. and Saturday before at 2:00 p.m. Communion is fourth Sunday in April.

 ARTICLES

1 THESSALONIANS 4: 16-18

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

The Holy Spirit of God knew exactly what words to inspire the Apostle Paul to write which would be most appropriate to comfort God’s people over the loss of loved ones. Although the actual context of this particular message of comfort goes back to the thirteenth verse; Lord willing, we will only look at these last three verses which alone could never be fully expounded in all their meaning, beauty, and comfort.

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven.” James 1:17 tells us, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Surely no greater and perfect gift has ever descended from above than the Lord Jesus Himself. And did not He descend in order for His people to ascend? Is not Jesus the ladder let down from heaven which Jacob saw in his dream? Among the miracles which Jesus

performed during His first advent was in behalf of a woman who had “a spirit of infirmity eighteen years and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.” Indeed, “With man it is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.” What she could in no wise do, Christ personally undertook for her and therefore she was made straight and glorified God. This is typical of God’s people who when quickened and made alive to feel the deformity of their sins, realize they are bowed way over and can in no wise lift themselves. Only the Lord Himself can remove such a burden by carrying it all the way to the cross for judgement. It is also typical of our physical bodies which when bowed down in death present an overwhelming problem; for though part of us, we are powerless to lift these decaying bodies and fashion them like the Lord’s precious body. Is all hopeless? No! “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with a voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:”

We have three things listed as taking place with our Lord’s second coming. First, there will be a shout, and what a glorious shout of authority and command this must be! “for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.” Next, we have the voice of the archangel. Where there is an archangel, there must needs be many angels under him and all this angelic host joyfully responding to the summons of the Lord. We read of many angels associated with His second coming as recorded in Matthew 24:31 “And he shall send his angels

with a great sound of the trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another." This brings us to the sound of the trumpet, the third item listed in Thessalonians as taking place at our Lord's return and also just referred to in Matthew above. This trumpet will sound doom for all outside of Christ and deliverance for those that are His. When the walls of Jericho came tumbling down, it was with the sound of trumpets, and when the builders laid again the foundation of the temple of the Lord, trumpets were sounded. A favorite passage referring to this last trump is 1 Corinthians 15:51 and 52 "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

God's people through the ages have had a yearning desire for this change. Job stated, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms 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 veins be consumed within me." David prayed, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." Isaiah said, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

The dead in Christ shall indeed

rise first and Job, David and Isaiah will be among that blessed number. The more we are given to enter into the writings of the prophets and apostles, the more precious these men after God's own heart become to us and the phrase "dead in Christ" begins to take on more meaning. Moreover, the longer we sojourn here below, the more we are called upon to bear the loss of those saints who have shared in our sorrows and our joys. Sometimes the call strikes ever so close to home. A beloved brother, sister, husband, wife, son, daughter, pastor, father, mother, yoke-fellow, friend receives the summons of death and oh, how hard it is to let them go! One by one they join the ranks of the "dead in Christ."

We realize of course, that upon death, the soul and spirit are immediately ushered into the glorious presence of God, and what we are left with is the dead body of the saint. However, is not this dead body precious in the sight of the Lord and should it not be precious to us? When Stephen was stoned to death and his spirit and soul departed from the body to join the Lord above, we find the body of Stephen, though dead and lifeless, still such an integral part of him as to yet be referred to as Stephen. Acts 8:2 states, "And devout men carried Stephen to his burial and made great lamentation over him." If this is the behavior of devout men, should we not wish to behave likewise? It is wrong to mourn as those who have no hope, but it is certainly right and proper to mourn, while ever realizing that our dark cloud of sorrow has a silver lining for at His coming, "the dead in Christ shall rise first."

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds .” What a glorious reunion this will be! The ones on earth who are alive when the Lord returns shall be transformed, glorified, and caught up together with the recently resurrected and glorified bodies now reunited to the souls and spirits of those who had gone on before . Shall we recognize one another ? With a loving difference towards those who say no, we are persuaded that as Moses and Elijah are recognizable in a state of glory (see Luke 9 :30-33), so will the rest of God’s people . As for the fear that were we able to recognize one another in heaven, the failure to find some loved ones there would mar our joy in heaven is concerned; surely the presence of Christ in heaven will infinitely make up for the absence of anyone else . Besides, we will be able in that day to say amen to anything which contributes to the glory of God .

As wonderful as a reunion of the saints can ever be, it pales in significance to why they are caught up together in the clouds ; namely, “to meet the Lord in the air .” There indeed neither can be nor will be a heaven without the Lord Himself being there . The eyes of the saints will then be able to see how true it is that “of Him, and through Him and to Him, are all things : to Whom be glory for ever . Amen .” Whenever we experience great joy on earth, it seems the time flies by all the faster and we are soon reminded that heights of joy are indeed fleeting here below . Only the Lord knows how many times multiplied over will our greatest joy on earth be when we are

ushered into the magnificent and glorious presence of our Triune God . But how long can such raptures of joy possibly last ? Only as long as we are with the Lord . But how long can we possibly be blessed to be with the Lord ? “And so shall we ever be with the Lord . Therefore, comfort one another with these words .”

In Gospel Bonds,
Elder Jimmy Hamrick

MOVED OR MOVING ?

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Editors

PSALM 71 : 1 - 5

In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion .

Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape : incline thine ear unto me, and save me .

Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort : thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress .

Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man .

For thou art my hope, O Lord God : thou art my trust from my youth .

VOICES OF THE PAST

“he being dead yet speaketh”

SUFFERING AND ITS BENEFIT

Preached on Lord's Day Evening
August 13th , 1853

Eden Street Chapel, Hampstead Road
England

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” I Peter v. 10.

When Peter was in the garden of Gethsemane with his suffering Lord, he was not qualified to write an epistle to the Church of God. The hand that grasped the sword which cut off the right ear of Malchus was not the hand to hold the pen of an inspired apostle. Like other good men in the days of early profession, he had more zeal than knowledge, more fleshly ardour than deep teachings of the Spirit and rich experience of the love of God. Had he then written, he would most probably have used his pen as he used his sword; and in cutting down the foes of Zion he might unwittingly have smitten some of her choice friends. But when he had passed through affliction's fiery furnace, had the dross and tin taken from him, and had become melted and softened by the grace of God, then as the blessed Spirit breathed upon him, and touched his pen with His own sanctifying grace, he was qualified to write these epistles so full of power and blessedness, and so full

of rich experience of divine truth. I know not whether you paid much attention this morning, when I read the first chapter of this First Epistle. Many seem to think the reading of God's Word a very unimportant portion of the service of God, and in some chapels it is omitted altogether, much, I think, to the loss of the people. But, in reading the chapter this morning, I could not but be struck with the richness and depth of divine truth with which that portion of God's Word seemed to me full even to overflowing.

We see, then, in the case of the Apostle Peter, how he was melted, moulded, and softened by the furnace of affliction and temptation; and when grace had wrought these blessed effects in his soul, then, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he could sit down and pen this epistle for the edification of the Church of God in all times.

The grand point of the words which I have read --- and from which I hope with God's blessing to speak a little this evening --- is suffering and the benefit of it. But I shall, with a desire to bring the subject more plainly before your mind, and to enforce it more powerfully upon your conscience, divide my text into four leading branches.

I. I shall endeavour to speak a little on the fulness and freeness of grace.

II. The holy and heavenly calling wherewith the children of God are blessed.

III. The necessity and nature of suffering.

IV. The blessed benefits and divine fruits that spring out of it.

You will find this claim drawn out

in our text; and it will be my business, as the Lord may enable, to take up these truths and to lay them before you, looking up to the Lord to bless His own Word with power to your consciences.

I. The God of all grace. How sweet is the word "grace" to every God-taught soul! But there is something, to my mind, singularly beautiful in the expression which the apostle here makes use of --- "The God of all grace." It is as if he would lead our hearts at once to the fountain; as if he would bid us not look at the stream, but lift up our eyes and view, in the actings of faith, the ever-flowing source of all grace.

We may view this part of our subject negatively and positively. God is "the God of all grace;" and, therefore, there is no grace but that which is of God. Many seem disposed unduly to magnify what are called "means of grace." They are good when God through them is pleased to communicate grace; but without His blessing what are they? We see sometimes as we pass along the streets the pavements broken up and pipes and tubes lying about. What are all these pipes for? To convey water; but of what use are they if there be no water to flow through them? Will iron pipes of themselves bring water? So what is all our praying, preaching, and the ordinances of God's house? They are mere pipes, and need the water of grace to flow through them if they are to be of any benefit to us. If the water of grace flow through these into the soul, what do we feel grateful for? The water of the pipe? It is the stream of mercy and grace that flows into the soul for which we are thankful, and not

the mere conduit through which that grace is communicated.

But positively He is "the God of all grace." But how, and in what sense? Why, of grace in all its various branches, ramifications, and developments.

1. For instance, there is convincing grace, for by the grace of God we are convinced of sin. The arrow of conviction shot into our conscience, making us to feel that we were sinners, and to cry for pardoning mercy, came from God. God was the Author of that feeling, if it were a spiritual conviction. It was He that wounded, He that pierced, He that killed, He that brought down, and He that opened the wound which nothing but the blood of Christ could heal.

2. But He is the God of pardoning grace. The same grace that led Him to wound leads Him to heal; the same grace that brought down raises up; the same grace that strips clothes; the same grace that preaches the thunder of the law, preaches the peace-speaking gospel; and the same grace that reveals the malady and uncovers the sore, brings the balm of Gilead and reveals the heavenly Physician. Therefore He is the God of pardoning grace in the sweet manifestations of the Saviour's love.

3. But the soul often wanders from its heavenly fountain. It backslides from God; and then grace is manifested in its restoration. David speaks of this restoring grace when he says, "He restoreth my soul." He brings us back to the spot whence we have wandered, and manifests the riches of His pardoning love, unsealing the fountain once opened for sin and for uncleanness. He it is who applies to the conscience the blood of sprinkling

which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.

4. But we have walked, perhaps, in temptation's fiery path, and sometimes have been well nigh overwhelmed with a sea of trouble. As one said of old --- "All Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me." Then we want supporting grace. "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." "Underneath are the everlasting arms." As we pass through the mazes of affliction, are in the furnace of trial, or are tossed on the deep waters of sorrow, still His arm is underneath to sustain.

5. But as we have by nature a heart "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;" as we live in an ungodly world, and carry in our bosom the seed of all sin, and are tempted continually to evil, we want keeping grace. "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Of that too He is the Author, for none can stand a single moment except as upheld by the mighty power of God.

6. And when you come to lay your head on a dying pillow, and the cold sweats of death gather upon your forehead; when the eye-strings are breaking, and you must take leave of this world, and of all that is in it, you will want dying grace to support you in a dying hour.

Thus He is the "God of all grace." All the grace that ever the church had; of all the grace the church ever needed or will need, He is the God. Look at the sun, that beautiful emblem of the Holy Spirit's own choosing to represent the Sun of Righteousness. How that glorious orb of day has shone for thousands of years! Look at the thousands of harvests which have been

reaped under his benignant influence; think of the millions of human beings that have been fed by the fruits that he has matured and ripened. But the sun still shines on in all his original warmth, light and beauty. He is not exhausted; he manifests no signs of exhaustion, nor has lost anything by shining; nor have all the rays and beams that have flowed from him drained him of one jot of his light and warmth. He is still the glorious orb of day, shining and shining, and losing neither light, nor heat, nor influence. So it is with the God of all grace! Thousands of hearts He has gladdened by the beams of His grace; thousands of contrite sinners He has comforted by the pourings out of His favour; but He is still the God of all grace, which is ever, therefore, flowing in rich streams of mercy, goodness, and love to the church of Jesus. Oh! why should we be so contracted as we often are, and lose sight of the God of all grace? Why dwell so much upon the creature instead of dwelling upon Him whom to know is life eternal? The God of all grace! This is a worthy theme, and I might enlarge upon it, but I have other work this evening before me to do.

II. I must, therefore, proceed with my text. "Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus."

There may, perhaps, have been this thought in the heart of some present: All this no doubt is true; but what interest have I in it? I hear of the God of all grace; but have I grace? Has the God of all grace bestowed His grace upon me? You may well ask yourself that question, considering how few there are, speaking comparatively, upon whom God has bestow-

ed His grace; but just see what gives a manifested interest in it. What makes that grace my own? "Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus." Calling, our second point of consideration, manifests an interest in the grace of God, and in the God of all grace. We are told by the same inspired apostle to "make our calling and election sure." How can we make our calling sure? By wrestling with God till He makes it sure in us, by sealing it with His own heavenly witness upon our breast, and making it as plain in our hearts as the sun in the sky. But it is not every child of God who can make his calling and election thus undoubtedly sure. There are some who, like Belshazzar, cannot read the writing on the wall, and want a Daniel to decipher it for them; but they have not an interpreter who can read one letter. Aye; there are many of God's children who cannot read their own experience; they cannot trace out their own grace, nor make manifest to themselves their own calling. They need then an interpreter, as Job speaks --- "One of a thousand, who can save them from going down into the pit," by showing them how to read the work of faith in their soul. This is the benefit of an experimental ministry, to discover to you what you could not otherwise learn for yourself --- opening up the work of God which is locked up from your own eyes .

There is then a being "called." This calling is "of God." It is "through Jesus Christ," and it is "unto God's eternal glory."

Divine calling is a special work of God upon the soul, separating from the world, profane and professing, bringing down high looks, piercing the

conscience with convictions, and raising up longing desires after Christ, with a going to Him for mercy; leading the soul with weeping and supplication to the feet of the Mediator; and then in God's own time and way making Christ precious, revealing His person, blood and righteousness, and shedding abroad the love of God in the heart by the Holy Ghost. To know anything of this divine teaching is to be made a "a partaker of the heavenly calling," and to experience a saving work in the soul. And consider those striking and heavenly words, "to His eternal glory." 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." To be called then unto God's eternal glory, to view it hereafter in its full blaze on the heights of Zion, to enjoy it with a soul rendered capable of bearing its full and eternal weight, and the body made a fit treasure-house and immortal companion for the glorified spirit; to be enraptured with the manifestations of God's presence and love throughout a boundless, glorious eternity --- what prospects of heavenly bliss are opened up and revealed in those words! What the full enjoyment of this unutterable weight of glory will be is beyond all present human conception, beyond the apprehension of the wisest saint, or the experience of the deepest taught saint of God. At the best we can only have a faint glimpse of the glory which God has prepared for them that love Him. But it is not so of our calling. No matter how desponding some of the Lord's family may be, they are called unto His eternal glory, to the preparation for it

here, and to the right enjoyment of it hereafter.

III. But let us pass a little farther onward. We have not yet got into the marrow of our subject; we are still but at the vestibule --- we have not yet penetrated into the inner court. We must pass the entrance before we get into the apartments of the palace. There is no entering into glory except through suffering; nor is there any getting into the rich experience of grace without affliction and trial. Was it not so with Jesus? What did He say to His disciples? "Ought not the Son of man to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And has not the Lord Jesus led the way in which we are to tread; and must we not be conformed to His suffering image here that we may be conformed to His glorified image hereafter? "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." If we have no union with Christ in suffering, we shall have no union with Christ in glory; and therefore there is a necessity of suffering with the Lord Jesus. Now it is this suffering which so deeply tries the minds of God's exercised family. If they were not so heavily weighted, they could get on, or at least they think they could; if the road were easy and the path smooth, if there were no trials and temptations, they, at least in their own apprehensions, could travel cheerily on. But when they come into temptation's fiery furnace, and are baptized into a flood of suffering and sorrow, then their faith seems to give way, and their hope to stagger they reel to and fro like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end to believe there is a grain of grace in their heart.

There is a necessity then for suffering; but though there be this necessity, yet one thing is very evident, that all God's people do not suffer in the same way, or to the same degree. God chooses our afflictions for us. He knows what peculiar trials are needful for every one of those who fear His name. We differ in bodily constitution, education, habits of life, powers of mind, and natural disposition. We differ as widely within, as we differ without; the features of our mind are as various as the features of our face; and therefore my suffering would not be your sufferings nor your suffering mine. We have each our own peculiar path of trial and suffering which God has appointed us to walk in. Some suffer in mind, others in body; some in their family, others in their circumstances; the trials of some are chiefly in things temporal, others suffer a fiery baptism in matters purely spiritual. But in addition to all other sources of trial, there is one common to all the redeemed family, a daily, hourly conflict with the body of sin and death, and the workings of evil in the carnal mind.

But time will not admit of a minuter detail of the various sufferings which are appointed for the family of God. Some may be deeper, others shallower; some shorter, others longer; but each is designed to work a like purpose --- the conforming of the soul to the suffering image of Jesus.

You will observe that in this chain there is a beautiful proportion and harmony. Suffering does not come at the beginning of the chain. First, we have "the God of all grace," the everflowing, overflowing fountain of

goodness and mercy , being the source of all . Then we have the "calling," whereby this grace is made manifest to the soul , and of which Christ is the blessed subject, object , sum , and centre . And then comes "suffering ," the third link of the heavenly chain . Grace first , calling next, and suffering third . If, then, you have not this link, the link of suffering there is a breach in the chain . If the God of all grace be your God , He has called or will call you; if He has called you , He has appointed unto you a certain measure of suffering by which you will be , as the apostle speaks --- "filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ ," that is , not His vicarious sufferings , but His afflictions in His members .

IV. We are now then prepared to pass on , by the blessing of God , to examine our fourth and last point --- the benefits , blessings , and divine fruits that spring out of suffering , which adds the last link to the chain .

But observe the expression , "After that ye have suffered a while ." Suffering is only for a while . Say at the most , that suffering should run parallel with the whole course of your life; say that you live to be ninety, and have day after day suffering and sorrow ; say that every hour brings you pain of body or grief of mind , trial of spirit , or temptation of soul . Say it shall be so , which however is not very probable , for you are not likely to live till you are ninety, nor are you likely to have every day a day of trial , temptation , and suffering ; but say it were so appointed ; then your soul is set at liberty from your enfeebled body , to soar upward into the regions of light and love , and drink in rivers of peace

and joy at the fountain head , it would , after all , be only "a little while ." Measured by eternity , what is time ? It is but a point , a thing only of a moment's duration . "Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceedingly and eternal weight of glory ."

But even in a world like this we are not always suffering . It comes and goes --- it is brought to-day and is taken away to-morrow . When the furnace has done its work , then the gold is taken out . But it is after , not before . You perhaps say you want to enjoy a clear assurance of interest; to be established in the liberty of the gospel ; to walk as an enfranchised child of God ; to be favored with fresh and fresh manifestations of His mercy and love , and have your soul sweetly enjoying the presence of a beloved Lord . But have you ever been tossed on a sea of suffering ? or do you think always to be in London Dock without ebb or flow ? Does the extent of your spiritual voyage reach no farther than Gravesend , where the scarcely salt river is still far from the sea ? You fresh water mariners , who sail on so jauntily in your river-built yachts , are not fit to do business in deep waters , nor can you see the wonders of the Lord as those do in the great deep . But if you have been long tossed on the stormy main , how welcome does the shore beam on your straining sight and how then you will drop anchor with an inward peal of joy . It is not before , then , but "after ye have suffered a while" that real soul profit , satisfaction , and joy are realized or experienced within .

But perhaps you are saying --- "May not persons be Christians , and

yet not be much tried or afflicted ?” Now , I believe it holds in grace as in nature --- whatever is easily got is rarely worth having . As a general rule , a man gets nothing easily that is really valuable ; neither knowledge , nor power , nor learning , nor even glittering gold dust ; nothing even that this world values is obtained without labour and pain . And sure I am that no spiritual man gets a rich experience of divine mercy and love without passing through more or less of soul exercise . He is not fitted for it ; his soul has not yet the capacity to enjoy the fulness of the love of God . In order to this he must , like a vessel , have ample tonnage . There must be capacity made in the soul , as in the hold of the ship , to receive the fulness of God’s mercy . Self must be baled out before the Lord of grace and glory will come in ; the cargo of rubbish must be heaved overboard before the rich treasure of heavenly mercy can find room in the bosom .

It is , then , after we have suffered a while , and only after we have suffered a while ; been exercised in our soul , tried in our mind , tempted of Satan , and gone through more or less of this inward strife and affliction --- this sea of storms , that these other links of the heavenly chain are brought into the heart , of which the apostle speaks --- “But the God of all grace , who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus , after that ye have suffered a while , make you perfect , stablish , strengthen , settle you .”

Oh that these words might sound in your ears ! Oh that they might be graven as by the pen of God in your hearts .

1. But let us look at these blessings in their order . “Make you perfect !” What word have we here ? Does not this look like perfection in the flesh ? Perfection in the flesh ! The Scriptures know nothing of this kind of perfection nor does any experienced child of God . In what sense , therefore , may we understand the word used by the Holy Spirit here ? “Make you perfect .” The terms have a meaning ; we will not dislocate and distort God’s sacred Word by putting on it a forced construction . Far be that from our wish or thought . I may observe , then , that there are two senses in which the word “perfect” is used in Scripture as regards the saints of God . The first meaning of the word is perfection in Christ --- “Ye are complete in Him .” The Church of God is represented as being “without spot or blemish or any such thing ,” a view of which draws forth from her divine Lover those striking words --- “Thou art all fair , My love , there is no spot in thee .” In that sense the Church of God is perfect --- perfect in Christ , comely with the comeliness which He Himself has put upon her , and so stands perfect in His perfection , holy in His holiness , glorious in His glory .

But that is not the sense meant by the word “perfect” here . She is that already ; but the making of her perfect “through suffering .” Perfection , then as here spoken of is not that through Christ’s righteousness ; that is an outward perfection ; but an inward , an experimental perfection as wrought in the soul by the grace of God through suffering . What then is this inward experimental perfection ? There is an expression in Hebrews v . 14 , which , to my mind , much clears up

the whole subject --- "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age , even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil ." The apostle is speaking here of the difference between those who are weak and ignorant and those who are strong and established . He says that some were babes , and did not even understand the elements of divine truth ; but that others were "of full age ." It is in the margin , which is the more literal rendering , "perfect ." Those , then , are , in an experimental sense , "perfect" who have arrived at the meridian of full age , whose senses are exercised by long and deep experience to discern both good and evil . This , then is the scriptural definition of experimental perfection . It does not consist in the absence of sin ; not in progressive sanctification ; nor in being made any better as regards our carnal mind ; but it consists in this --- in being ripened and matured in the divine life ; in being no longer a child , and ever in want of a tutor of first principles ; but "a man in Christ ," grown up in Him and having a ripeness of Christian experience . This is Christian maturity and this divine ripeness of soul is only to be obtained through suffering . It is "after you have suffered a while" that God thus "makes you perfect" --- in other words , matures you , so that you bring forth the fruits of the Spirit , and become an adult man in the knowledge , enjoyment , and experience of spiritual things . The tried self comes forth from the furnace with the dross and tin of soul taken away , and thus becomes a vessel of honour fitted for the Master's use .

2. But the Apostle goes on to pray

that the God of all grace would , after they had suffered awhile , "stablish" them . This extends somewhat widely . It implies an establishing of our understanding , conscience , judgment , and experience not only in our views of divine truth , but also of our own interest in "truth as it is in Jesus;" that we may not be carried about with every wind of doctrine , but be so established , rooted , and grounded in the truth of God , as never , by any consideration , be moved from it . How is this desirable thing to be attained ? Suffering , suffering , is still the channel ; and the furnace is still the means . It is only "after we have suffered awhile" --- suffered from Satan , from sin , from persecution of enemies , and the unbelief and abounding corruption of our own hearts --- it is only after such an experience of personal , inward suffering that we get to be thoroughly established in the truth . Growth in grace is like growth in nature . It is the mushroom that springs up in a night ; but the oak is the growth of centuries . We are to grow like the oak , not like the poplar ; be a cedar of Lebanon , not a willow by the brook . We have also to take root downward as well as to grow stout and strong upwards --- to spread deep and wide roots in the soil as well as to spread forth sturdy branches in the air . And it is that we may thus take root and become established that we are subjected to affliction and sorrow sorrow .

No instance was ever known of an established Christian who had not become so through in medium of deep and sanctified affliction ; and God will not alter His ways to please our vain fancies ; "for He is in one

mind , and who can turn Him ?”

3. The next fruit of suffering for which the apostle prayed was that God might thereby strengthen them . But what a strange way of being strengthened ! You feel your weakness , do you not ? “Yes,” I may speak for some here --- “I do indeed ; O if you did but know how weak I am !” I know it very well , for I know how weak I am myself . If I can read anything it is my own heart ; and in reading mine I can read yours . But you say , “How weak I am !” Well , will you ever be anything else ? Would you wish to be anything else ? “I would be strong ,” you reply . So you are . “When I am weak ,” says Paul “then am I strong .” There is the true secret of all strength . What makes us strong ? Weakness . “Weakness makes us strong ? --- that is a flat contradiction .” No , it is not . Because when you are weak then the Lord Jesus works strength in you , and thus you resemble the worthies spoken of in Heb . xi. , who “out of weakness were made strong .” No other strength is worth a straw . Suppose I came here this evening and into the pulpit all strength in myself . Should I be worth hearing or listening to ? But I come all weakness ; if I have strength God gives it me . So if you come strong to hear , you will not want for Christ to bless the word and communicate strength to your soul ; but if you come weak as one seeking strength from Him , if you come as an empty vessel for God to pour His love and grace into , then the Lord will answer you . Was it not so with David ? “In the day when I cried , Thou answeredst me , and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul .” But you will say , “I have had a great deal of

trial lately ; I have had affliction in my body , or trials in my family , or my circumstances have been very distressing , and to make it worse , I have had such darkness of mind and many powerful temptations to grapple with . Under all this my wicked heart has rebelled against God ; and I have hard work , I can assure you , to stand my ground at all .” What has that taught you , and to what point has it brought you ? It has made you a hearer of the gospel , it has made you to long for the God of all grace to manifest unto you the the riches of His mercy ; it has weaned you from the world ; broken the arm of self ; destroyed your creature confidence ; and rendered you a fit subject for the Lord Jesus Christ to work upon , and in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure . All this good suffering has done , it has been sanctified to your soul . Look at Moses . How weak he was . He replied , when sent on his mission to Pharaoh , “I am slow of speech ;” but God qualified him to speak and act too . Look at Abraham , and the course of God’s dealings with him . How the strength of God was made manifest in his and Sarah’s natural weakness ! Look at David , the beardless boy , going out against the giant . So your weakness is but the needful preparation for God out of it to make you strong . I hope that some of you here this evening , if not many , are poor and needy , weak and helpless . So many as are such , are so many cases for God to strengthen .

4. The last blessing for which the apostle prayed as following suffering was --- that God would thereby settle them . I was speaking this morning

about a building . Now, you know a building must settle before it will stand . It is so with every structure . A bridge has to settle sometime some inches, and time for the most part must be given for every edifice to settle before you can be sure that it will stand firm. It settles by sinking, and becomes firm by losing somewhat of its original height; it drops that it may stand; it sinks that it may not fall. So must you be settled, if you are to stand; not settled on yourself, but upon the work of Jesus, the lining stone which God has laid in Zion . To be settled is not to be settled down in vain, presumptuous confidence, but to have a firm standing in Christ by the Spirit's teaching and testimony, and so to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. There must be a settling down into and upon the Lord Jesus; a resting the entire weight of the soul's salvation wholly and solely upon Him who is mighty to save . And the more the soul is thus settled upon the foundation, the firmer, closer union it has with it .

Now, look at these things, for they will bear examination . I am not afraid of my doctrine being examined . Not that the things I have uttered are worth anything, so far as I am the speaker of them; but the points I have advanced and dwelt upon are solid truths; and I know them to be such . They are in strict accordance with the Word of God; and I believe in accordance with the experience of God's saints . Weigh them up, then, and weigh yourselves too at the same time . Put yourselves into the scale, and see whether God has stamped good weight upon you . Who is it that has reason to tremble when the sur-

veyors come round to examine their weights and measures ? It is the deceitful, dishonest tradesman who fears to see their face . The honest tradesman boldly brings forth his weights and measures, and does not slink into the back shop with fear and trembling . So the teaching of God in the soul will bear examination . You may be very weak --- the tradesman's weights and measures are not all of the same size and dimensions . There is the gill and the quart, as well as the pint and gallon; and there is the quarter and half-ounce as well as the stone; but they must be all lawful weight and bear the queen's stamp . So that if you say your grace is small, I reply, "It may be none the worse for that ." If we have gardens, and are fond of flowers, we admire the little shrub as well as the large one; and there is as perfect a life in the tender flower as in the stronger plant . So if you are planted into the heavenly garden the divine Husbandman will water and make you grow . I would much sooner have a little living shrub put into my garden bed than a dead lofty tree . All the trees of righteousness planted by the hand of the Lord are living, growing trees, watered and nourished by the dews and rains of the Spirit . See, therefore, whether you cannot find something like the grace of God in your heart . O what a mercy to have one grain of grace ! What a mercy to be a living soul ! You may be tried, tempted, and exercised; but if you are one of the Lord's people all this will eventually be for your profit. But always remember that there is a furnace to go through to burn up self-confidence, and bring you forth a vessel fit for the Master's

use . The trials you are called to experience, and the sighs and groans you utter, are spiritual sacrifices, acceptable in God 's sight . These things are designed to mature you in the things of God, to establish you in the truth, to strengthen you in faith, hope, and love, and to settle you down into sweet confidence in the Lord Jesus. "O," you will say, "if this be the case, thank God for every trial ; bless His holy name for every temptation ; thanks for every furnace, every exercise, and every affliction ; they have brought my soul to a firm standing ; they have made Christ precious ; they have endeared His love ; they have led me more fully into the 'truth as it is in Jesus,' and given me richer and more blessed views of Immanuel, God with us."

Now this is the main thing the heart desires ; not that we desire the furnace , but we desire the great benefits produced by it . O may "the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus," in the words of our text --- "after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you ."

J.C. Philpot

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OBITUARIES



Elder J.L. Hamrick

On december 21st ., 1987 our beloved associate editor Elder Joe L . Hamrick finished his journey here on earth .

saddened that we cannot see and visit him anymore . The Signs of the Times feels a great loss in the absence of his writings, to behold no more his name to an article, unless a reprint .

May God give us, along with the family, endless grace to believe he wrote every article he was supposed to write, and though no one else can fill his shoes, we trust others may be given to walk in other shoes to make tracks in the same pathway .

We know of no one in the last 10

years that worked as Brother Joe for the good of the paper, sending in many new subscriptions, paying for those unable to afford, himself .

While we hope God will make us reconciled to our loss, we would not heap praise on the man, but thank God for our love for him . We often stand in awe at the marvelous work He can perform in His people .

Although we grieve and miss him we sorrow not as those that have no hope, believing our brother has passed on to an eternal home, a beautiful city, that we with the lovely family, see yonder with an eye of faith, yet have many trials and sorrows to encounter, that he will know no more for ever . Can not we see he has laid his armour by, no more warfare, his battle is fought, at last at peace, at home with his Captain that has gone on before .

In sadness,
Elder J . R . Williams

SISTER ANNIE COBB

On July 17, 1987 God in His infinite wisdom saw fit to call Annie McKinney Cobb to her heavenly home . She had celebrated her 99th birthday on May 3rd, 1987 . Then in June she suffered a stroke after which she improved enough to return to church one more time . Her favorite hymn was "Amazing Grace" . God's amazing grace was very evident in her life . She was blessed with good health all her life until the stroke . When asked how she was doing, her bubbly reply was always, "I'm fine", even after her stroke . She never

complained and enjoyed the long life God granted her . She loved her church and her pastors and attended very regularly .

Her funeral was preached at Dan River Church on Sunday July 19, 1987 by her pastor, Elder Kenneth Key, and Elder Paul Lamb . "Amazing Grace" and "I Would Not Live Always" were sung in Church and "Rock of Ages" was sung at the grave . She was laid to rest in the church cemetery beneath a mound of beautiful flowers to await the second coming of our Lord when we shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory What a great and glorious day that shall be when the graves burst open and these natural bodies are raised spiritual bodies and death shall be swallowed up in victory .

Annie McKinney was married to David Irwin Cobb in 1903 . To this union were born 4 daughters and 11 sons . 6 sons and 2 daughters preceded her in death . She leaves 2 daughters, Lillie Cobb and Ethel Hopper of Reidsville and 5 sons, Brooks, Edward, and Raleigh of Reidsville, Herman and Curtis, with whom she made her home, of Eden .

She was a member of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church for many years and was a faithful member until her death . Her presence has been greatly missed but we know that our loss is her eternal gain . Now she really is "fine" . I extend my deepest sympathy to her family but I would say to them to rejoice in her homegoing knowing that she has found joy unspeakable with the Lord .

Written by request of Dan River Church while in conference on September 27, 1987 .

In Christian Fellowship,
Jean Moran

Thelma H. Winborn

ASA JOSEPH HARDISON

Asa Joseph Hardison, born December 11, 1894 (Martin Co., N.C.) — died June 15, 1987. He was the son of the late George and Fannie Whitley Hardison. He was married to Otie Roberson April 16, 1922. To this union was born two daughters who survive — Thelma H. Winborn and Leona H. Corey. There are three grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Also one brother Ira Hardison and two sisters, Lizzie Griffin and Naomi Roberson. He was preceded in death by his wife who died June 22, 1986.

Brother Hardison was a hard working man, and many have said he always seemed to do what was right. Early in life, nine years of age to be exact, his father died leaving him head of the house. He joined the Primitive Baptist at Smithwick Creek in May, 1918. On July 6th of that same year he had to report for military service.

His faith was very important to him, he hardly ever missed a meeting. He used the Bible as his guide book. He served as clerk of the church since 1935 and as a Deacon since August 1947. He also was a trustee of the church.

His funeral was conducted at Smithwick Creek Church by his pastor Elder J.T. Prescott of Swansboro.

Written by his loving daughter, of Ahsokie, N.C.

IRA O. MYERS

As requested by his wife, with much grief in my heart, the Dear Lord willing I will endeavor to write a few words in memory of one whom I love. Our beloved Brother and friend was born in Pittsylvania County on December 17, 1919. He was a son of the late Charlie A. Myers and Arbelia Weeks Myers. Survivors include his widow, Sister Irene Dalton Myers of the residence; one daughter, Gracie Adams, Java; one foster daughter, Frances Johnson, Bedford; two brothers, Douglas Myers and Louis Myers, both of Gretna; four sisters, Kathryn Staton and Madgie Stevens, both of Lynchburg, Frances Vasser and Nannie George, both of Gretna; one grand-daughter, one great grandson and one foster grandson.

He attended his meetings regularly as long as his health permitted. He was received into the fellowship of Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church on December 23, 1979, and was baptized on April 13, 1980.

He was in V.A. Hospital, Roanoke, Virginia, 10 months and 2 days. He suffered long but bore his afflictions with patience and always enjoyed visits from his brethren and friends. I believe he was made reconciled to his illness. I was blessed to visit him on many occasions and he would greet me with a smile. When he became unable to talk, he would point up above to let you know where all his

help came from . I believe he could witness with Paul— I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus .

He was taken from this world of sin and sorrow on March 7, 1987 . His funeral was held on March 9, 1987, at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church by his Pastor, Elder O .K . Tench, and Elder Leonard Brammer . His body was laid to rest beneath an array of beautiful flowers in the church cemetery to await the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ .

Written by : Marvin Brumfield
Elder O .K . Tench, Moderator
Phyllis Goad, Clerk

Haskell, Ark . Two sisters Mrs . Melvie Thomason of Haskell, Ark . and Mrs . Alpha Reddin of Camden, Ark . Ten grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at 2:00 p .m . Tuesday, July 14 in the White Water Baptist Church at Tinsyan by Elder Clovis Townley . Burial was in Watson Cemetery at Tinsman by Benton Funeral Home .

She was loved by all Old Baptists that knew her. She was a lovely Sister and will be missed by all very much.

Brought up in conference, 1 copy to the Signs of the Times, 1 copy to family, and 1 copy to Pilgrim Rest Church .

Elder J .C . Townley, Moderator
Frances Townley, Church Clerk

MRS . FLORIECE WATSON

Mrs . Floriece Thomason Watson, age 76 years . Passed away Sunday, July 12, 1987 in the Hampton Nursing Home at Hampton, Ark . Sister Watson was a member of Pilgrim Rest Primitive Baptist Church . She was faithful to her church as long as she was able to come . She loved the doctrine of the Old Baptist . Sister Watson was the widow of Deacon Ross Watson, the daughter of Charles Thomason and Myrtle Oliver Thomason .

She is survived by two sons Charles Watson of Tinsman and Pete Watson of Memphis Tenn . Three daughters Mrs . Sarah Eubanks of St . Louis, Mo ., Mrs . Elsie Ashcraft of White Hall, Ark . and Mrs . Peggy Govan of Memphis, Tenn . Her mother Mrs . Myrtle Thomason of Haskell . One brother Gervas Thomason of

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WE APOLOGIZE . . .

In the February issue of The Signs we regret that a few copies were mailed out with an incorrect page . If your received one of these please notify one of the editors and a corrected copy will be sent you .

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POEM

The Weaver

*My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me,
I cannot choose the colors
He worketh steadily.*

*Ofttimes He weaveth sorrow,
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I, the underside.*

*Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why.*

*The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skillful
hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has
planned.*

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EDITORIAL

REPENTANCE


Elder W.D. Griffin

This is a scriptural subject. If we, the writer and the reader, are men of God, then the subject is certainly for our benefit. On the other hand, if we are not men of God, the written word of the Bible, as well as all the preaching and writing of the gospel will not make the subject beneficial to either of us. Let us remember that as a stated truth from the inspiration of God. Let us emphasize that inspired truth make the work of God's Holy Spirit keep us from ever making a

gesture of compromise about this stated truth.

Now let us not be afraid of any man of any set of men about this stated truth. May our adherence to the truth of this principle of the teachings of the written word be known unto all men. However, being a stickler for one phase or one side of the truth, and a slackness for another phase of the truth pertaining to the same subject, pictures us as being unstable, a compromiser, as being bewitched. If the doctrine of repentance applies to the men of God, it applies to all men of God wherever they may be as to the land of birth or their present dwelling place. Thus I do not have the right to speak in such a way, or write to the family of God, that what I am writing, or what I am saying behind the sacred desk, does not apply to them.

Let us be sure that we understand that repentance is not to any degree whatever the work of the fleshly minded man or woman. On the day of Pentecost the work preparatory to the success of the important Pentecostal day was done by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh. I realize the rising up of the carnal mind and making an application of that blessed event to every body that was there. As long as we dwell here in this world, we must expect this challenging storm of those that know not the covenant of grace, and that its message, cheer and comfort is limited to those given the Son in the choice of Almighty God. Not any of the words of divine Scripture, not any of the Holy Scriptures, not any of the preaching of the gospel is in any saving sense written or spoken or sent to any of the Adamic

family save those that are made alive in Jesus Christ our Lord .

What was the result of this pouring out of God's Spirit on the land of Israel ? Was it effectual on them ? How many other lands were savingly represented in the assembly on this blessed date ? Does the minute description of these events show any Israelite undecided about coming ? Does this vivid description of the arrival show one questioning the why of them coming ? Now when the apostles got to their assigned places, did any try to crowd in other than those that got in ? Was there any confusion as to who were to be seated and as to who would not be ? When the service began , was there any hesitation , indecision , confusion or disturbance in anyway as to who was to do the preaching ?

Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented: but sorrow of the world worketh death . (2 Cor . 7 : 10 .) If language means anything , and , not withstanding the fact that it does , many contends contrariwise . However , for a sinner to have godly sorrow , he or she , must be godly . Again , if language means anything , then , of necessity godly sorrow is wrought in those that are godly by the indwelling Spirit of God in them . It is not the spirit of the creature that works repentance , but it is the Spirit of the God of all grace that is silently , effectually working it in them .

Now it is true that God works in gracious characters both to will and to do of His good pleasure . Now I did not say , nor Paul did not say that God worked in them both the will and the do . He did not say that . Let those say that He did that if they have that mind .

But Inspiration did not say that . If He did not say that , what did He say ? He said , For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure . If inspiration had of said that God works in you to will , and the working out is left to a discretion of our will , then I'd place my hand over my mouth in silence . But since God works in us the will (the will always comes first) then , the will having already been wrought in us it is followed by the same effectual work of God to the end that immediately following the will being wrought in us , the outward performance of it is made manifest .

This day , as are all of the days of our salvation unforgettable . The people of God remember the day and the way in which He has brought them . All of them are unforgettable experiences . His goodness to them in leading and guiding them to obey His commandments ; His patience and longsuffering with their shortcomings , both alike are remembrances of yesteryear that often brings us to live anew the mercies extended , or to hang our heads in sorrow because of our disobediences .

What mercies were shown both the people that had the spirit of the Lord poured out upon them , and Peter and the other apostles as they came for this momentous day . Has there ever been such unity as was wrought in the whole assembly ? There had not ever been a day like unto this day . Where did it start ? Did it start in the mind of God's people or did it start in the mind of God ? Everything that is acceptable and honored and held holy before Him is that which starts with Him . God teaches His people ; He

bleses His people ; He cares for them in every way . When God poured out His Spirit upon them , they responded ; there was an immediate effect upon and in them . While we are gazing in wonder at the scenes before us , let us have grace that we may always remember that every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights in whom there is not any variation or even a shadow of turning . May God open our understanding to know , to fully believe that all goodness stems from Him , First , by an eternal design and secondly , by the effectual workings of His power and wisdom .

Great and marvelous are thy works Lord God Almighty . None of these had ever experienced anything like this before . But that did not show in the outcome of it all . All of Israel was there . Peter , and the other apostles were there . That weakling of other days , where was he ? That man that had denied His Lord and Master where was he ? Come dear readers , linger here in the midst of these glorious surroundings . Israel came not knowing what these things meant . When they heard the first gospel message in their lives they did not know what to do . Was it a happen so that Peter was there ? Pity that poor sinner that believes there are any happen so with Israel 's God . Peter could not have strengthened these brethren earlier . He would have preached to them the same thing that he hurled in the face of his Saviour .

How wonderful it is that God changes things . In all of the history of Israel , both under the law and under the grace dispensation , God did not try to do anything . He never has , and , thank His dear name , He will never

experiment to see if He can inveigle the race of Adam into doing something that He desires to be done . I know the rebellion that is in men 's hearts , including mine , but there is not anything too hard for the Lord to do . Just a word , just a look , melts the heart of a stubborn Peter , and brings a doubting Thomas to cry out for mercy , and to beg for help in their hour of unbelief .

There may be readers among the Signs patrons that believe in a god of limited power , but that does not make Him of limited power . He does His will in the army of heaven , and among the inhabitants of the earth . There is not an incident (nor an accident) in all of the teeming panorama of years since God pronounced all that He had made as being good that He has not come off victor in it all .

On this memorable day of Pentecost the laboring masses of Israel gathered at this divine altar . They did not decide to come . The evidence is that had the Spirit not been poured out upon them that they would have never come . So convinced am I of this victorious truth , that if that is furnished to me from the Bible , that I will close the lid on my typewriter and return my credentials to the church that issued them to me , and I will not ever enter an Old Baptist pulpit again . If God did declare the end from the beginning (and He did) , then those that he determined to come will come . Not only did He declare the end from the beginning , but all of the incidental matters and events were in His declaration . To declare a thing shall be , is equal to an oath to that end . God did swear by Himself , by two immutable witnesses , in which it

was impossible for God to lie (to make a conditional promise .)

God sent His ministers to preach the gospel. The law system had failed every one that trusted in it . It was given to fail . I know that men recoil at such an expression as that , but it is only unbelieving men that disbelieve . That law was not given as an experiment . God had a purpose worthy of His name in giving the law . God did not give it to see if it would work . He did not do that . God does not want anything , not in my weakness I am going to say that He did not desire it to work . He gave it to teach poor sinners that writings and ordinances and conditional statues could not ever save . The laboring children under these things had the Spirit poured out upon them and were blessed to see that the keeping of them had not availed them anything . They came not knowing what to do . Down the ages of time God 's elect people have not been able to master the law of Moses . At the end of that lesson , God has folded them up , as He lays away every created thing as its purpose and usefulness is fulfilled (Heb . 1 : 12) . How glad I am , and truly hope that I am thankful to the God of purpose that he made everything for a purpose ; that each purpose is fulfilled , then , THEN , that He folds it up , as is done with a garment that is not any longer of any use , and lays it away . I am glad and thankful for such a rich display of His sovereign will . The law will never molest or make afraid a single one of these chosen vessels .

The Spirit of God was , and still is , poured out upon every one of them , and it was effective in bringing every one of them , both then and now . The power of God will come to every one

of them , and every one of them will be turning (repenting) from the law and will be found walking in the apostles doctrine ; further , they will be in fellowship with the apostle 's doctrine . and they will have all things in common .

Another matter comes up . There is not any Bible record of one of these beloved and chosen of being left to perish . God's will concerning His people is that they all come . I will say to the north , give up ; and to the south , Keep not back : bring my sons from far , and my daughters from the ends of the earth . Even every one that is called by my name . (Isa . 43 : 6 , 7) . It is my judgment that no father or mother among my readers , or , for that matter , in all the world , would call for any others when they divided up their goods with their children . I am sure of this . I am equally sure that God did not nor would not , nor could not have poured His Spirit out upon any but His own family , and I am equally sure that but very few , if any , of the Adamic mothers and fathers would leave any of their children out , yet , realizing that , in some cases , they would , and do , even that . But I am sure that God did not , and will not , and cannot leave one of His children out of any one benefit that rightly belongs to one of His children .

Peter , in his preaching , commanded these people that did not know what was taking place , that did not know what to do , to repent and be baptized . Now may God give us grace to examine the meeting on this occasion . If language means anything (and it does) then this is the folding up of the first covenant and the laying of it away . Let us not be fooled , for great and precious things are

being unfolded before us . God gave the first , and He had a purpose worthy of Himself in giving it . His purpose in giving it was not to see and find out as to whether it would work or not . God knew better . I urge that God knew better . I am going to say that God purposed that the first covenant of works (law) fail . It just had to fail . I am at times called by way of ridicule a necessitarian . I plead guilty . If this had to be , then , by all means , this had to be . There was not any ablution that could come about by the law . That could come only by the shedding of blood . Therefore , the first had to be removed , completely taken out of the way .

What a beautiful scene it is as God removes one and initiates the other . Here God is seen as working at both ends of the line . God alone in His almighty power and right and dominion begin that work . He poured out His Spirit on those that were to receive the benefits of this change , which , we must remember , was not a change in God 's purpose but a change in dispensations . Look and see poor sinner . Behold the goodness of God . As He pours out His Spirit upon these chosen people the inquiring begins ; the stirring among them begins . They begin to move forward to the Pentecostal Day .

Let me digress . Why is Peter the spokesman ? All of the apostles were along , but Peter alone did the preaching . Let us go back . It is needful that we remember the apostle 's weakness . Not only did he have the audacity to hurl conditionalism in the face of His Saviour , but boasted to Him of his ability to stand by Him through any conflict that might beset Him . Let us look at the naked truth . When thou are

converted strengthen thy brethren . God doesn't at all , and sensible men don't leave the strengthening of weak creatures to themselves . God alone is to do that . He had a test coming up that would show up his weakness , that would overwhelm him with shamefacedness , and that would make him weep in much anxiety . This was provided by the Saviour . But more is to follow . At exactly the right time this apostle that could not preach the truth , but would attempt to preach his spurious doctrine to Jesus Christ , is sent to meet the new class of poor sinners , even a class that is to be preached the solid grace foundation to them . Not only sent to his brethren , who truly needed strengthening , but that he was prepared and taught and strengthened to say and to do just what would strengthen them in this trying hour . The pouring out of the Spirit of God upon them was strengthening to them , even getting them ready for the message , but that the poor sinner , the Apostle Peter , said exactly , no more , no less , than what was indeed good news to them , was Strengthening to them .

The gospel is the power of God . If ever there was an occasion when a great lesson was learned by both the speaker , truly it was here . With all of my heart I believe that this gospel , even the exact same gospel message is being preached today . It is the power of God being made manifest . To one and all to whom this gospel is preached it is the power of God today . We are living in the Pentecostal Day . This day will last long enough -- it will last until the Saviour comes the second time without sin unto the reception of the whole triune family of God .

This great Day is described in the Bible . This Bible contains the scriptures , which are inspired and written to the man of God to the end that he in every nation and kindred and tongue be perfected in every good work . I feel an urgency and a keen anticipation that I would have little support and evidence in my favor if I left off or added to single word of that Book .

From this good meeting by the people of God , they all continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship , and in the breaking of bread , and in prayers . They all continued in one accord . What was it that they were in accord about ? It was in regard to the doctrine that Peter preached . Every apostle was in unison with it . They all heard Peter preach the gospel . All of those that had been favored with the pouring out of the Spirit upon them , all endorsed it as the apostles doctrine . Peter , with the approval of all other apostles , together with all of those on whom the Spirit had been poured , they all approved . All of them continued from that day forward in what they had heard .

I want to walk with this great band of believers . I beg for grace to live in their fellowship , to break bread with them , to go from house to house (from church to church) esteeming every occupant better than myself , knowing no doctrine save that , that was preached at the ushering in of the Pentecostal day , walking and , by the grace of God . Living in the apostles doctrine in precept and example .

If it is the pleasure of our heavenly Father , I hope to meet you in the spirit of this doctrine , in the fellowship that has ever abounded from the Day of Pentecost until the present , to be

gathered together in these houses .

Your little brother ,
Elder W . D . Griffin

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sister Jones ;

I am sorry that I have not answered your good letter before now . I was really thrilled to get it and particularly at the time that I received it . It was waiting for me when I returned home after our vacation . We came by the Powell Valley Association on our way back from Florida and I really enjoyed visiting with the brethren and sisters there .

The world would think it strange to feel that way toward someone that you had only met once and then for just a few hours , but , the same feeling of fellowship is there for those of like precious faith whether you have known them for a day or so much longer . At least , I hope that I can honestly say those of like precious faith . I fear much of the time that I have no faith , but nevertheless the feelings that I have for them is most precious to me .

Then when I got home and found your letter , and read it , it just seemed to be the perfect ending to a very enjoyable trip you and brother Jones always were some of the ones that I thought of most often when given a mind to remember the precious brethren and sisters that I have been associated with over the years . Your home was the first that I remember visiting

in after I began to visit among the Baptists and it has always been a most precious place to be .

I have enjoyed reading many of your sweet letters since Mother, Aunt Lucille and myself always share the letters which we receive from the brethren , I have always considered them to be among the things which we all have in common . I would never think of picking up one of their letters from a friend and read it but these letters of love are to anyone who has an interest in the spiritual kingdom of God .

You mentioned reading the hymn " If God is mine " and the travel of mind that you had thinking about the lines the poet was blessed to pen down . It seems , to me , that sometimes a poem , song or single verse of scripture can expand into the whole of the scripture if your mind is blessed to dwell on the truth they contain . There is a scripture that speaks of the simplicity that is in Christ . The scriptures a simple and beautiful story of the love and mercy of God which is sovereignly bestowed upon his elect vessels of mercy which have ever been afore prepared unto glory . This is not something that the natural man can attain to , but it is the substance of the heritage of every child of grace and it has been theirs since the beginning of time and before the foundation of the world . In this life the fullness of this treasure is revealed unto them line upon line and precept upon precept , here a little and there a little to keep them following along in the way of truth . It is for a specific purpose and shall surely accomplish the desired end and produce the needful effect .

As Peter says " That the trial of your faith , being more precious than gold that perisheth though it be tried by fire might be found unto praise and honor at the appearing of Christ ." All of the experiences of a child of God are for their good that they should be a vessel unto honor , sanctified and meet for the masters use and prepared unto every good work . The natural man , as he is born into this world , is of the earth , earthly and could never be a vessel of mercy in and of himself , but as the spirit of God comes and indwells the man and leads him through his trials of faith he becomes something else . The trials are not that God might learn something about the man but rather that the man is made to acknowledge that his ways are not his own and to witness to the fact that , " By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God ." The natural man is proud and would never acknowledge his dependence on God for everything without his being made to do so . This he is made to do as his trial of faith produces its perfect work and he can do nothing else . The tribulations , doubts and fears which he endures makes him to realize his weakness but the grace and faith which are God 's gift to him cause him to press on toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God .

These things sometimes seem so plain and simple that a child could understand them but when the spirit is withdrawn one can only say . " Oh wretched man that I am , who shall deliver me from the body of this death ." In this state you are given to see your wretched and undone condition and fear you have been mistaken

in it all and you have been but deceiving yourself .

The men of the world are never given to see themselves in this condition . They see only the pride and vanity of the flesh and never realize that it is all temporal and perishes with the using . They never acknowledge their weakness and inability to accomplish their desires . They believe they are masters of their own fate and can make themselves pleasing in God 's sight . They are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth . They have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof .

The child of God is given to see their corrupt state and to mourn their undone condition but their hope is that this in itself is evidence that they are an heir of heaven even as irrational as it may seem in their present state of mind . As you said the rod is just as needful as the staff . They are each a blessing of God upon his people , purging them of the vanities of nature , the pride of the flesh so that they will acknowledge , " For all flesh is grass . " This they would never do living under the influence of the vanity that the fleshly creature was created subject to . Isaiah says , " Behold I have refined thee , but not with silver ; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction . " I believe that the furnace of affliction spoken of by Isaiah and the trial of faith that Peter wrote about are one and the same . They are not good to the heir of grace , but they are good for them and are necessary in the perfecting of the saints .

These are things of which the world is unaware and if you try to tell them about your experience they will

say that you are foolish and imagining them . They cannot know them because they are spiritual and the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned . One of the disciples asked Christ , on one occasion , " Lord how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world . " The answer is that the comforter whom the Father will send in my name shall teach you all things .

Oh how I do hope and pray that I am in that number , and do know a little about these things from experience .

In bonds of love ,
Richard

We want to thank Sister Jones for sharing this letter from Elder Richard Campbell with the readers of the " Signs " .

Editors

LOOKING BACKWARD — THEN FORWARD

Dear Elder Key ,

Here is a letter I received from sister Rlee Houchins , that I think is good , and I asked her if I could send it to you for publication , she agreed to share it with the Signs readers , if you the Editors feel to print it I would be glad .

Leonard J . Brammer

As I stand on the threshold of another year , the old one almost gone , I look back at the long ,

rugged road that I have been brought , and I see many things . Sometimes on this journey , it seemed I was running with anticipation , then slowing down to a faltering walk , even stumbling and falling too , on this path of my uncertain journey .

Now as I stand and look , as it were , into the future , what do I see ? Oh , I am so tired and so weary as I look out and wonder if and how I will ever get to the land that “ flows with milk and honey .” Will I ever reach it and forever be with Christ , or will it be of “ fire and brimstone ,” with Satan and his angels ?

As I look back along the long and wearisome journey , that I have come , I see the few “ oases ” in the desert that refreshed my parched soul from time to time . I can only beg that there will be a few more on the journey yet to come , that I may survive to reach the end .

I have only a precious hope that the “ Star ” that guided the wisemen of old on that glorious journey so many years ago , will lead and guide me to that land of eternal rest . That Star that is felt in the soul and heart and one that cannot be destroyed as the seasons come and go , I trust will lead me on and keep my feet in the narrow way .

Oh , sometime the hills seem so long and steep , I wonder can I go another step ? Can I hold out to reach another little shadow , that I may again breathe the fresh perfume of His love ? The hills of this life are so steep , the desert is so barren and dry . The hills are just decaying materials and there is hardly any foot-hold and if I fall , it will be into the horrible pit of destruction .

But listen ! As I climb , what do I

hear so faintly in the distance ? Oh , I hear singing as I crawl onward and upward , slowly now , reaching for something solid to hold to . I can hear it more clearly now , though still it is far in the distance . Surely it is the singing of the angels , no other singing can have such a perfect sound . No other sound can soothe the tired , weary soul on such a long and fearful journey . There is no turning back now , the decaying materials of this life , the steep hill is crumbling behind me , I cannot go back . I must continue to press upward with each breath an unuttered prayer , that I might be blessed to hear each note of that melodious singing .

The end of my journey will soon be over now , my journey through the desert land and up the steep hill and then what ? Just now I feel content that I will hear the angels singing as did the wise men of old . Oh , may my speed forward be a little more swift , not lagging , so unsure , but hasten forward that I may hear more clearly the angels in the Promised Land , that I may join the heavenly hosts , and “ Crown Him Lord of All . ”

Heavenly Father , as I look backward , then forward , hasten the day if it is Thy will , that I , a poor sinner , by Thy mercy and Thy grace , might join in Thy perfect praise .

Amen

Rlee B . Houchins
Roanoke , Va .

Jan . 30 , 1988

Dear Editor :

For some time now my thoughts have dwelt upon the garments referred to in the Bible . Es-

pecially those garments that the children of God are to **PUT OFF** and those which they are to **PUT ON**. The Bible illustrates these garments as man-made , God-given and spirit-wrought .

Man-made garments as one has said ; “ are original , but not sufficient (Gen . 3 : 7). Natural , but not clean (Zech . 3 : 3-5) , Smart , but useless (Isa . 64 : 6) and mended , but made worse . ” (Mark 2 : 21) .

God-given garments are those provided by God and point to Christ — the sacrifice , which means **TO COVER** . “ The Lord our righteousness , ” who become **OUR ROBE** of righteousness . “ Put ye on the Lord , Jesus Christ . ”

Spirit-wrought garments is as much from God as the God-giving one — because the “ **ACTS** ” spoken of are done in the power of the Spirit . Having been born of the spirit **TO SEE** , **TO ENTER** and **TO INHERIT** the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world , our life here should be one which brings glory to God . Put ye on the Spirit-wrought garment of the Lord , Jesus Christ . Now if any have not the Spirit of Jesus Christ , he is none of His .

Satan in the garden of Eden stripped man of his Robe of Righteousness and Innocency and left him in a state of being naked and unfit for God’s presence . We have this illustrated in the parable of the man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves , which stripped him of his Raiment , wounded him and departed , leaving him as dead . This is the picture of man’s helpless condition .

When Adam and Eve knew of their

condition , they at once tried to remedy it . “ . . . They sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons ” — man-made garments , denoting works of self-righteousness , by the flesh , works of the carnal natural man .

Those fig-leaves were but a picture of themselves plucked from the parent stem , death had set in and though for a time they might remain glossy and beautiful , they would soon be withered and dead . The fig-leaves were not sufficient to make them fit for God’s presence and when they heard God’s voice (“ Ye are called with a holy calling ”) “ Where Art Thou ? ” They hid themselves for they still felt naked and unclothed .

So , it is always with garments man makes for himself — Though sin would persuade us that we are well Clad ! “ Ye clothe you ” says Haggai , “ but there is none warm . ” And Isaiah expressed it : “ Their webs shall not become garments , neither shall they cover themselves **WITH THEIR WORKS** ” For “ All our righteousness is as filthy rags . ”

Unto Adam and Eve God made coats of skin and clothed them . With their first dress , the fig-leaf aprons , God had nothing to do , and with those “ Coats of skin ” man had nothing to do . They were God-given garments !

We do not read that Adam and Eve put the “ Coats of Skin ” over their Fig-leaf Aprons . They were stripped of all their self-righteousness . They were God-given and so The Word , that was made flesh , The Son of God is God-given !

When the Prodigal Son returned his father said : “ Bring forth the best robe and **PUT IT ON** him . . . ” The best

robe was not put over the rags in which he returned .

Man by nature is inclined to try to " patch-up " his old rags and put on " some of self and some of Thee , " but Christ tells us how useless this is : " No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old , if otherwise then both the new maketh a rent and the piece that was taken out of the new AGREETH NOT with the old . " The garment which God gives " Agreeeth Not " with filthy rags !

In the demoniac story , when the Lord met him , he " wore no clothes , Neither abode in any house , but in Tombs . " A place of death . But when the demons had been cast out , he was found at the feet of Jesus . This a picture of man ' s condition and when given a spirit-wrought garment will be found at Jesus ' feet , totally dependent upon Him ! In All Things !

Horace E . Walker

Horace E . Walker
6430 Kelley St .
Salem , Va . 24153

Jan . 29 , 1988

Rt . 2 , Box 75

Strong , Ark . 71765

Dear Editor ' s of the Signs ;

It was said to me , to keep writing , by some of the dear brethren , and sisters , from afar and near , I know unless the Lord blesses me with a spiritual mind , it would be of no comfort to you dear ones saith Paul , a carnal mind is enmity against God , not subject to the laws of God , neither indeed can be . For to be carnal minded is death , but to be

spiritual minded is life and peace . I know there dwells nothing good in my flesh . I hate my sinful flesh , we know when the Lord blesses us with his spirit , to understand a portion of his precious truth . It is life and peace to us . Jesus is the way , the truth , and the life . Saith Jesus , 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 . John said , whosoever transgresseth , and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ , hath not God . He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ , he hath both the Father and the Son . If there come any unto you , and bring not this doctrine , receive him not into your home , neither bid him God speed : For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds . I adore the three in one God , God the Father , God the Son , God the holy spirit . The secret things belongs unto God , the revealed things belongs unto us . Mat . 11 : 27 . All things are delivered unto me of my Father : and no man knoweth the Son , but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father ; save the Son ; and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him . I know the precious truths that the Lord has blessed me to believe , and also to write a little concerning spiritual things . I believe I was taught it of God , and not by man , but by the revelation of Jesus Christ ; That is the way the Lord ; has taught all his children , from the least unto the greatest . Heb . 8 : 10-12 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days , saith

the Lord ; I will put my laws into their mind , and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them a God , and they shall be to me a people : and they shall not teach every man his neighbour , and every man his brother , saying know the Lord : for all shall know me , from the least unto the greatest . For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness , and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more , how precious these scriptures are to this vile and sinful wretch . Thy mercy , my God , is the theme of my song , The joy of my heart , and the boast of my tongue : Thy free grace alone , from the first to the last , Hath won my affections , and bound my soul fast , without thy sweet mercy I could not live here : Sin soon would reduce me to utter despair ; But through thy free goodness my spirits revive ; and he that first made me still keeps me alive .

1 John 4 : 15-21 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God , God dwelleth in him , and he in God , and we have known and believed the love that God hath to us . God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God , and God in him , Herein is our love made perfect , that we may have boldness in the day of judgment : because as he is , So are we in this world . There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath torment . He that feareth is not made perfect in love . We love him because he first loved us us . If a man says 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 ? and this commandment have we from him , That he who loveth God love his

brother also .

1 John 5 : 1-2 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God : and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him . By this we know that we love the children of God , when we love God , and keep his commandments .

Acts 13 : 48 And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed , he came unto him own , and 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 .

Romans 9 : 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy , which he had afore prepared unto glory , (verse 24) Even us whom he hath called , not of the Jews only , but also of the Gentiles

Ephesians 1 : 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened ; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling , and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints .

Col . 1 : 12-15 Giving thanks unto the Father ; which hath made us meet to be partakers of the saints in light : who hath delivered us from the power of darkness : and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son : In whom we have redemption through his blood , even the forgiveness of sins : who is the image of the invisible God , the firstborn of every creature : saith Paul Rom . 6 : 17 But God be thanked , that ye were the servants of sin , but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you . There is 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

all ; and in you all . I love the way the Lord blessed his apostles to address the true churches of the living God , grace be to you and peace from God our Father , and from the Lord Jesus Christ . Also this from Isaiah , And all thy children shall be taught of God , and great shall be the peace of thy children . Hymn 280 came to me ; I poor , weak and worthless , tho I am , I have a rich ; almighty friend ; Jesus , the Saviour , is his name — He freely loves ; and without end . He ransomed me from hell with blood , and by his power my foes controlled ; He found me wandering

far from God , and brought me to his chosen fold . He cheers my heart , my wants supplies , and says that I shall shortly be , enthroned with him above the skies — O what a friend is Christ to me !) Sometimes I can say I know my redeemer liveth . The Lord is my Shepherd , but when doubts and fears trouble my mind . I wonder am I his or not , do I love the Lord or not , I then have to be shown again , that the Lord is my Saviour and my God .

With love to all you ,
 dear ones in Christ ,
 Lula Fox

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



ROANOKE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH



Elder L. J. Brammer

Roanoke , Va . in 1960 .

The Roanoke Primitive Baptist Church was organized in 1900 and moved to its present location at Burke Street and Maiden Lane S .W .

Meetings are held on 1st Sunday at 11 a .m . and Saturday before at 2 p .m . Also every 5th Sunday at 11 a 11 a .m .

The Communion meeting is held on 1st Sunday in April .

Elder Leonard J. Brammer is the pastor .

 ARTICLES

AMAZING GRACE

Psalms 66 : 1 , " Make a joyful noise unto God , all ye lands : "

I don 't know of a more joyful noise than amazing grace when it is sung with grace in your hearts to the Lord .

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

His grace has most surely been amazing to a wretch like me . In my darkest hours , I heard my name called so plainly I answered . It was a fearful , but sweet sound . I was found in a waste howling wilderness and I believe by his amazing grace , he opened my eyes that I could see .

" 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear ,

And grace my fears relieved :
How precious did that grace appear ,
The hour I first believed . "

When I saw myself a hell - deserving sinner , it taught my heart to fear . I felt so unworthy when I was blessed with a hope that the precious saviour died for my sins . By his amazing grace , my fear was relieved .

It was not my choice to believe or not to believe , rather by his amazing grace .

Hebrews 4 : 12 , " For the word of God is quick , and powerful , and sharper than any two - edged sword . "

" Through many dangers , toils , and snares , I have already come ;

" 'Tis grace has brought me safe

thus far , And grace will lead me home home . "

I have toiled many nights because of my sins and snares that were set for me . I feel his amazing grace has brought me through many trials and tribulations .

I dreamed of seeing that city whose streets are pure gold . I hope his grace will lead me home where I shall see him for myself and not for another .

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

I believe I can witness his promise through and by his amazing grace , for the Lord is good to me , and without his word , I fear my hope is not secure .

I feel his truth is my shield from the destruction of unbelief . Lord , I believe ; help thou mine unbelief .

If by his amazing grace I have a portion , I shall receive it in due season as long as life endures .

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

As we grow older , it causes us to realize that at any moment this flesh and heart can fail and we pray for a peaceful moment for this mortal life to cease .

The only joy and peace we find on earth is when we are blessed by his amazing grace to joy in the Lord and hope that we shall possess that joy and peace within the vale .

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

I believe that , that day for which

all other days were made is nigh at hand and the things we see today will be seen forever no more .

There will be no need of the sun , neither of the moon , in that city which hath foundations , whose builder and maker is God , for the lamb is the light thereof .

At our communion service in October 1987 , I closed my eyes in prayer . I hope and believe that by an eye of faith , I saw the lamb of God standing beside the table . I hope by his amazing grace , I shall see him again and call him forever mine .

“ Where we will have no less days to sing God ’s praise than when we first begun .”

Clifton Robertson
Route 1
Reidsville , N . C .

“ Beloved , think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you , as though some strange thing happened unto you : but rejoice , inasmuch as ye be partakers of Christs sufferings ; that when his glory shall be revealed , ye may be glad also with exceeding joy .” I Peter 4 : 12-13 .

Beloved brethren , we know that the trials of our faith are not for God to find out how much faith we have , but for our good ; for all things work together for good to them who love God , to them that are the called according to his own purpose . We have no faith within or of our own self , for faith is the gift of God , lest any man should boast . We face trials , tribulations and temptations almost

every day of our life , but let us not charge God with our temptations . “ Let no man say when he is tempted , I am tempted of God : for God cannot be tempted with evil , neither tempteth he any man : but every man is tempted , when he is drawn away of his own lusts , and enticed .” Every man and woman on earth is full of lust , for we were made subject to vanity from the beginning , and our federal head Adam fell under its power . And being Adam multiplied we can be nothing more than he . There are those who would charge God with being the author of sin because he made us the way we are , but they are only trying to hide their own sins , instead of confessing them and repenting . “ Nay , but Oman , 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 ?” We were made according to his own will and purpose and we should be exceedingly glad that it is so .

Being made subject to vanity we fell under its power , and therefore became sinners . But God foresaw all of this , and the cure was with him before the foundation of the world : For Christ stood as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world . Though God made his people subject to vanity he also subjected the same in hope . Hope of what ? Hope of heaven and immortal glory : to reign with him forever . Can we have any real hope without faith ? I do not believe hope and faith can be separated . If we are given faith to believe that Christ died

for his people, must we not also hope that we are included? "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his names sake." Yes, dear brethren, we must suffer for Christ's sake, for he also suffered for us. There are those who teach that you can live rejoicing every day, if only you will accept him as your Saviour and give him your heart. I don't know how anyone can give his heart to God, and if God does not take away our cold and stony heart and give us a heart of flesh we can never know him: "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." If one does not know God, how can he give or even offer anything to him? "He that commeth to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." How can one seek anything that he does not believe exists? Brethren, my experiences have taught me that I cannot live rejoicing every day. There are moments when God reveals himself to me, (at least I believe this to be true,) but most of the time I go moaning in spirit and total darkness. Is this not also your experience? Not only am I in darkness, but trials, temptations, and persecutions meet me daily, and being very weak I often succumb to temptations; and almost always regret it. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it

it." Although we often succumb to our fleshly lusts, a way is always made for us to escape so that we can never go so far that we utterly destroy ourselves. If it was not so, I feel sure I would have been destroyed long ago; and that justly so. Thanks be unto God that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to save the world from the condemnation it was already under. We read in the second chapter of Hebrews: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." And, "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find help in time of need."

Yes, dear brethren, while in the flesh our Lord and Saviour was tempted of Satan in all points, but without sin; and is now sitting on the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. Therefore let us come

before his throne in prayer in our time of need .

The Apostle James tells us to , “ count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations ; knowing this , that the trying of your faith worketh patience . ” Also , “ Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried , he shall receive the crown of life , which the Lord hath promised to them that love him . ” Do we love him ? If we love him , it is because he first loved us , and gave himself for us . To know him is to love him , for God is love ; and it is God that teaches us to love . The natural man does not know or love God , for the natural man cannot receive the spiritual things of God . Only when one has been born again of the Holy Spirit can he know the love of God : and man has no more to do with bringing about this birth than he did in bringing about his natural birth . God is light , and the natural man loves darkness , for his deeds are evil . When one is born again and this new life is made manifest to him , a war is begun . There is then two lives living in one body and these are contrary the one to the other so that we cannot do the things that we would : for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit , and the Spirit against the flesh . There is nothing good in our flesh , and the works of the flesh are adultery , fornication , uncleanness , lasciviousness , idolatry , hatred , etc . and these we will do if we are not led by the Holy Spirit . Then if led by the Holy Spirit we will have the fruit of the Spirit which is love , joy , peace , longsuffering , gentleness , goodness , faith , meekness , temperance : against which there is no law .

Brethren , it is this warfare that

causes the believer to suffer . The non-believer knows nothing about this warfare , therefore he may live rejoicing every day ; but because of our own belief we must suffer persecutions and afflictions . Yea , all that will live godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution : but out of them all shall our God deliver us . Many non-believers say they believe ; but know not the truth , for they know not from whence belief comes , nor do they suffer as do believers . Our belief is of God : “ Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ , not only to believe on him , but also to suffer for his sake . ” Rejoice , dear brethren , if you suffer for his name 's sake , for , “ If we suffer , we shall also reign with him . ” Is this not your desire , your hope , that you will live and reign with him forever ? Non-believers profess to know that they are saved and will surely get to heaven , but the true believer can only profess a hope : for we walk by faith and not by sight . Where does our hope come from ? We must have faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ to redeem his chosen people before we can have hope that we are numbered with them . How do we attain to this faith ? Is it something we can reach out and take hold on anytime we so desire ? No , “ For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God ; lest any man should boast . ” The grace and the faith are both gifts from God . “ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for , the evidence of things not seen . ” I cannot separate faith and hope . Faith without hope would be worthless to me , and hope without substance (faith) would also be worthless .

Our God is a consuming fire ; he

hath chosen us in the furnace of afflictions , and he will bring us forth as gold with all the dross burned away . I believe that the trials of our faith is a part of the burning away of our dross and the renewing of our faith . And as Paul said , “ being justified by faith , we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand , and rejoice in hope of the glory of God . And not only so , but we glory in tribulations also : knowing that tribulations worketh patience ; and patience , experience ; and experience , hope . And hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us . ”

Brethren , I often rebel when faced with trials , and tribulations , and I believe this is common with all men : believers and non-believers alike . But when I am given to see that the hand of God has delivered me , it often brings me to my knees , begging forgiveness for my rebellion . At other times it makes me thankful and at peace with God , and seems to renew my little hope . Also there are times during my trials and tribulations that I turn to him , begging for mercy and to be relieved . I realize , however , that without trials and tribulations and persecutions that I would have no need or desire to pray : no need to ask for help or give thanks for help given . But thanks be unto our all wise God that all things work together for good ; for he works all things according to his own will and purpose . “ O the depth of the riches of both the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments , and his ways past finding out ! ” May we glorify his

holy name forever .

Brethren , again I feel that my thoughts have been very scattered , but I present them for your prayerful consideration , and ask that you receive them only as you find them in harmony with the holy scriptures . May God bless the truth and pardon all errors .

Brethren , pray for this poor sinner .

Clifford Wilbanks

VOICES OF THE PAST

“he being dead yet speaketh”

“ *The entrance of thy words giveth light ; it giveth understanding unto the simple.* ” — *Psalm cxix. 130 .*

The word “ simple ” means literally something which is not folded or twisted together . But owing to the treacherous and desperately deceitful heart of man , all , without exception , in a state of nature are the reverse of this . All their plots and contrivances for worldly profit or fleshly pleasure are tangled and complicated ; and they are continually twisting together some thread or other of carnal policy . But when God the Holy Ghost begins the work of grace upon the souls of the elect , he proceeds (if I may use the expression) to untwist them . He takes hold of that rope which Satan and their own hearts have been twisting together for years , and he untwists it throughout its whole length , so as to leave the strands not intertwined as before , but riven , separated , and torn from each

other . The light that shines into the soul out of the fulness of Jesus discovers to a man the tortuousness, the crookedness, the complicated deceit and hypocrisy of which he is guilty . A man then is made " simple , " when the folds and rumples of his heart are shaken out , and he is brought to see and feel that God looks into him ; that his eye penetrates into every recess of his bosom ; and that there is not a thought in his heart, nor " a word in his tongue , but the Lord knoweth it altogether " (Psalm cxxxix . 4) . This character is aptly represented by Nathaniel . He had gone through this untwisting work in his soul . He had been under the fig - tree , and whilst kneeling and praying there, the eye of God looked into him , and just as a flash of lightning runs , in a moment , through a coil of wire , so , when the eye of God looked into Nathaniel 's soul , that instantaneous flash unravelled and untwisted the devices of his heart, and made him a simple man before him — " an Israelite indeed , in whom there was no guile " (John i . 47) .

" If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world , let him become a fool , that he may be wise . " — I Corinthians iii . 18 .

The fruit and effect of divine teaching is , to cut in pieces , and root up all our fleshly wisdom , strength , and righteousness . God never means to patch a new piece upon an old garment ; he never intends to let our wisdom , our strength , our righteousness have any union with his ; it must all be torn to pieces , it must all be plucked up by

the roots , that a new wisdom , a new strength , and a new righteousness may arise upon its ruins . But till the Lord is pleased to teach us , we never can part with our own righteousness , never give up our own wisdom , never abandon our own strength . These things are a part and parcel of ourselves , so ingrained within us , so innate in us , so growing with our growth , that we cannot willingly part with an atom of them till the Lord himself breaks them up , and plucks them away . Then , as he brings into our souls some spiritual knowledge of our own dreadful corruptions and horrible wickedness , our righteousness crumbles away at the divine touch ; as he leads us to see and feel our ignorance and folly in a thousand instances , and how unable we are to understand anything aright but by divine teaching , our wisdom fades away ; and as he shews us our inability to resist temptation and overcome sin , by any exertion of our own , our strength gradually departs , and we become like Samsom , when his locks were cut off . Upon the ruins , then , of our own wisdom , righteousness , and strength , does God build up Christ 's wisdom , Christ 's righteousness , and Christ 's strength : as Jesus said to his servant Paul , " My strength is made perfect in weakness ; " and this brought him to that wonderful conclusion , " Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities , that the power of Christ may rest upon me " (2 Cor . xii . 9) . But only so far as we are favoured with this special teaching are we brought to pass a solemn sentence of condemnation upon our own wisdom , strength , and righteousness , and feelingly seek after the Lord 's .

MOVED OR MOVING ?

To assure you of getting your "Signs" and without missing any copies, be sure to inform us of any change of address.

Editors

MEETINGS

**MT . OLIVE
PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH**

Dear Elder Williams as clerk for the Mt . Olive Primitive Baptist Church in Stockdale , Texas , I wish to notify you , for publication , of the change we made for our time of meeting . We have met for years the first and third Sunday of each month . Beginning in Feb . of 1988 we plan to have our meetings the second and fourth Sundays of each month .

We have three very able ministers Elder Gerald Shipman , Elder Malcom Burkhalter , and Elder David Harrell . We have very few members , but we live in hope .

Thank you
Iva Lee Souter , Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JANUARY 1988

- Rufus L . Jacks , AL 7.00
- Eld . D . R . Cabbage , TN 2.00
- Mrs . Hazel Garland , MD 18.00
- Mrs . Mary E . Poff , VA 4.00
- Alan Terry , VA 2.00
- Mrs . Oza Hill , TX 7.00

- James Cunningham , MO 2.00
- Alvis G . Beacham , NC 12.00
- Eld . Jessie A . Foreman , NC 2.00
- Mrs . Myrtle T . Daniel , FL 2.00
- Mrs . Allyne Page , TX 7.00
- Dr . & Mrs . G . R . Harrell , TX ... 7.00
- Mrs . Joyce Farley , TX 32.00
- Mrs . Nannie Arrington , VA 2.00
- Mrs . Susan W . Cutts , VA 5.00
- Alabama Friends In Memory Of
- Eld . Joe L . Hamrick 30.00
- George W . Hyslip , TN 10.00
- Ercy C . Redman , AL 7.00
- Mrs . Annie Reed , VA 10.00
- Mrs . Marjorie Cook , TN 3.00
- Mrs . Jewel Scott , AL 2.00
- Davis Mordecai , AL 2.00
- Ones That Love Him , N . C .
- In Memory Jesse Somers 20.00
- Eld . T . J . Solomon , VA 2.00
- Mrs . Virginia L . Apple , NC 2.00
- Mrs . E . G . Wilson , NC 20.00

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OBITUARIES

**OBITUARY OF ELDER
WILLIAM ERNEST BRANCHE**

Elder William Ernest Branche , a faithful soldier and gospel laborer in the army of the Living God , was discharged by death and called home on August 15 , 1987 at

the age of 74 .

Brother Branche was born in Patrick County, Virginia on December 22 , 1912 , one of the sixteen children born to the late Thomas Green and Lucindy French Branche . During his childhood the family moved to West Virginia so his father could work in the coal mines . In later years Brother Branche lived in Beckley , West Virginia and pursued the same profession for some time . Since the year of 1962 , he had made his home at Marion , Virginia .

On his 22nd birthday Brother Branche was united in marriage to Hazel Martin , a daughter of the late Elder John Martin . Although the Lord added no offspring to their household He blessed them to live closely bound together for better than 52 years .

As a young man Brother Branche thought to join himself to the world and be a partaker of its pleasures . The Sovereign Disposer of all events had made other arrangements : He called him out of nature 's darkness to His marvelous light , revealed in him a hope of life and glory in Jesus Christ , and gave him a ear to hear the gospel of his salvation . He united with Guyandott Primitive Baptist Church at Budd , West Virginia in May 1938 and was baptized by the late Elder Albert Runyaon . In later years he removed his membership to Glenwood Park Church where he remained as a member for the balance of his earthly life .

The Lord laid His hand on Brother Branche in the early 1940 's and placed a special kind of burden upon his heart . In 1944 he moved clear across the country to California , thinking to leave behind what was to follow him everywhere . Inasmuch as when the Lord calls one must answer ,

he was compelled to return to West Virginia and offer his gift to the church . He was ordained to the full work of the ministry in July 1949 . He was called to serve Glenwood Park Church as pastor in September 1952 , following the death of Elder Samuel Priddy . At the time of his own death Brother Branche was also serving as pastor of Fisher 's Gap Church at Low Gap , North Carolina .

Brother Branche was a true servant of his Heavenly King . In his disposition he was mild - mannered , kind and friendly , meek and humble ; but in his calling he was bold as a lion in defense of the revealed truth of God . He was especially blessed by the power of God to search out and bring to light the deep hidden things of the Spirit . His conversation was nearly always spiritual because his mind and heart were filled with the hidden treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God .

When Brother Branche passed away he was survived by his wife , whom he baptized into the fellowship of the church : four brothers , Lemuel , Howard , Bruce and Bernice Branche and three sisters , Sister Sylvia Barbour , Mrs . Goldie Saunders , Mrs . Ollie Cook , together with several nieces and nephews . His funeral service was held at Glenwood Park Church and was conducted by Elders Curtis Branham , Paul Hopkins and John Wingfield . His mortal body was laid to rest in the Shumate Cemetery near Lester , West Virginia , at the feet of his well - beloved father and mother - in - law . There , he lies peacefully awaiting the redemption of his body in the morning of the Resurrection .

May his brethren and sisters in the

flesh , together with his dear companion and his brethren and sisters in the church , be made reconciled to the Will of God in the loss of Brother Branche .

Done by order of Glenwood Park Church in conference , the 13th day of September 1987 .

Elder John Wingfield , Moderator
Sister Marilyn Shaw , Clerk

LEONA D . DALTON

It pleased our Lord to call home Sister Leona D. Dalton . She passed from this life , September 3 , 1987 . Sister Leona was the daughter of the late George Davis Dalton and Itasca Dalton . She was the widow of Brother Raymond C . Dalton .

Sister Dalton was a faithful member of Springfield Primitive Baptist Church . She loved the church and came as often as her health permitted . She was received by experience and baptism July 11 , 1937 .

Survivors include three daughters , Doris Crews and Geraldine Torrence , both of Danville and Ruth Creasy of Gretna ; four brothers , Lawrence Dalton , Claude Dalton , Lyle Dalton , and Orelle Dalton , all of Danville ; two sisters , Gracie Sours and Ora Hodge , both of Danville ; four grandchildren and four great - grandchildren .

The funeral was conducted from Springfield Primitive Baptist Church by her beloved pastor , Elder O .K . Tench her body was laid to rest in the Gretna Burial Park to await the coming of our Savior . May each of us be given to say , " thy will be done ."

Written in love and hope ,
Carol R . Pickral

Elder O .K . Tench - Moderator
Oscar D . Pickral - Clerk

SISTER KATE DYER

It is the desire of our church to write the followings in memory of Sister Kate Page Dyer , who was born May 20 , 1903 and passed away August 1 , 1987 .

She had been in declining health for several years .

She leaves to mourn her passing , one son , Herman , three daughters , Barber Houser of Danville , Va . Ruby D D . Pace , Martinsville , Va . Youvne Holman , Dallas , Texas . Three brothers , and four sisters .

We esteemed sister Kate dearly for she was gracious , gentle , and kind with a warm personality that endeared her to those that knew her .

Sister Kate loved the doctrine of salvation by grace and she joined Dan River Primitive Baptist Church June 25 , 1938 .

She was a faithful attendant as long as she was able to attend , she loved to meet with those of like precious faith and she always met them with a loving smile and a warm handshake . Her presence at her meetings always added pleasure for all of us .

Sister Kate was married to Brother Johnie Dyer , August 12 , 1923 .

Funeral services were held at Townes Funeral Home , Monday August 3 , 1987 , in Danville , Va . by Elder Kenneth Key and Elder Haywood Wray . Interment was in Highland Burial Park , Danville , Va .

Kenneth R. Key , Moderator
Coley S. Strader , Committee

faith to carry on .

Written by her Sister ,
Hazel Fleming Jackson

MARY RUTH FLEMING

With a sad heart I will attempt to write the obituary of my Dear Sister , Mary Ruth Fleming . She was born August 23 , 1905 , the daughter of Marcellus and Mittie Hodges Fleming . She passed away November 6 , 1987 in Pitt County Memorial Hospital Greenville , N . C . making her stay on this earth 82 years , 2 months and 14 days .

Mary Ruth was a firm believer in salvation by the grace of God , although she never offered to the church , she manifested much love for the church and attended the meetings as long as her health permitted .

She loved her neighbors and people around her and was always ready to offer aid and sympathy in times of sickness or other needs that might arise in the neighborhood or community .

She worked as bookkeeper for a department store for 36 years before retiring and was loved and respected by her co-workers .

Her funeral was conducted in the Chapel of S . G . Wilkerson Funeral Home , Greenville , N . C . by Elder Reeves Smith and Elder Joe Sawyer . Her body was laid to rest in Greenwood Cemetery , Greenville , N . C . beside the resting place of her parents .

It would be hard to say how much I miss her for she lived with me the past twenty - five years and there is a vacancy that can never be filled . May the grace of God give each one that feels a loss so great the strength and

WILLIE THOMAS LOVELACE

Brother Lovelace was born October 23 , 1893 and passed from this life August 27 , 1987 . He was married to Ester Perkins in 1920 , who survives along with 7 children : Willie Lee Lovelace , Irene Rogers , Georgie Atkins , Vivian Wyatt , Nick Lovelace , Andrena Lovelace and Carol Brinson . Also surviving are 8 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren .

Brother Lovelace joined Dan River Primitive Baptist Church on May 26 , 1951 and lived most of his life in Rockingham County , North Carolina . He was a faithful member and supporter of his church as long as his health permitted ; he was declining in health for many years and unable to attend the meetings . He was a strong believer in the Doctrine of Salvation by the Grace of God and believed all that the Father gave him would have eternal life . He was a kind and loving husband and father and will be greatly missed .

Funeral services were conducted by his pastor , Elder Kenneth Key . He was laid to rest in the church cemetery and to await the second coming of our Lord and Saviour .

Written by request of Dan River
Church while in Conference

Submitted by Brother Reuben and
Sister Bea French

Signs of the Times

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POEM

*Let us sing the songs of Zion
While we sojourn here below.
Songs of Christ and His fair city
Where, by faith, we long to go.*

*On, how good to meet together,
Fellowship and love so sweet.
Let not pride destroy this union.
Keep us at each others feet.*

*Oh, the wisdom and the power,
Tis by this we walk and live.
And, when trials come upon us,
His sweet comfort He will give.*

*Let us bear our trials and sorrows,
Knowing they are for our good.
Causing us to beg for mercy,
And be cleansed in Jesus blood.*

*Filled with joy by His salvation,
With the Saints, Oh let us sing.
And while we are here together
Let Hosanas freely ring.*

*Hallelujah to our Savior.
Hallelujah to our King.
Swelling fountains born within us,
To our lips sweet anthems bring.*

*Written by Sister Lucille Young
and Elder Wayman Chapell
of Memphis, Tenn.*

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EDITORIAL



Elder Kenneth R. Key

John 3-16 — This is a scripture that is probably read more and emphasized more throughout the worldly religions than any other verses in the bible. In my estimation the most incorrectly interpreted. This reads :

“ 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 . God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved . ”

This scripture is pertaining to the church of the living God . There are those who believe that this is pertaining to every one that is born into the world . We do not find in the scripture where it teaches that every one would have everlasting life with Him . God has prepared a place for those of the elect family of God and he has prepared a place for the non-elect family . We do not believe it is his mind & purpose that all would be saved . We know this is a hard doctrine — the natural or carnal mind cannot understand this , why he would love some people and not love them all . It is written that “ Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated , before either were born and neither having done any good or evil , that the purpose of God according to election might stand . He had an elect family who were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world . Now if he has an elect family , it is a family known unto Him . He has all of their names recorded in the Lambs book of life . They know him and they follow Him and a stranger they will not follow .

We may consider our natural families , there are eight children in my fathers family . There is no way we or anyone could add to that number or take away from it . It takes them all to make our family complete .

Now the family of God are those that have been born of Him , that incorruptible seed that liveth and abideth forever . This is made known unto them through the new birth . They are his children and He is their father . Those not born of the Heavenly father are bastards and not sons . He sent his Son down here to save his children from their sins , those that believe in him . Now who are those that believe

in Him ? They are those who he has taught to know him , who to know him is life eternal . They are those that have been born of that seed of Abraham , that seed that the Father promised that would grow into an enumerable host and be as numerous as the sand of the sea . He said they would live in a land of bondage for some four hundred and forty years . He said they would be delivered or led out . All of Israel is not Israel . Everyone that was born then were not of the elect family . Those that are born again — Jesus Christ born in them the hope of Glory , are given to look unto God as their father and it is those that believe in Him . There is a reason for that hope that is within you . There is a reason you believe this doctrine . You did not come to know him by the teaching of flesh and blood but by the revelation of Jesus Christ , and this is by the work of God . in Hebrews , eighth chapter he makes a new covenant with the house of Israel . He says ; “ I will put my laws into their mind , and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them a God , and they shall be to me a people :

And they shall not teach every man his neighbour , and every man his brother , saying , Know the Lord ; for all shall know me , from the least to the greatest . ”

Peter was able to acknowledge unto Jesus that thou art the Christ the Son of the living God . He told him there that this was by the revelation from God . This is the only way we can know the Lord , and be blessed to feel the Lord is my Shepherd , I shall not want .

In the natural state in which we are born into the world we cannot know him as Peter on this occasion . We are

born into the word in a dead state as far as spiritual life is concerned . The carnal mind is enmity against God , and not subject to His laws . Before the Spirit is revealed unto us we could not believe in Him . We might believe in a natural sense . Our fathers and mothers would if they could have taught us to know him and they would have told us as much as they could about Him . We were brought up in a moral home , but before we could know Christ in a spiritual way we must have some experience of our own . It has to be by an application of the spirit of God right in our own lives . It has to be inside in our heart . Thats where he works . That is the way we come to know Him and believe in Him .

There is a reason you believe what you believe . You may look back through the journey you have come and somewhere along the way He was revealed unto you . He gave you to feel that He is your Heavenly father , that there is one in Heaven that could reach your case when earthly hands could not help you . I am sure there are times in each of your lives when you had come to the end of your strength , you felt you knew not which way to turn and you didn't know where to go . I believe there were also times you were given to feel that there is one that could help you , and you were made to pray unto the Father from whom all blessings flow . I don't know when this was manifest to you but you do . It may have been when you were a child . God is not only a God of the old but he is a god of the young . If he has ever loved you , if you are one of His children of the elect family you have ever been a child of God . He knew and loved you before you were even born .

The Apostle Paul was a chosen

vessel, the scripture teaches us, but God suffered him to plot his own course and he preached for fourteen years in the Jews religion and prospered above many of his equal. He said after his conversion he verily thought he was doing the work of God, but he admitted he did it in ignorance and unbelief. But when it pleased God to reveal His son in him, he saw a more excellent way. I believe Gods children have ever had the spirit of Christ in them even from the time they were chosen in him, but not mindful of this until it pleased God to reveal it unto them.

This is when they are born again, they are made spiritually alive — their blind eyes are open and deaf ears are made to hear. They begin to hunger for spiritual food. These are the ones he is talking about in our text. These are the ones that believe in Him. And they shall not perish but have everlasting life. When his spirit is manifested within you, when you felt his presence, you can then say you believe. Not because flesh and blood, your mother or father or any other man has taught you to know him. You now believe because you have felt something yourself, you have found a change within you, something has taken place that you didn't know anything about before this time. You couldn't hear the gospel being preached. You could hear but you didn't understand. The bible teaches of those who have ears but do not hear. He has to open those deaf ears.

This is such a blessed change and a love we can never tell. A little taste of Heaven on earth. At this time all doubts are removed and it seems nothing would ever mar our peace again. We feel as David that surely

goodness and mercy would follow us all the days of our lives.

Then soon we are made to doubt just like John. He had the privilege of baptizing the Lord in the river Jordan. He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him: and to a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. You would think he would never doubt, but a few days hence he was shut up in prison and sent his disciples to inquire is this the Lord or shall we look for another. So soon he was made to doubt. Jesus told his disciples to go show John again. We have to be shown these things again, How we once were blind but now we see, we once were deaf but now we hear. You hear the things that are so sweet & precious unto you because it parallels with that of the laws he has placed in your heart. That is when the gospel becomes sweet and precious to you.

When we come to stand before Gods people, we realize we are not telling you anything that you don't know, but hopefully bring into remembrance the things that you have already received. The Apostle Paul admonished the church at Corinth to believe no other gospel other than that I have preached unto you and that which you have received. You have received something if you are one of the elect family of God that you have not received from any man but from the hand of God. This is his work, he put the laws in your heart.

When you hear the gospel preached you try the spirits, whether they be of man or of God. If what we preach does not parallel with that you have been taught in your heart or that you have been made to believe, then it

would mean nothing to you and you wouldn't believe it or understand it , but if it finds a lodging place there then its an evidence we have something in common . Then it is precious to us and we are then mutually comforted together .

Jesus told Peter that when thou art converted to strengthen thy brethren . We should talk of our experience of Grace to each other , tell others about your feelings , tell them about what you have received . You may find you have something in common , you have been taught the same as they have been taught and you believe the same as they believe . You feel the same as they feel in their heart . You are then being comforted together .

We do believe that those whosoever believe in him shall not perish but have everlasting life .

Lets now go back to this family — the elect family , this number of children that God has chosen , and none can add to it and none can take from it it .

God sent his only begotten son down here to save his people from their sins . He didn't send him to save the whole world . He said he came not to do his own will but the will of the Father . When Jesus prayed to the Father he said he had finished the work he had sent him to do . I have saved all of those that thou hast given me .” He had saved every one of them — not a one of them were lost . His blood ran out half to the hinder seas and half to the former seas . This covered every one from the beginning and until the final consumation of time . And he said he would raise them up again in the last day and present them back to the Father without spot , wrinkle , blemish or any such thing .

How safe and secure the church and the family of God is .

When Jesus ascended back to the Father he said he was going to prepare a place for them , that where he is they would be also . I believe that everyone he saved by his shed blood one day will see the place he has prepared for them . That city whose builder and maker is God . That long home to be with him forever and ever .

May God bless each of us to continue to run the race he has set before us , ever looking unto Him , the author and finisher of our Faith . And you may be confident of this very thing , that He who has begun this work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ .

Elder Kenneth R . Key

The above is excerpts from a sermon preached at Moons Creek Church , the third Sunday in March 1988 . Edited for publication .

CORRESPONDENCE

REMEMBRANCE

In searching through my correspondence that I have been blessed to have with many precious brethren over many years , I found a letter I received in 1969 from a dear old Elder whom I had never met and whom I feel is now resting from his labors — Elder Johnnie Joyner .

The reason for his letter was because of the love and fellowship I was blessed to have for my pastor , Elder Curry King , whose first concern

was peace at home .

Elder King was in the hospital and the day and hour he was to have a major operation, I was at my work. My thoughts were upon him and these words came to my mind. I wrote them down as they came and sent them to him hoping to express my love and concern .

I had no thought they would be published, until I saw them in the April 1969 issue of the Signs of the Times where he had requested they be published .

ONCE AGAIN OUR HEARTS ARE SAD

“ We pray Thee , O Lord , as humble as we know how , for mercy , if it be Thy will , for one precious to us is very ill .

Our pastor , who so sweetly preaches Jesus , and the Crucifixion , is now on the bed of affliction .

In his suffering , gracious Lord , wilt Thou be near , for Thou hast caused us to love him so dear .

Grief has overshadowed us , as the darkness of the night. We can only look to Thee in whom there is light .

We know Thou has not forgotten to be gracious to those whom Thou has made precious .

Our Sister , and his companion so dear , whose heart is filled with love and fear , we know the way seems hard. Have mercy and strengthen her O God .

Upon the Lord with patience we wait , for His grace and mercy has never come too late .

Our Father we look to Thee , for a time like this , it is plain to see , how helpless we poor mortals be .

In His great and Holy name , we are not ashamed to cry for help , for

we find our blessed Jesus wept .

O Lord , our arm is too short to reach Thee , but in love and humbleness we beseech Thee , that once again Thou will bless us to hear that tender voice , with praises ring , of our pastor Elder Curry King .

As we thank Thee Father for the gift , we can only say , in a kind and humble way , not my will but thine be done .

Lord Thou knowest that some service we desire to render , but keep us Lord that we might not hinder . ”

Written in love and sympathy ,
Clifton C . Robertson

Elder Joyner's Letter :

Dear Brother ,

“ We are strangers in the flesh but I hope we're not in the spirit . I was reading last Friday evening April the 18th in the Signs of the Times your prayer to God in the behalf of your dear Pastor Elder Curry King . After I had read your sweet prayer , I was made to rejoice in my poor heart so much . I had a feeling I just cannot express . That prayer was from God . He is the prayer giver . He is the prayer answering God .

I do believe you had your dear pastor at heart . I do believe you had the church at heart . The church loves their pastor and a true pastor like Elder King loves his little flock .

That evening while my wife and I was at the supper table , I was carried back in my feelings the time that I was blessed to hear Elder King preach . I don't remember just now where it was at but I haven't forgotten the text . It was in John's writing , Chapter 6 . ‘ All tht the father giveth me shall come to me .’ If I have ever heard the gospel

preached, I heard it that day. My poor soul was so rejoicing, my cup was running over. I told my wife there was no doubt in my mind but what that was the gospel of God our Saviour. I was made to rejoice in it again.

After I read your prayer to God, dear brother, I have some feeling I would like to tell concerning my own experience if I have one, and I hope that I have some experience but I am in great fear. I am so scared that I will do something wrong. My experience, part of it, is just this: if it isn't something I have done, it is something that I haven't done.

I hope that in 1915 I was made willing to go before the church and ask them for a home with them. I was out in the cold. I was received in full fellowship. I never have felt that I was worth anything to the church, but it has meant something to me.

In 1918, for some cause, the church saw fit to liberate me to speak in public. I just felt like I just could not bear it. It has been a fearful thing with me. I fear sometime that I haven't been blessed to pray much, but I can say one thing. I have done a lot of begging the Lord to have mercy on me and to direct my footsteps in the way that he would have me to go. I believe I know the feeling of what it means to have the pastor care of a church. It is a fearful feeling with me. I have my home church and I have been trying to serve a church in Halifax County for about 12 years or some over. I love my brethren and sisters and they say that they love me. I can truthfully say that they have proved it to me by their deeds and that is a good proof. My home church is at Mill Branch Church.

We are in the Black Creek Primitive Baptist Association and the Black

Creek Primitive Baptist Union.

Dear brother, I have felt so impressed to write to you ever since I read your prayer to God. I would like to meet with you sometime. When you see your pastor, give him my love and best regards.

In love, I hope to you and family and to your home church. I would like to visit with you all. I feel it would be a pleasure to meet with you all, but I don't know just when it will ever be. I do hope that my few remarks won't worry you too much.

Goodby."

From a brother, I hope,
Elder Johnnie Joyner

After receiving his letter, I had a desire to meet him. I went to his association with that in mind.

I met a man coming up the walk so afflicted he could hardly get along. I felt I could see the spirit of love and kindness manifested in his face. It was Elder Johnnie Joyner, for whom I was searching.

After meeting him and talking with him, his letter became even more precious. I never met a brother who I felt was more humble and sincere in his praise to God. I could see he was not one to try to study out some new gospel theme, but rather he spoke in sincerity and truth.

It wasn't very long after we met, that I heard of his death, and I felt his suffering was over. There would be no more afflictions, and he has not been forgotten.

Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Clifton C. Robertson
Route 1
Reidsville, NC 27320

Dec . 11 , 1987

To Elder Kenneth Key and to whom it may profitably concern of spiritual things and hopefully for the comfort and edification of the Saints of the Most High Almighty God .

This message is a promise made by the One and Only Almighty to the Saints of God . This revelation was revealed to me only by this God with His spirit without any help of flesh and blood or human beings . Definition of these Saints are those who were chosen and elected in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world and known as Gods elect and with Jesus being the only Begotten Son of God . The saints are called by the divine spiritual power at an exact time and this true God does not lie and keeps all his promises . Also all his wills and shalls will and shall be done according to his will and without failure . These saints are born again spiritually by Gods Spiritual Supernatural Power for God is Spirit . You have no choice in this matter, whether one likes it or not and it's a fearfull thing to fall into the hands of a living God . You must be born again by His Spirit to receive any of his revelation (" Unstanding Truth ") One of the Great Promises to His chosen elect people is " I will bless those who bless thee and curse those who curse thee . " My understanding is that Gods revelation is not to all his creation either . Neither is His promises of good to all but only to those whom God has imputed righteousness according to his will for he is the only righteous one . This God is also a merciful God , " His mercy endureth forever " , This quote in King James Bible by King David but I believe one

can only understand it by God's divine revelation . I hope God has caused me to by vision or dream to see a portion of this Eternal Heaven , or Paradise (whichever it should be called) I have never seen anything so beautiful . Don't think I could near describe it to anyone . God forbid I should lie about such fearful subject . I am glad of what Jesus did on the cross there on Golgatha Hill when he said " It is finished " and commended his spirit into the hands of his Heavenly Father . No more for the Saints of this God to do for this God is " The Author and Finisher of our Faith which is required to please this God . Free Faith , Grace , and Truth .

I may suffer but better for a little while than forever . I am living and or existing by this God Given Hope . We enter into eternal life " To Wit " I expect to see Jesus and be like him and be Satisfied . What more should one desire ? " Nothing more can be said than that which has been said . I am so happy about this , I thank God from my Heart , Soul , Mind and Spirit . " If God be for me who can be against me ?

Carl Hoffman
4 Arbor Ave .
Hartsville , S . C . 29550

Dear Elder Williams ,

Enclosed is a check to renew for another year . I'm at home today due to illness . I decided to write a few words , having been blessed to meditate on the riches of God 's mercy . A sweet song of ours says , " Now , thou art precious to my heart , My portion and my joy : Forever let thy boundless grace , My sweetest

thoughts employ." How, I thank God for the precious hope in my breast.

I was so sick early this morning. I could not raise my head up. The tears of joy stream down my face as I remembered the blessing of a Holy God on this unworthy worm of the dust. I knew this was the time I had to be sick, yet He still keeps me by His grace. God who has all power, blesses us in health, in sickness, in sorrows and the griefs that have been appointed unto us in this life. "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." Isaiah 61 : 3.

I remember the words of a dear Elder, as we parted five years ago this month. (I being in such grief at that time). "Take care of yourself, till we meet again." I said. He replied "I can't do that, for it is God who keeps us." Yes, dear beloved brethren, God keeps our feet, lest we fall. He will take care of us in all the trials of this life. When our bodies rest beneath the sod, He'll watch over the sleeping dust, till the dawn of that great day, when He shall come again. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words. Thessalonians 4 : 16, 17, 18.

May God bless the household of faith.

In bonds of Love & Hope,
Emmie L. Grayson

NOTICE :

Notice Is Hereby Given Of The Formation Of AMERICAN UNION OF BAPTISTS, INC. As a Non-Profit, Non-Stock Religious Corporation Organized Under The Corporation Law of The State Of Maryland - Approved 1987.

The major purpose of this corporation is to provide for divine worship as practiced by the Particular or Old School Baptists, in conformity with the King James Version of the Bible, as interpreted in the 1689 London Confession of Faith, the 1832 Black Rock Address, and the Volume I, Number I 1832 Signs of the Times Prospectus.

To that end, the corporation is authorized to sponsor and assist religious publications or magazines (such as Signs of the Times); to assist in preserving and maintaining the records and heritage of Old School Baptist Churches; to assist Old School Baptist Churches in secular affairs such as trusteeship, insurance, property management, and property acquisition or disposition; and for such aims and purposes to hold and manage properties, monies, gifts and assets of every kind.

The five founding and currently serving trustees of the corporation are: Milton Fountain, Richlands, N.C. NC; Victor H. Laws, Salisbury, MD; Jennye A. Osborne, Westminster, MD; Eugene F. Osborne, Westmin-

ster, MD; Burnell B. Williams, Blairs, VA.

Said trustees elected the following officers : Victor H. Laws , President , and Jennye A. Osborne , Secretary / Treasurer .

The corporation acquired by merger in July 1987 , the property and assets of Ebenezer Primitive or Old School Baptist Church of Baltimore City and is holding same for the above purpose .

The mailing address of the corporation is c/o Victor H. Laws , P.O. Box 75 , Salisbury , MD 21801 . All inquiries and correspondence should be sent to that address .

The corporation , and its trustees and officers , will welcome your help and your suggestions for accomplishing its aims and purposes .

Victor H. Laws , President

ARTICLES

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

JOHN 11 : 25-26

“ I am the resurrection , and the life ; he that believeth in me , though he were dead , yet shall be live : And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die . Believest thou this ? ”

These words were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ to Martha , and they undoubtedly have a great significance . It shall be our purpose , God being our helper , to present at least a portion of their meaning . We wish our readers would turn to and read the eleventh chapter

of John . The account given here concerns Jesus , Lazarus , Martha and Mary . It is quite evident to us that they were much more than good friends , for when Jesus asked , “ Where have ye laid him (Lazarus) ? They said unto him , Lord , come and see . Jesus wept . ” John 11:34-35 . Is it any wonder that the Jews should have said , “ Behold how he loved him ! ” We have heard of brethren presenting the idea that the death of Lazarus and his being raised from the dead typified the resurrection of the Lord’s people on the “ General Resurrection Day . ” We would like to suggest here , in our humble opinion at least , that Lazarus was a type of the Gospel Ministry ; Martha was a type of the Church under the law , and Mary was a type of the Gospel Church under the dispensation of Grace . When word first came to Jesus that Lazarus was sick , he said , “ This sickness is not unto death , but for the glory of God , that the Son of God might be glorified thereby . ” He later said , “ Our friend Lazarus sleepeth ; but I go , that I may awake him out of sleep . ” Apparently , they did not understand Jesus , and he finally said unto them plainly , “ Lazarus is dead . ” When Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead , we are told that he “ came forth , bound hand and foot with grave-clothes , and his face was bound about with a napkin . Jesus saith unto them , Loose him , and let him go . ” The true gospel minister must be as dead to the law and the things of the legal dispensation , as one who had been dead four days and laid in the grave , if he is to preach the gospel in its purity , and we believe that all ministers who are called and qualified by God can testify to this death . When they are brought

forth , however , by the mighty power of God , and the gift to preach is made known unto the Church , she is to acknowledge that gift by loosing him , or ordaining him to the full work of the gospel ministry , in order that he may be free to go wheresoever God in his providence may open a door and direct him . Otherwise he is not free to perform , properly , the ordinances of God 's house .

Martha , as we have said , was a type of the church under the law . She could not understand fully the ordinances of God 's house under Grace . We are told by Luke (10:40) that " Martha was cumbered about much serving , and came to him , (Jesus) and said , Lord , dost thou not care that my sister (Mary) hath left me to serve alone ? bid her therefore that she help me . " But Jesus answered and said unto her , " Martha , Martha , thou art careful and troubled about many things : But one thing is needful : and Mary hath chosen that good part , which shall not be taken away from her . " Martha , therefore , had to be instructed more perfectly in the things pertaining to the gospel church , and this was what Jesus was doing in the words of our text . She had just been saying , " Lord , if thou hadst been here , my brother had not died . But I know , that even now , whatsoever thou wilt ask of God , God will give it thee . " Jesus then said unto her , " Thy brother shall rise again . " Martha replied , " I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day . " She , apparently , had a very similar idea to that held by many today and they need to be taught as she was taught and by the same Teacher , the way of God more perfectly . Jesus , therefore , said unto her , " I am the

resurrection , and the life : he that believeth in me , though he were dead , yet shall he live : And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die . " And then Jesus added , " Believest thou this ? " We would to God that all of his people might believe this in deed and in truth , and , perhaps , then there would be no confusion , for they would then be seeing eye to eye and would no doubt speak the same things . But we are persuaded that it is not God 's purpose that we should all be seeing alike on this point , any more than it is His purpose that we should agree on everything else . We honestly believe that as long as we live here in the flesh there will be things to bring forth the graces of his blessed Spirit , such as longsuffering one toward another , forgiveness , meekness , humility , charity , etc . , that patience might have her perfect work . It is in this way we believe , that we are to see God manifested in the flesh , through the kindness and tender mercy of the brethren toward each other . There are those Marys , however , who have ceased from their labors and have entered into the house , or gospel church , and are sitting at the feet of their Lord and Master , enjoying and delighting in the work of redemption which he has finished in every sense of the word . They really believe with all their hearts and souls that Jesus is their resurrection and their life , and they are fully persuaded that whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall never die . Having part with Him , who is the first resurrection , they are convinced beyond the peradventure of a doubt that all of their adversaries and even the second death can have no power over them . We do not

understand that Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead in a literal sense , for there were others and he himself raised Lazarus from the dead but Jesus was the first to keep the law in every jot and tittle and to rise from its condemnation and death , for having satisfied the demands of the law he could not be holden of death , which was its penalty , and since he did all of this for his people they stand complete in him . With faith to believe this , they need fear no evil , for no lasting harm can befall them . Even the last monster , DEATH , which some so much dread , shall but prove the opening of the portals through which they shall pass out of this world of sin and sorrow into the fullness of that which no eye hath seen , nor ear heard and neither hath it entered into the heart of man , but is prepared for those that love him . They shall bid adieu to this vain world and find entrance into their eternal home , where undivided praise shall be rendered , world without end , to Father , Son and Holy Ghost . The Poet must have had a glimpse of this when he wrote the words which comprise Hymn No . 1256 , in the Beebe Collection :

“ It is not death to die —
To leave this weary road ,
And , 'midst the brotherhood on high ,
To be at home with God .

It is not death to close
The eye long dimmed by tears ,
And wake in glorious repose ,
To spend eternal years .

It is not death to bear
The wrench that sets us free
From dungeon chain , to breathe the air
Of boundless liberty .

It is not death to fling
Aside the sinful dust ,
And rise , on strong , exulting wing ,
To live among the just .

Jesus , thou Prince of Life !
Thy chosen cannot die ;
Like thee , they conquer in the strife
To reign with thee on high . ”

ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER

“ *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God . . .* ” *Romans 8:28 .*

This verse in Holy Writ I see ,
Has very often puzzled me .
And many have been led to doubt
Just how this could be brought
about .

How trouble as a blessing could
Work out for our eternal good
Was more than sight of man could
know

And yet I felt it must be so .

“ All things ” include both dark and
bright ,

It means the sunshine and the night
It means my sickness and my health ;
My poverty as well as wealth .

This world is full of toil and care ,
Both joys and sorrows have a share
But one there is a present friend
Who knows my life from start to end

Should He permit dark clouds some-
day ;

To cast a gloom upon my way ,
I know it is my Fathers ' will
I 'm in His care . . . He loves me still ,
My feet may press a world of care
But I may breathe a purer air ,
An atmosphere from heaven above
Fragrant with the Fathers ' love .

Someday when I've arrived at home
 And view the road o'er which I've
 come ;
 I'll see the battlements of light
 And know he doeth " all things "
 right ;
 For then will be revealed I know
 A picture of my way below ;
 Some things I had not understood
 I'll realize were for my good .

I'll see from where I then shall stand ,
 That " all things " were within His
 hand
 He knew just where and when to send
 A shadow with the light to blend
 My Father has in view a plan
 Far deeper than the mind of man
 And since he n'er forgets His child ;
 I'll trust Him and be reconciled .

The past is gone ; the present hour
 Is mine with sunshine or with
 shower ;
 The future days of weal or woe
 Are veiled . . . I'm glad He wills it so .
 " All things " . . . this comprehensive
 phase
 Will lead me on through lifes' short
 days ;
 And in a better world of rest ,
 I'll see more clearly , God knows
 best .

. . . Selected

Submitted by Sister Edith Thompson

None but those who are partakers of a heavenly birth feel heavenly realities to be their choice element , holy things their sweetest meditation , and the solemn worship of God their supreme delight . Look at this mark as a touchstone of divine life ; for to be spiritually-minded a man must be spiritual , and to be spiritual , he must have received the Spirit and been made a partaker of that " kingdom of God which is righteousness , and peace , and joy in the Holy Ghost " (Rom . xiv . 17) . Have you never found in reading the Scriptures a sweet peace distil over your soul , as the glorious promises came forth one after another as the stars in the evening sky , each one brighter and clearer and you felt a blessed persuasion of your interest in them ? When at the throne of grace , favoured with liberty of spirit and access to your heavenly Friend , have you never felt the peace of God to drop into your heart , and like oil upon the waves , to ally every rising of rebellion within ? Have you never found , in conversing with the saints of God , a sweet flowing of heart to heart and soul to soul , and felt that such conversation left behind a blessed fragrance upon your spirit ? Have you never in the house of prayer had your heart and affections drawn up to the things of God ; and as you sat and heard Christ , his Person and work , his grace and glory set forth , faith was drawn out to believe , hope to cast forth its anchor , and love and affection to flow , so that you experienced a spirituality of mind , a heavenly calm , and a holy peace that touched every spring of your soul , and watered it as the river that went out of Eden to water the garden ?

" For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit . "—Romans viii . 5 .

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



LAUREL RIDGE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH



Elder L. J. Brammer

L aurel Ridge Primitive Baptist Church near Cave Spring , Virginia , was organized around 1821 . The church records date back to 1825 , but the

county records date the beginning of the church at about 1821 .

The original building was a log structure and was used until 1890 , when a new frame building was built on property nearby donated by George M . Bell , a deacon , with the request that the church be named Bellview . The name Bellview was used until 1975 when a new building was built near the site of the original log building and the name was changed back to Laurel Ridge .

Our pastor , Elder Leonard J . Brammer , has served our church continuously and faithfully since 1957 . Our meeting time is eleven o'clock each third Sunday and 6:30 each third Saturday night . Our communion day is the third Sunday in May .

The Lord , in His infinite mercy , has blessed our little church to enjoy good meetings in His praise . The church is located on Roselawn Road , just off Route 221 near Cave Spring , Virginia .

The Lord willing , the one hundred and sixty third annual session of the Pigg River Association will convene at Laurel Ridge Church beginning on Friday before the first Sunday in August , 1988 .

“ Man ’s goings are of the Lord ; how can a man then understand his own way ? ”—Proverbs xx . 24 .

Does not your heart sometimes quake with fear lest you have nothing but a nominal profession, lest the god of this world be blinding you, and lest your conscience be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? It is good to have such fears. He who feareth not, who has no solemn apprehensions, no anxious inquiries, who is never exercised with some internal trepidation of soul, it is much to be feared has never known what it is to have “ the candle of the Lord searching the inward parts of the belly.” But if God has quickened your soul into spiritual life, and you have ears to hear, I would just put two questions to you: Have you obtained righteousness by a manifestation of Christ’s righteousness; pardon by the application of Christ’s blood; love by a shedding abroad of love; deliverance by a discovery of God’s outstretched hand? My other question is this—If you have not, and let conscience bear its honest testimony—if you have never experienced righteousness, pardon, love, and deliverance, is there a cry in your soul after them? Is there anything like fervent supplication that God would bestow them? Is there anything of a groan in the depth of your spirit that the Lord would reveal them? These are marks of life; and he that has these marks will have the blessing, because God has quickened him into spiritual life. It may be long delayed, but it will come at last; “ it will surely come, it will not tarry.” It may be withheld for wise purposes, and you may have to travel through many a dark season and

many an anxious hour, but deliverance is sure; it is reserved for you in Christ, and you are reserved for it, kept by God himself unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

MOVED OR MOVING ?

To assure you of getting your “ Signs ” and without missing any copies, be sure to inform us of any change of address.

Editors

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION ?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 5 / 88
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE .

VOICES OF THE PAST
“he being dead yet speaketh”

“ THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD .”

(1 Cor . ii . 10 .)

We recall that in our youth very often we heard “ the deep things of God ” spoken of by some as things to be avoided in our conversation and in our preaching. It would often be said by some, when certain principles of doctrine were named, O these are deep things, and we ought to avoid them and hold forth simpler, plainer things. This would be said especially of the doctrine of predestination, of election, of the atonement, the new birth, and of some other principles of truth as well. One thing we often noted, viz., that this was never said by any who believed these

principles of doctrine and whose hope of salvation was based upon them, but always by those who did not believe them, and who were seeking to oppose and overthrow them, and we further noticed that this would be said of the very things which lie at the foundation of a believer's hope. Still further, the principles of doctrine of which this was said were those which, if anything, were more clearly stated in the Bible than were some others to which not so much opposition was manifested. We have come to the conclusion in later years that all this language arose not so much out of reverence for the word of God and the things which are called deep, or such as would cause one to speak softly and carefully of them, but out of that opposition to God and his truth which dwells and rules in all natural hearts. We also noticed that those who believed in and who sought to defend these deep things were more reverential in their words and manner toward these things than those who questioned them, or who said let them alone. From our childhood it was our privilege to dwell among some who loved to speak of predestination, election, the new birth, the infinite attributes of God and of the work of the Holy Spirit in redemption. They solemnly felt that these were all deep things indeed, but they were the things revealed by the Spirit to them. We can recall such ministers as Elders John A. Badger, Wm. Quint, Wm. J. Purington, Hiram Campbell, P. H. Hartwell and Joseph L. Purington, who sometimes visited our father's house in Maine, and who loved to converse of these solemn realities. They all confessed them to be deep things indeed, but yet be-

lieved them to be revealed things, revealed in the word of God, and these things they all rejoiced in as the foundation of all good hope. There was no lightness in the conversation of these men; they believed in solemn things, and they spoke of them solemnly, whether at the fireside or in the pulpit. It has been our observation all our life that they who know the Lord in these deep things have been more reverential in manner, and in their words when speaking of heavenly things, than have those who counted these things among those which ought to be avoided and as being beyond all our understanding.

In these later years we have sometimes heard the same things said in substance. Of some principles of doctrine we have heard it said, "I do not understand that." "We cannot understand this." "We have not experienced this, and cannot therefore know anything about it." Such things as these have been said of various principles of doctrine which are plainly stated in the Scriptures. Some have seemed to desire to avoid saying much about the attributes of Jehovah, such as his omnipotence, his omniscience, his omnipresence, his wisdom, his eternal purpose, personal election, the three that bear record in heaven, which three are one, the hope of future heaven and glory, the everlasting punishment of the lost, and the resurrection at the last day, and this upon the ground that we cannot know anything about these things, because they are too deep. With relation to these things we have also noticed much the same things that we did in our youth, viz., that they who say such things, do so because they do not fully believe the principles

of doctrine named . On the other hand , we have noticed that those who often speak of these things and believe them , do so because they love them , and because their hope is hinged upon them . It is sure that when any truth has been made precious to man , he will delight to hear and to speak of that truth . It is also sure that if one says of any principle of doctrine , We had better let that alone , it is because he does not love it or hope in it . Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak . The truth is , that everything concerning God , sin , holiness and salvation is deep ; all belong among the deep things of God ; one is no deeper than another . It is a truth that finite minds cannot comprehend infinity ; it would be an absurdity to say that the finite could comprehend that which is infinite . Things which our minds grasp are necessarily finite . It is also true that there is not a man of normal mind on earth who does not as a matter of fact believe and know hundreds of things which he cannot in the slightest degree comprehend or understand ; hundreds of examples could be given were there room to do so . We know that in the springtime the earth is covered with a carpet of green , but who can understand it ? We believe that the human heart sends out to all parts of the body the lifeblood for years , and scores of years , but who understands it ? We know that two people in an instant come to love each other , so that from that time there are none else in all the world for them save their two selves , but who can understand it ? If we do not believe or say anything about all that we cannot understand , there will be nothing left for us to believe or speak about . This

is true both of the natural universe and of the spiritual world . It is true of both earthly and heavenly things . If it may be said of some one Bible truth , O that is deep , let us speak of other things that we do understand , what other things do we understand ? If one says I mean , Let us talk of experience , of the love of God , of his mercy to sinners , of the ups and downs of our daily life , of practical duties , of the promises of daily grace and of future glory , then it may be well answered that all these things are bound up in one bundle with all the strong doctrine of the Bible . If it be said , Let us avoid the deep things , and testify of Christ alone , and of his sufferings , death , resurrection and ascension to glory , are not these among the deepest of the deep things of God ? But one may say , We mean , let us speak of the revealed things and let unrevealed things alone . To this we would respond , “ Amen , ” with all our heart . But the revealed things are all of them deep things , all of them are too deep for reason 's line to sound . But faith finds them not too deep . The revealed things are all that God has testified of in the Scriptures . All that the Scriptures contain belongs to us and to our children forever . Secret things are the things that our God has not been pleased to make known in the word . All things were secret and would continue to be so were it not that he has been pleased to reveal them to the children of men . His very existence no human reason could ever be sure of . That he exercises a providential care over the earth and all that it contains no searching of man could find out . No man by searching can find out God , and so in the connection of the text it is written , “ Eye hath not

seen , nor ear heard , neither have entered 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 : for the Spirit searcheth all things , yea , the deep things of God .” According to this testimony , then , all that our God hath revealed to us belongs to the deep things , and if any of us are anxious to be sure that the things which we have personally seen and felt are the things of God (and what true believer does not often question this ?) we can only be sure by comparing what we have seen and felt with the testimony of the Scriptures . It is written , and rightly written , upon almost all church books among Baptists , that we believe the Scriptures are the only rule of faith and practice . They are the rule by which our faith , our feelings , our thoughts and our actions , either personally or in church capacity , must and ought to be tested . According to the connection of the text , then , it is the “ deep things ” of which we ought to speak . These things we should by no means let alone . We cannot let them alone if we be children of God at all ; they have been revealed in the word , and have been made precious to our hearts by a personal experience of our need of these very things , and then by having them at times sweetly applied to our consciences , purging them from dead works to serve the living God . How can the weak cease to think and speak of the power of God ? How can a sinner cease to think and speak of that which has put away his sin ? How can such finite , changeable beings as we are cease to think of and rejoice in an unchangeable God ? How can that soul who has realized his just con-

demnation cease to think of and testify to that atonement which released him forever from that condemnation ? How can a frail , dying man cease to think of the promise of the resurrection to life and immortal glory and to rejoice in it ? There are thousands of promises in the word suited to his need , most of them yet unfulfilled in him , but to him is given a foretaste of them , and , drinking of the stream , he must long for that period to come when he shall drink at the fountainhead . The future things , as well as present things and past things , are deep things , but in such measure as we have come to know past things and present things we can also know what future promises imply . Again let us say that we must and do believe things in the future of which we comprehend very little . Holy men of old wrote of the first coming of Christ , and believed in it , and looked for it even to the day that he came , yet how little they comprehended of it . They believed in his first coming , because the Father in heaven had revealed this to them , but many things connected with that coming they did not understand , and it is said that they searched diligently what and what manner of time the Spirit that was in them did signify when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow . Even so we are told in the New Testament of many future things , and it can but be true of us also that we shall search what and what manner of time the Spirit which has testified of these future things does signify . If we are not to speak of future things because we do not understand them , why did apostles and servants of God of old speak of them ? As believers

they did not understand or comprehend future things any more than we of to-day , and yet they testified of them ; why should not we do the same same ? If failure to comprehend a matter forbids our thinking and speaking of it , there is absolutely nothing of which we can speak . The greatest mystery of all to every heavenborn soul is his own redemption and quickening into divine life . Does this stop our mouths from speaking of it ? Ought it to stop them ? And so also ought we to cease testifying of the hope of future glory , though we do not comprehend what that glory may be ? At least , we do know that there we shall be free from sorrow , toil , pain and sin . We do know that we shall be like him , for we shall see him as he is . We do know that we shall be satisfied when we awake with his likeness . We know all this , not because we have as yet attained to this perfect state , but because the word of God , who cannot lie , has declared these things . Who can , here and now , know what perfection means ? But yet perfection is promised us . Shall we not encourage each other with this promise ? These are also among the deep things of God .

In conclusion we would say , if any who bear the name of Old School Baptists are ever tempted to lightly lay aside some principle of doctrine revealed in holy writ because it is deep , let them remember that the same reason would at last lead them to lay aside all the doctrine of God our Savior . Let us all be careful not to go beyond the testimony of the Bible , and let us desire and strive not to cast aside anything there revealed , as being of no present use to the church

of God . There have always been many portions of the Bible with regard to which we have felt that we had no light ; that is , we did not even understand the language or the figures of speech used . Concerning these portions of the word we have not been able to say anything at all . But , on the other hand , some portions of the word have seemed plain to us , while yet the truth couched in them was far too deep for us to sound ; still we have found delight in that which has appeared , and sometimes after a time still greater understanding has been given us , as we hope and firmly believe . Many times we have been compelled to speak and to write without any feeling sense of the things of which we spoke or wrote , yet have believed at such times that we were giving the true meaning of the text , and have hoped that some of the preciousness of it might be afforded us , if not then , at some other time , and sometimes some little word , of which we had thought many times , has been filled with sweetness , and some doctrine that we have always believed has at times been made like honey and the honeycomb to us . We are glad when such experiences are given us .

Elder F . A . Chick

PSALM 107 : 1 , 2

O Give thanks unto the Lord , for he is good : for his mercy endureth for ever .

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so , whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy ;

MEETINGS

STANTON RIVER MEETING

The Stanton River Primitive Baptist Union meeting, the Lord willing, will be held with Union Church the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in May 1988.

The Church is located on #605 between #799 and Rt. 40. We invite all lovers of the truth, all ministers of our faith and order to meet with us.

Elder Raymond Goad, Pastor
Silas Payne, Clerk

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union meeting will be held, the Lord willing, with the Greensboro Primitive Baptist Church in Greensboro the fifth Sunday in May. Song service will begin at 10:00 A.M. & Preaching service will begin at 10:30. All lovers of the truth are invited to come and meet with us. We extend a special invitation to ministers of our faith and order.

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Moderator
Brother Wayne Edwards, Clerk

HOPEWELL CHURCH

The fourteenth annual Fifth Sunday meeting will be held, the Lord willing, with Hopewell Church, Winnsboro, Texas, beginning on Friday, May 27th, 28th, and

29th. Hopewell Church is located about six miles west of Winnsboro. Go west on Coke Road about four and one-half miles and follow signs.

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

There will be no business, just preaching and singing.

Jimmy Hamrick, Moderator
John Hamrick, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR FEBRUARY 1988

Mrs. John D. Stophel, VA 2.00
 Horace E. Walker, VA 3.00
 W. L. Knight, NC 2.00
 Mrs. Cliff Weaver, WA 15.00
 Mrs. Ilene Clifton, VA 2.00
 Mrs. Sam Edd Craddock, VA 2.00
 Miss Lora Smith, NC 2.00
 Mrs. Iva Quesenberry, VA 5.00
 Mrs. Clyde Black, Jr., NC 5.00
 Homer E. Rogers, TX 5.00
 Mrs. Mary Messick, AL 5.00
 Mrs. Naomi Houser, VA 20.00
 Mrs. Audrey Glidewell, NC 2.00
 Mrs. Phil Pittman, TX 5.00
 R. L. Schofield, AL 2.00
 Mrs. Nannie A. Carter, NC ... 2.00
 Mrs. Ruth C. Turner, VA 2.00
 A. R. Elmore, NC 2.00
 Mrs. James Treas, KY 5.00
 B. B. Williams, VA 2.00
 Mrs. Mary N. Phillips, TN 2.00

PSALM 27 : 1

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

 OBITUARIES

ROBERT COKER

The church at Tarboro feels it has been God's will to call our dear Brother Robert Coker home .

Brother Coker was born March 9 , 1898 and died January 19 , 1988 , making his stay on earth nearly 90 years . Brother Robert attended our church many years before he was blessed to join on September 3 , 1983 .

He was better known in his community as " Uncle Robert " . He was looked upon as a good friend and his advice was well respected . Uncle Robert was a great believer of Salvation by Grace , and he looked to his God for all of his blessings . He enjoyed having his brethren visit him to talk about the mercy of our dear Saviour . Uncle Robert will be missed by his church and friends , but we trust he is at rest with his Maker .

We , the church at Tarboro , send our sincere sympathy to his wife and daughters and trust God will bless them to carry on . We ; therefore resolve , that three copies of this resolution be made : one for the church records ; one for the family ; and one for publication in the " Signs of the Times " .

This done by order at our February conference .

Elder Henry Jones , Moderator
John H. Coker , Clerk

CLARA CUMBO

Clara Mae Flint was born May 2 , 1921 in Roanoke , Virginia . Her parents were the late Calvin and Maude Brindle Flint .

She married Homer Stanley Stroud in 1938 . They were blessed with three children . Her husband and a son , Homer Whitney Stroud preceded her in death .

Sister Clara worked twenty years in the Spinning Room at Dan River Mills .

In 1957 Sister Clara married Otis Cumbo . She joined Dan River Primitive Baptist Church on June 27 , 1965 and was baptized by her pastor , Elder David Spangler .

Sister Cumbo was in declining health for the last ten years . She died January 13 , 1987 . She is survived by her husband , Otis , a son , Louis Rici Stroud , of Danville , Virginia ; a daughter , Judy Allison Stroud of California ; two sisters , Juanita Grubbs , and Sister Glenna Keaton of Danville , Virginia and four grandchildren .

Her funeral was held in Dan River Church by Elder Kenneth Key and Elder Haywood Wray . She was buried in Dan River Church Cemetery .

May God comfort and reconcile her family in their loss and may we at Dan River be given to feel our loss is her eternal gain .

In Christian love ,
Sister Phyllis Snyder

ESTELLE GOOCH

We , the church at Tarboro , feel it was God 's will to call our dear Sister Estelle Gooch home . She

was born September 16 , 1895 and died November 6 , 1987 , making her stay on earth 92 years .

After being a member of Aycocks Primitive Baptist Church for around 35 years , Sister Estelle moved her membership to Tarboro Church on May 6 , 1961 . She was a faithful member , and she filled her seat as long as she was able .

Sister Gooch enjoyed the visits by her brethren , as she and Brother Gooch in turn enjoyed visiting in the homes of many brethren in the states of North Carolina , Virginia and Maryland . She believed in Salvation by Grace and that all things are in the hands of her Lord .

To know Sister Gooch was to love her . She was the type of person who had only kind words for everyone she met . We feel she is now resting in peace with her Maker , awaiting for the day of Resurrection . We also feel our lost is her eternal gain .

The church at Tarboro resolve that three copies of this resolution be made : one for the church records ; one for the family ; and one for publication in the " Signs of the Times " .

This done by order of conference at our December meeting .

Elder Henry Jones , Moderator
John H . Coker , Clerk

ELDER JOE L . HAMRICK

The Lord or Glory saw fit on Dec. 21 , 1987 to remove from our grieving midst Elder Joe Hamrick , beloved pastor of Hopewell , Good Hope , and Paran Primitive Baptist Churches ; and associate editor of the Signs of the Times . His funeral was

officiated two days later by Elder C . M . Haygood with , the help of Elders Gerald Shipman , Malcolm Burkhalter , and David Harrell . Afterwards , Hopewell Cemetery received his body to await the glorious resurrection .

Elder Hamrick was born May 9th , 1913 in Winnsboro , Texas to Frank and Dolly Hamrick . On June 9th , 1942 he married Audrey Ruth Duit and to this union were added five children : Joe Hamrick Jr . of Lindale , Mrs . Jeanene Harrell of Dallas , Mrs . Judy Williams of Rockwall , Jimmy Hamrick of Lindale , and John Hamrick of Mt . Pleasant ; all of whom along with his wife he had the great joy of eventually baptizing . These all survive him along with 13 grandchildren and a sister , Mrs . Allyne Page .

One Sunday afternoon early in 1957 , Elder Hamrick had the terrible and frightening experience of the weight of his sins crushing down upon him . He truly felt his life 's breath was being pressed out as he cried out , " God help me ! God help me ! " This cry was heard and the Lord , mighty to save , quickly intervened to turn a terrible and frightening experience into one of joy . Surely he could identify with David in Psalm 38:4 — " For mine iniquities are gone over my head : as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me . " Also Psalm 34:6 — " This poor man cried , and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles . "

The Lord blessed him to join Mt . Zion Primitive Baptist Church in Weslaco , Texas on the second Sunday in May , 1957 . He later served as a deacon and in 1961 , he was ordained an elder . He tried faithfully to serve the churches he was called unto ,

realizing only God's grace could make him a true and loving pastor. His reliance upon God's grace was not in vain and he was given a warmth about him which made it extremely easy for anyone to approach him with a problem or a question. His preaching was characteristically experimental. That is, he had much to say about the depths a little child of grace must enter due to convictions of sin produced by the Holy Spirit. Also, he spoke much of the sweet deliverance found in the person of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The God of all love blessed Elder Hamrick to feel a great love for the saints and therefore it was a great burden and concern for him to see or hear of any trouble arising among them. When trouble did come, he was more than willing to be self-sacrificing in his efforts to restore peace.

Among other spiritual writers who Elder Hamrick dearly loved reading was J. C. Philpot, whose grave he was able to visit. It is truly felt that the inscription on J. C. Philpot's tombstone also by God's grace applies to Elder Hamrick. It reads as follows: "He was widely known and greatly loved by the living family of God for whom he labored abundantly by tongue and pen. 'He being dead yet speaketh' Heb. 11:4."

Solely by the grace of God, Elder Hamrick was blessed to be a loving pastor, husband, father, brother, grandfather, and dear friend. To God alone be all the glory and thanksgiving for the precious memories.

It was felt appropriate to end this obituary with Elder Hamrick's own words as found in a paragraph taken from a letter to Brother Cannaday

dated January 8th, 1987 — "We should all look forward to our leaving this old sin cursed world, for it opens the door for our souls to be carried up into His presence to bask in the sunshine of His love and mercy toward us, and to sing praises to His holy name and to await the resurrection of our bodies. Solomon said, 'That the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.' and Christ says, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' and 'precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.' Ps. 116:15. You and I do not know the beauty and blessing of heaven yet, nor can we till death seizes us; but I trust we, in the Lord's own time concerning us, we will know."

Written at the request of
Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church
by his son, Jimmy Hamrick

MARY FAUCETTE POOLE

Sister Mary Faucette Poole, a member of the Durham Primitive Baptist Church passed from this life on September 11, 1987. She was the daughter of Brother Fred and Sister Vera Faucette.

She married James S. Poole. To this union were born two daughters, Linda and Susan. Sister Mary taught in the Durham Schools for a number of years and prior to her retirement was librarian at Holt School.

Besides her daughters, she is survived by three grandchildren, David Morris, Adam Ray and Lauren Ray, three brothers Horton, George and James, one sister, Ruth Allen and several nieces and nephews.

She joined Durham Church on August 19, 1951 and was baptized by Elder J. W. Gilliam. She was faithful to attend her meetings through the years and was very forthright in expressing her belief concerning the doctrine of salvation by grace and predestination to glory of the elect of God. Her friends both personal and professional knew of her belief. She was not ashamed of it.

Her funeral was conducted by Elder Cleo Robertson at Hall-Wynne Funeral Chapel and her body was interred at Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens to await the resurrection. May the Lord console her love ones and fill the void in their lives with reconciliation to his will. I think that words of the poet who wrote this hymn also express Mary's hope and anticipation of heaven:

" There is a home of sweet repose
Where storms assail no more:
The stream of endless pleasure flows
on that celestial shore.

There purity with love appears,
and bliss without alloy:
There they that oft had sown in tears
Shall reap again in joy."

Catherine M. Humbarger
Clerk

EVA BROWN PICKEREL

We are again saddened by the passing of a sister, Eva Brown Pickerel. Sister Pickerel was born July 26, 1899, a daughter of the late Richard Crouch Brown and Nancy Taylor Brown. She was the widow of the late Posie C. Pickerel. Sister Eva passed from this life November 20, 1987.

Survivors include one son, Samuel V. Pickerel, Gretna, Va.; six grandchildren nine great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

As we reflect on the sweet memories of Sister Eva Pickerel, we remember her sweet smile and soft hand shake as she met her brethren. Sister Eva was a faithful member of Springfield Primitive Baptist Church. She was received by experience and Baptism, August 12, 1962.

Sister Eva Pickerel's funeral was conducted by Elder Raymond Goad. Her body was laid to rest in the Gretna Burial Park to wait the coming of our Savior. May we be given always to say say, Thy will be done.

Written in love and hope,
Carol R. Pickral

Elder O. K. Tench - Moderator
Oscar D. Pickral - Clerk

PSALM 116 : 15

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

Signs of the Times

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TRIBUTE TO OUR PASTOR'S WIFE

*In the shadow of the Church
Stands a figure oft obscure
Just behind the faithful pastor,
Is his wife, devout and pure.*

*She is with him every moment,
Helping make his work progress,
And you can't discount her portion
In his measure of success.*

*Oft behind the scene of action,
Often never seen or heard,
Yet she stands forever ready
Just to give a helping word.*

*With her home forever open,
And her work quite nicely done,
She is ever his faithful helper,
In the battles fought and won.*

*It is not in active service,
That her worth is really shown,
But in bearing heavy burdens
That to others are unknown.*

*With encouragement and vision
She must urge God's servant on,
When the shadows are the darkest
And his courage almost gone.*

*Don't forget the pastor's partner
When you measure up his life,
All too often he is honored
And forgotten stands his wife.*

*So while passing out the laurels
And when giving honor due,
Give a share to one who helps him
Through his trials to be true.*

Selected

*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold
in pictures of silver — Proverbs.*

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EDITORIAL



Elder R. H. Campbell

At Midday , O king I saw in the way a light from heaven , above the brightness of the sun shining round about me and them that journeyed with me .

And when we were all fallen to the earth , I heard a voice speaking unto me , and saying in the hebrew tongue , Saul , Saul , why persecutest thou me ? it is hard to kick against the pricks? and I said , Who art thou Lord? and he said , I am Jesus whom thou persecutest , But rise and stand upon thy feet : for I have appeared unto thee for this

purpose , to make thee a minister and a witness both of the things which thou hast seen and of those things in which I will appear unto thee ; Delivering thee from the people , and from the gentiles unto whom now I send thee . To open their eyes , and to turn them from darkness to light , and from the power of Satan unto God , that they may receive forgiveness of sins , and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me .

The above scriptures give one account , of many , of the experience that the Apostle Paul had on the road to Damascus and of the things that he heard and was shown on that occasion . This was the occasion on which he was called up before king Agrippa and was told by the king to speak for himself and answer the charges that were brought against him by the Jews who desired to have him condemned and executed . This was the most beautiful and inspiring account of this experience and of his conversion from the traditions of his fathers to the Christian faith , as he was given to go deeper into the content of the revelation that he was given and the purpose of it . Surely it is the most dramatic experience that is recorded of one being brought from darkness to light .

There are scriptures recorded in the gospels which are referred to as the great commission , by many , which is the time when Christ , after his resurrection , sent forth the Apostles saying , “ Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature . ” He further told them of signs which would follow them as evidence of his presence with them and that he would be with them even unto the end of the world . Surely the above scrip-

tures are the commission that was conferred upon the Apostle Paul by Christ and is a pattern whereby all of his ministers have been sent forth into the gospel vineyard, since that time, to labor among their brethren and fulfill their calling. I have heard many relate their calling to the ministry and all have spoken of a burden that was placed upon them at some point in time and it so impressed them that they could not refrain but were compelled to go forth and declare the power and the mystery of their calling. They went forth as the kine that were tied to the ark and left all behind and went on their mission. Sometimes this is through dire trials and sufferings but yet they go, declaring that they are not going in their own strength but rather the power of their calling.

The Apostle Paul was, in his own opinion at the time of his conversion, serving God and prospering in that service above many of his equals in his own nation and was exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers. He was satisfied with his religion and had attained a position of great respect among his peers, was at the height of his career in the Jewish religion and was authorized by them to aggressively persecute the Christian faith in the name of God. Seemingly it was in remembering these things that he wrote to the Galatian Church, "But when it pleased God who separated me from my mothers womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his son in me that I might preach him among the heathen: immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." This was his confession that this event was not at a time convenient with his plans but that

it was at a time appointed by God that he was called and sent upon his mission. This calling was without repentance as are all of the callings of God and it is for life, not just till 65 or retirement age, but for the rest of their life. This was evidenced in the life of the Apostles and we see it happening all around us today in the God called ministers. I know and have known some active after the age of ninety. As Paul, they are told in no uncertain terms the purpose of their calling, to whom they are sent and the results that their going forth will have upon those who are given ears to hear and hearts to understand. They are made willing to go even though they go in fear that they are mistaken in their calling but go they must.

This is the experience of all that are called of God and sent forth on a mission that demonstrates the power and wisdom of their calling. Jesus told Peter on one occasion, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldst: 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 was declaring unto Peter that he would be led in ways that would not be his choosing but the way was determined and he would fulfill his commission. Each one is led in their own path for a specific purpose and to fulfill a particular need in the kingdom of God, even though they may feel that there is no specific direction in their labor, there is, because this is the work of God and all his works are perfect. Jesus told his Apostles, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go

and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." If this was true of the Apostles, and it was, and of the Apostle Paul and he was a pattern to them that should follow, then surely this is the way with his servants today. They are each called and sent, not because of any qualities that they possess but just because it was the pleasure of the Lord to fulfill his will and purpose that was determined before the foundation of the world.

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah saying, "before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth from the womb I sanctified thee and ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." His way had been determined according to the will of God before he even had an existence in the world. His reply was, "Ah, Lord God behold I cannot speak: for I am a child." This did not alter the original plan and he did go forth on his commission and was a prophet unto the nations according to the Lord's words. Surely, this is the response of all when they are confronted with the power and the wisdom of this heavenly calling, realizing the weakness and unprofitableness of the flesh. The Apostle Paul was made to acknowledge, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do, Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members," "Oh the dilemma of the servant of God, the sin that dwells in the flesh causes suffering because of the spirit that is also present and he is made to ponder the question, which is the real me. Is

the true essence of his being the evils of the fleshly being or the goodness of the spiritual entity. Many and varied are the travels of the mind and the fearful encounters experienced by the servants of God and only the sustaining grace of God causes them to endure and fill their allotted course and finish their race in peace.

The Apostle Paul was richly blessed to fulfill all of the prophecies set forth in his calling as set forth in the above scriptures. We have the epistles that he was blessed to write unto the churches and a record of the way in which he was blessed to minister unto the churches and the brethren in his day and the fruit that was made manifest everywhere he was led. Over the centuries, since that time, his writings have been a great inspiration to the saints in all ages who have been given an understanding of spiritual matters and a hope of things eternal. Surely, their eyes have been opened, they have been turned from darkness unto light and from the power of Satan unto God. This was not because of any wisdom or knowledge provided by Saul of Tarsus, but rather, because of the revelation given unto Paul for that specific purpose. In all of his writings to the churches he contended for this above all that it was by the grace of God that he was a preacher of righteousness that he should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. To the church at Corinth he wrote, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me: Yea woe is me if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me." In

writing these lines he must have been remembering his commission and the power of the revelation that so impressed him that he was made willing to bear all things for the truths sake , he was made willing not only to be bound imprisoned , beaten and shipwrecked for the cause of Christ but even to die , (which he did eventually) for the glory of God and because of the necessity laid upon him by this heavenly calling .

If your hope of things eternal is based upon a personal demonstration of the longsuffering of a just and holy God toward one who feels to be the chiefest of sinners and unworthy of the least of his love and mercy then you are in complete fellowship with the Apostle Paul . If your hope of salvation is solely dependent on the finished work of God who loved you and revealed himself to you when you were ignorant of his presence in your life then you are in the same condition as all who have been called out of darkness into the marvelous light and liberty of God's heavenly kingdom here on earth . You too have been saved and called with a holy calling , not according to your works , but according to his own purpose and grace , which was given you in Christ Jesus before the world began . Your salvation is being experienced by you here in time , and being made manifest in your heart and soul now , but it is the end result of a work which was the determinate counsel and fore knowledge of God and it was his good pleasure for it to be so when the morning stars sang together , and all the sons of God shouted for joy ? Yours is a glorious heritage and it cannot be corrupted by all the wicked devices and counsels of man or of

nations of men . All of the combined efforts of man all over the world and in all ages of time have not been able to pollute the kingdom of God nor thwart any of his plans . They may cause grief or distress to the child of God , in their journey , by what they behold all around them but they will never cause one to be separated from the love of God , or from the way of their salvation .

May God give us a mind , from time to time , to reflect on all of our way , remember the day of our own spiritual awakening and the blessings we have enjoyed in our earthly pilgrimage . If so blessed we can , with patience , continually press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus .

In bonds of love ,
Elder Richard H . Campbell

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Pauline and Russell ,

Have you ever had a desire to express your gratitude to precious friends but didn't feel blessed with words to express your feelings ? If you have experienced such , then you can witness with me . I have desired to write to you and tell you how very much we enjoyed our visit with both of you . It was a Bethel spot that we can go back to and feel the Lord was in our midst .

Since our visit , I have thought much about the subject of leaves and their comparison to man . As fall of the year approaches , the leaves began to

turn different colors . Leaves contain three different compounds , and the color of each leaf depends on which of the three compounds it has the most of after the chlorophyll breaks down . The glorious climax in the life of the leaf ends when a fresh breeze blows the dying leaf from the twig . It flutters to the ground . After the leaf falls , it lies on the ground for a while . The leaf is softened by rain , and then bacteria begin to break down the dead leaf materials . Rain water dissolves the decayed material and washes it back into the earth .

As I view the different leaves , I am made to notice the types and colors that come forth . Some are much more beautiful than others . Isn't it so true with man . Don't those that the Lord has wrought a work in have a different look and different walk than those in the world and of the world . "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 honour , and another unto dishonour ? " As some of the leaves are more beautiful than others , isn't there also a great difference in the race of man . There are many different types . Those that God has called out of darkness into His marvelous light have a different countenance . The glory of the Lord doth shine round about them . They walk in this life with a bowed head . When sin is finished , it brings forth death . All men must die , but not all men were chosen to be conformed to the image of His son . As the leaf decayed and washed back into the earth , so is the experience of man . He too must die (natural man) and to back to the dust of the earth from whence he came . But those that

God hath chosen before the world began hath everlasting life . The Lord will come again and receive His own unto Himself .

" 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 of Him , and through Him , and to Him , are all things : to whom be glory for ever ."

Pauline and Russell , thank you for being so gracious to us . We enjoyed such precious fellowship with you . We enjoyed the delicious meals that we feel were prepared in love . We hope the Lord will bless us with thankful hearts for these many blessings . If we're not deceived , we desire to tell you that we hope we love you for Christ's sake .

If it is the Lord's will , we look forward to seeing you this coming weekend .

Love in Christ ,
Jeannette and Cleo

ARTICLES

EXPERIENCE

Dear Brethren and Friends in the Lord :

I have had a mind for some time to write some for the Signs . My weakness and imperfections have given me much fear ; however , I believe the Lord is able to give me strength to do so , if it be his will . I hope and pray He will direct my mind in the right way .

I was born in Patrick County ,

Virginia , August 11 , 1920 , in a little log cabin about five miles from Fairy-stone Park . My mother had been married before , and had been left with some small children . When I was about eight months old my natural father died , leaving my mother again with more small children .

I do not remember much about my life until I was about eight years old . We did not own a home and found ourselves moving from one place to another . At about the age of eight I had scarlet fever , and the doctor told the neighbors that he did not think I would live . I was out for some time , I do not know how many days , and did not know anything . My grandfather lived with us about this time , and he was taken sick and died .

My mother did not have the money to buy clothes for me to go to school , so I had to wear my grandfather 's clothes . I went to school but very little , and what time I did go I was nicknamed Grandpa , because my clothes were too large for me . Sometime in early life I had serious thoughts about death and what would become of me after death ; but as I thought on these things , I also thought I had plenty of time ; and before I got old I would think more about it . But time went on , and sometimes it did not bear on my mind so heavy ; but other times it would get so heavy that it seemed I could not bear it .

I felt to be so young , and such a vile sinner , but I thought I was too young to even think about joining the Church because most of them were up in age . I thought I was too young even to think of such things , and would try to put them out of mind . I would go with my mother to church ,

and would see them and my mother crying , and I could not understand why . Why would they cry if they were happy ? I did not know that their tears were of joy . I have always felt to be a misfit with my schoolmates , and with the Church people today . I well remember that one time my teacher came to me on the school ground and said to me , " Leonard , why don't you play with the other children ? " I don't remember what I told her , but I felt so unwanted by my schoolmates .

There was an Elder who was to preach at a church close to the schoolhouse , and the teacher told us children that we would all go down to hear him . Most of the children as well as myself were glad to get away from school awhile ; and this was the church I had been going to with my mother . We all went in and sat down , and the Elder began to preach . At the close of his sermon he turned to us children and began to admonish us how we should mind our parents , and how we should not worry them ; for this was good in the sight of God . Before I knew what had taken place , I began to choke up in my throat . I have said , and still say , that I believe that was the first sermon I ever heard . Sometime after that my mother came back from church and told me that the church wanted me to be their house-keeper . I was twelve or more years old at this time , and I felt that to be a great honor : I would sweep the dust that came from the Saint's feet ; and to be a doorkeeper in the House of the Lord was more than I felt worthy to be .

Time went on and I got worse instead of better , it seemed to me . I had heard people say that after you pass twelve years of age , that you would come to the age of accountabi-

lity ; and now I have passed that and have not felt the deliverance at the hand of the Lord . Time went on , and we moved to the little Town of Bassett , Va . , and I went to work in the plant there . My burden of sin became so heavy it seemed I could not live . I became very ill and could not hold down my job . This gave me much concern , and I began to lose weight ; and it seemed the doctors were doing me no good . What to do I could not find . I would try to pray but it seemed the Lord would not hear . I would go to bed at night and lay there trying to beg the Lord for mercy ; and when I arose in the morning , my very breathing was “ O Lord have mercy on me . O Lord deliver me according to thy grace . Bless me , O Lord , that this mountain of sin might be removed from me . I confess before thee , O Lord of heaven and earth , that I am vile , I am undone ; but I believe thou art able to set me free , thou art able to give me life . ”

I remember one night going to bed as usual ; and sometime in the night I dreamed I saw a large body of clear water . As I looked at this water a voice seemed to say , In it dwelleth righteousness . As I thought on this it seemed that in it dwelled righteousness for me , and I felt this was to show me I should be baptized . But I wanted more evidence . One of my half-brothers was boarding with us at this time . I thought him to be a good man and I asked him to pray for me — it seemed the Lord would not hear me and my prayers seemed to go no higher than my head . My half-brother went to his bedroom that night , and I could hear his voice but could not understand his words . That night I dreamed I saw a man standing in the

pulpit of my home church ; and this man was my Lord , and he beckoned for me to come . I awoke the next morning and told my brother the dream . He was and still is a member of another order , but he said to me , “ That is the church for you . ”

I had been sick all of that winter , as I stated before . Sometime in March I had gone to bed as before , begging the Lord for mercy . The next morning I awoke , got up and walked to the window and looked out . My tongue will never be able to describe what I saw , and how I felt . I had never felt this way before : as I stood before that window I saw a new world . I believe I saw my Lord in the pardon of my sins ; that His blood had made me clean , and I was as free from sin as if I had never sinned . O the peace and joy that flooded my soul ! I wanted to talk about my Saviour to every one I met . I wanted to tell them what He had done for me — how he had come and taken my feet out of the pit , and put a new song in my mouth , even praise to His name . My thought and desire was to tell the church my feelings ; but I wanted more evidence . It came to me that if I didn't go with what I had , I would not receive any more . I felt that I would die if I did not go .

I was now only seventeen years of age . I went before the church at Riverview , Bassett , Va . , the fourth Sunday in March , 1938 , and was received . I was baptized the fourth Sunday morning in May , 1938 . I felt I left something there that has not been with me since : the heavy load I carried was gone , and I felt I had been enabled of the Lord to do His will for the first time in my life . I went on rejoicing I don't know how long ; but soon Satan came along and began to tempt me ,

and these thoughts would arise in my mind : You have gone to these good people and told them that you have a hope of heaven ; and they believed you . You should be ashamed of yourself . Over this I began to beg the Lord again , O Lord , what must I do ? I want to be submissive to thy will . It would be hard for me to go back and tell them I was mistaken in the whole thing ; but , Lord , if I have done wrong , I will go back and ask them to take my name off of the Church Book .

About this time I laid down on the bed in mother's room , not knowing what to do . I cannot tell whether I was asleep or not , but a man's hand appeared before me . I could see the robe as it swung from his wrist ; and as I beheld this strange sight , I saw his arm — and then I saw a body , but did not see his face . And , behold , it was the body of my Lord : I could see the blood and water flowing from His side . As I write this my eyes are dim with tears . As I beheld this glorious sight , the words seemed to say within me , This blood was shed for me .

I went on for some time , — a stranger to myself and to others , I thought . I became burdened again , and what was wrong I did not know . I did try again to beg the Lord to show me what he would have me do . I even asked the Lord if I was wrong about the whole thing , and if I should go back and repent again ; or if I had left my first love . My cry was , O Lord , help me . O Lord , lead me in the right way . Keep me by the right hand of thy righteousness .

I well remember at church one time , a brother Deacon called me aside and said , Brother Brammer , I have been watching you , and I see your interest in the Church , and

seemingly you are carrying a burden for a deacon ; and I wanted to ask you about it . I did not deny it , and told him I felt to be burdened for something , but did not know what for . My home church called a presbytery to look into my qualifications as a deacon . This was in June , 1949 , the fourth Saturday . After I went for a short time thinking that this would ease my burden ; but in a few months the burden came back worse than ever . Again I did not know what to do . My dear reader if you have not traveled this road you may not know what I am talking about ; but if you have , then you know .

I began to feel that I would have to speak in public ; but my thoughts were , I cannot do this for I am slow of speech and of a stammering tongue ; and I would try to put it away from me . Time went on and I thought I could cast it aside ; but it was greater than I . I would make many excuses , but none of them did any good . My burden grew worse .

About this time I had a small peach orchard , and I spent much of my time there . A great deal of my work was in a bowed position ; and I worked and tried to pray and beg the Lord to show me what he would have me do . Sometimes the burden got so heavy I would leave my work and go to the woods and fall down on the ground , and cry to the Lord for mercy . Many scriptures would come to my mind . One time while in the field at work , I thought I had found a good excuse , because if I should be called to preach , I could not serve churches as Pastor . Just at that time my mind turned to a church that had a pastor ; and I was ashamed I had such thoughts . (I will try to explain this later .)

My burden was still heavy upon me, and I still did not know what to do, but would continue to beg the Lord over and over, O Lord, what would you have me to do. At one time it came to me, Why don't you put your case before the church and let them decide what to do. To this I could not answer, because I felt they would do what was right. About this time I felt I could not stay away any longer; and I still pleaded with the Lord. I heard a voice as if it spoke to me, "Wait, I say, upon the Lord," and this would go over and over in my mind: "Wait, I say, upon the Lord." And I was made willing to wait upon Him. Now I felt that if it were his will for me to preach, he would show me more; if not, I would become reconciled. I had tried to keep my feelings to myself as much as I could, but I would talk to my wife some about it. I well remember once when I was so burdened that it seemed I could not live, I was doing some work in the house, and I quit my work and told my wife that I could not live with the burden I had; that something would have to be done. Her reply was, "I would not mind you preaching, if I knew you could preach; but I would not want you to worry the people."

This was one of the things that worried me; so I did not get much comfort from this. My pastor and I went to Bush Arbor Church together; and I had come to the place I must talk to someone. I told him some of the things I have written here, and asked him not to tell anyone; and he said he would not. Sometime after this I was going to my work one Monday morning, and a voice seemed to speak to me, "Now is the time, this is the day, this is the accepted year of the Lord." And I said, "Lord, if you will give me

strength, I will go this coming meeting." The fourth Saturday soon came. I did not tell anyone my feelings until I got to the church that day. My prayer was, Lord you fix it the way you would have it to be. When I got on the church ground, my pastor, Elder J J .R . Hollandsworth was already there. I went to his car where he was reading his Bible, and said, "Brother Hollandsworth, I cannot live in the condition I am in." It seemed death if I went, and death if I did not go. This was the fourth Saturday in February, 1955. We went on in the house and the pastor asked me, after he told the people what I had told him, to open service with song and prayer, and to speak as I felt to.

I opened to the fourth chapter of Ecclesiastes, the 8th to the 12th verses, and talked for fifteen or twenty minutes. In a short time the church I spoke of above heard that I had begun to speak in public, and their pastor had told them to start looking for another pastor, (which I did not know at the time I first thought of this church,) and when the deacon heard that I had begun speaking, he said, "There is our Pastor!" I am now trying to serve those brethren, and three other churches.

I have had many ups and downs in life, but the Lord has been so good to me. I would like to tell another dream that I had: I dreamed that I saw a strange looking sight — it seemed that I saw bubbles floating on the earth. As I looked at this, I saw a bright spot in the sky, I saw the face of a man in the sky; and this was my Lord. It was not like you and me: it was solid gold as if it burned in a furnace. My wife was with me and we were sitting at a table, she on one

side and I on the other . We were talking about how glad we were that we had seen the Lord coming in the clouds of glory . As we talked it began to rain ; and I thought it was the rain of fire and brimstone ; but I was not afraid because we had seen the Lord . I awoke my wife and told her in tears about my dream . I was crying so loud that it awoke my children upstairs ; and they began to cry : the whole family was happy . I have a hope that some day I will see my Lord for myself and not another .

Early in this article I stated that I had scarlet fever , the doctor gave me up to die . My mother told me after I started to speak in public , that while I was sick , she went to the kitchen and knelt down on the hearth rock , and asked the Lord to spare my life : if He would just spare my life she would be willing for the Lord to take me and use me anyway he saw fit . She said while she was praying , she saw a small light in the crevice of the hearth rock , and felt I would get better . That was about forty years ago .

I feel that the Lord has been so good to me , that he has been my strength , my shield , and the horn of my salvation . May His high and holy Name have the praise , the honor , and the glory , both now and forever . Amen .

Elder Leonard J. Brammer
Rt . 3 , Box 269
Martinsville , Va . 24112

and sent to me after her death by her parents , sister Elizabeth Garton and Roy Garton , of Lakemp , Okla . I read it with a solemn thrill , as a voice from the dead ; then I thought , No , not from the dead , but the living , for Christ said , “ Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die . ” If it meets your approval please publish it in the Signs .

Unworthily ,

Mary Ellison

DEAR SISTER IN HOPE : — If you will allow me to so address you after this long silence . I have thought of you and I hope of all the dear kindred in Christ , often , but I am so slow to perform my duty that I have put off writing the letter which I know ought to be written . We are well and getting along very well , but I , as usual , am unthoughtful of God 's goodness to me until I feel his presence in this cold and stony heart . I am very unprofitable in the things of God ; I am never able to observe his kindness and loving care until I feel that “ something ” which makes me thank him for the sunshine and beautiful day . I feel my heart overflowing this morning , hence this letter to you . Do not think I am always at the feet of Jesus , for I am not . Most of my path lies in shadows and doubts , and there are times when I fret and plan for tomorrow , forgetting there is One who has already provided for the morrow . This is my great grief , that I cannot always feel the assurance that he has provided a way . True , I believe it and think it , but when clouds gather and there is no light ahead I wonder how it is all going to come out — wonder how tomorrow is going to be provided for , when he has left so many assurances

Dear Brethren Editors : — By request , and also by my own wish , I am sending you this copy of a letter , which was begun by our late sister Nettie Porter , of Garber , Okla . ,

that he has us in his loving care . When I look back and count my blessings and think how unthankfully I have received so many of them , it makes me wonder at the unreasonableness of my own nature , and in my heart this morning I cry , and long to cry with my lips , O for a closer walk with God . My mind has gone back on the path I traveled when I first began to think on the things of God , and I remember how impossible it looked for me to ever own my God and Savior and live a in peace at home . Then I remember how that still small voice urged me on , with a blessed assurance that all would be well . When things were the darkest , in my heart I was willing to give up all and go the way I felt drawn , and then the thought and the feeling would come that God was able to make all rough places smooth , and there would even be good in what then seemed hard to me . Now , when my husband and I sometimes grasp a thing of God together , I recall my doubts and fears , also the suffering I then had to bear , and I think that the burden I then had to bear is nothing , and not to be compared with the grace and comfort I get out of God's word , and the unity of feeling that exists between my husband and myself . That is one of the blessings I thank God for , and feel ashamed of the doubts and fears I felt ; but I thank him for the strength that enabled me to bear my burden . I recall how I wandered in darkness , and how I would carry some little portion of my burden to my husband , and how like Job's comforters he was , and I know it was only the blessed work of God , to plant my feet on a firm foundation , and every shred of hard feeling has long ago left my heart , and I feel that spirit

which prayeth , Father , forgive them , for they know not what they do . I can even say I am glad that it was so , for in it I can see that it was only a work to show forth the glory of God . There was always a desire to talk more with God's people about my travel before I came to the church , but there was always a something that kept me from it . I always loved the Baptist people ; even when a child I loved the sound of their voices when giving thanks unto their God ; but there was one thing that always grated on my nerves , even when a child , when I heard them tell of their experiences , and they would in any way connect a dream . It always made it look queer and superstitious to me . When I was fifteen years old I began to be worried about death and the hereafter . I wanted so much to do what was right , and tried that hopeless task of trying to merit salvation . When I was in the most hopeless state of mind I dreamed that I was riding on horseback over a desolate , hilly country . The hills were bare of vegetation , and even the sun was hid behind a cloud . I thought the path I traveled was so rough I might be killed at any moment , and just as I thought I was about out of the bad country I came to the end of my path , or road . I was on the top of a high hill that there was no visible way of getting down and going ahead . There was a valley that commenced right at the foot of the hill , with beautiful green grass , and a beautiful stream of water that ran very smoothly and wound prettily through the valley . There were a few clusters of trees , and over it all the sun shone so prettily that it made me shudder with dread as I thought of turning back over the desolate road I had traveled . I awoke with that awful

feeling of dread , and try as I might , and tell myself as often as I could that there was nothing in a dream , that dread and awful feeling stayed with me for seven years . Often I prayed to God to take it away , just to remove that dread and harrowing feeling . Once as I went alone out into the orchard I prayed for some kind of a token , to relieve my bruised and burdened heart . As I looked about me there came a feeling with these words : Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness , for they shall be filled . The thought was in my mind that surely I could take hold of that , because I was hungering and thirsting after righteousness . For a few months I found relief from the awful burden , and thought it was gone , when it came anew and seemed much worse than before . For a year I wandered and sought God in vain ; but one morning as I went about my household duties I felt the loving-kindness of God , and I worshiped as one who has no hope himself when I stood in my kitchen doorway and prayed God if it were his will to take away my burden and remove the dread produced by the dream , and it came as a voice , though I heard no sound , O , have you not yet suffered enough to know that it is not on a high hill of pride where mercy is to be found , but low , low down at the feet of Jesus ? and the peace , the sweet peace of God , so filled my heart that it shut out everything else , removing all doubt , all fear ; even the horror of the dream , that had hung over me , went , never to fill a moment of my time again , lifted as a mist before the sun . I am sometimes in doubt and in trouble , but not the kind that lays hold —

Here the pen was laid aside , and

the hand of death intervened before it was lifted again . The beautiful song of praise was interrupted , to be resumed in the midst of the heavenly choir , before the throne of God and the Lamb , where throughout an endless eternity she will join with them in sweet anthems of praise , singing , Not unto us , not unto us , but unto thy name be all the glory , because thou hast redeemed us by thy blood . Not by works of righteousness which we have done , but by his mercy he saved us . The dear sister died about the last of February , leaving her husband , John Porter , and four little children , besides her parents and three brothers . I presume a suitable obituary notice will be sent to the Signs . Though rejoicing in such precious testimony of such a favored witness to the goodness , mercy and peace of God , which passes the knowledge and understanding of the worldly-wise natural mind , I am made to feel very humble and deeply sensible of my unworthiness to have been the recipient of this letter . Surely it is because He is of one mind , and none can turn him , that I am not consumed ; and though I deplore the expression of even an implied doubt of his mercy and favor to one who surely is less than the least of all saints , yet I am tempted to say , if one at all .

Submitted .

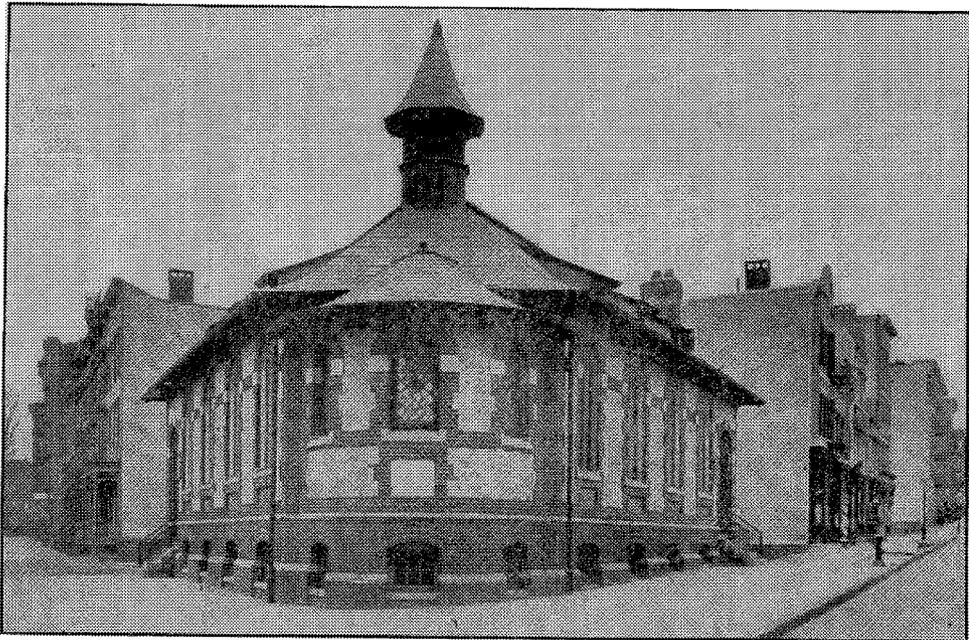
Mary Ellison

NOTICE

The address of the Circulation Office and Elder J . R . Williams has changed from Box 65 to Route 1 , Box 420 , Keeling , Va . 24566 .

Editors

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



EBENEZER OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CHURCH

Elder R .L . Dodson , former editor and manager of the

Signs of the Times served this church from 1922 until 1950 .

“ He that hath an ear , let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches .” — Revelation ii . 29 .

These words extend the message beyond the church to which they were spoken , and address themselves to every one to whom the word comes , and to whom an ear is given to hear and receive it . Thus each message sent to the churches becomes a message sent personally to us . If we have a spiritually circumcised ear , if we are willing to listen to the voice of the Lord , he speaks to us in every message as personally and as distinctly as he spoke to each individual church . It is indeed an un-

speakable blessing to have this ear given to us that we may receive in humility , simplicity , and godly sincerity what the Lord speaks in the word of his grace . It is by his word that he knocks at the door of our hearts ; and what a blessing he has pronounced on the man who hears his voice and opens the door when he hears the knock , like a fond and affectionate wife when she hears the knock of her husband at the door of his house : “ Behold , I stand at the door , and knock : if any man hear my voice , and open the door , I will come in to him , and will sup with him , and he with me ” (Rev . iii . 20) .

VOICES OF THE PAST

“he being dead yet speaketh”

THE ARMOUR OF GOD

Paul instructs the saints at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus to , “ Put on the whole armour of God , that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil . ” (Ephesians 6:11) These wiles of the devil are principalities , powers , the rulers of the darkness of this world , and spiritual wickedness in high places . Seeing that all these things are confronting us today , we feel it to be high time to stir up your pure minds by calling to your attention the admonition of Paul to the brethren for this day of evil . The whole armour of God is necessary to overcome all these things and enable us to stand , pray , and watch as a good soldier . We must lay aside the armour of man and put on the armour of God . We must be properly clothed to fight the good fight of faith . Our strength must be in the Lord and the power of His might in order to withstand this evil day . We cannot overcome unless we are properly clothed and have the proper equipment for our protection and defense .

May God grace us to inspect this armour piece by piece in the order given in Ephesians 6:14-17 . Please read . As we examine each piece of the armour let us note the supreme workmanship and material with reverential awe . May we admire its supreme value to such extent that nothing else can satisfy us . May we be given to examine the girdle , the breastplate , the shoes , the shield ,

the helmet , and the sword in such a manner as to determine whether or not any piece of armour upon which we are depending is pure or counterfeit . Have we put on the whole armour of God ?

The girdle is the first piece of this armour to be considered . We are to have our loins girt about the Truth . The truth is to be close about us and we are to be tightly bound with it . The truth must not be slack about us , but taut . It is to tightly embrace the part of us that is so subject to pain . We find that Christ is the truth , and we must see Christ in each piece of the armour . The truth must be revealed to us and dwell in us in order to be girt about with it . We must be convinced of our ignorance and made to lay it aside before the truth can be close about us , as Job was when God spoke to him out of the whirlwind , as recorded in the 38th chapter of Job . God commanded Job , “ Gird up thy loins like a man : for I will demand of thee , and answer thou me . ” (Job 38:3) The purpose of our girding up our loins with truth is to be able to give a proper answer to those who inquire of us . When our enemies assail us we want to be adequately clothed with the truth , the whole truth , and nothing but the truth in order to stop the mouths of gainsayers . When Jesus was urging watchfulness to his disciples , He said , “ Let your loins be girded about , and your lights burning . ” (Luke 12:35) When Peter was exhorting against fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance and giving exhortations to godliness , he wrote : “ Gird up the loins of your mind , be sober , and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation

of Jesus Christ . (1 Peter 1:13) Diligent searching for the truth and the discarding of erroneous and false impressions and theories tend toward girding up the loins of our minds . When a desire for the truth is slackened room is given for wild impulses and erroneous ideas to disrupt the soberness of our minds . When this is true we talk as a drunken man . Our conversation is rambling , inconsistent , and without purpose .

As we are now faced with the many wiles of the devil in this evil day , may we be given to gird up the loins of our minds with pure knowledge sufficient to discern between the true and the false . We may readily accept rumors as truths without an investigation in periods of relaxation , when truth is slackened . We may take dangling expressions as true without proof when the truth is not held as sacred and precious to us . We may tolerate hypocritical actions when we have little regard for sincerity . We may be careless concerning our vows and promises when the loins of our minds are not girded . We may be content with the customs and practices of our people without research , if we be at ease in Zion . We may be satisfied with what our preachers tell us without searching the scriptures to find whether or not they tell us the truth . We may be content with just knowing with whom we affiliate to such extent that we give no attention to WHY we are not in affiliation with certain people . These aforestated conditions make us unfit to stand as good soldiers .

Paul told Timothy to “ Study to shew thyself approved unto God , a workman that needeth not to be ashamed , rightly dividing the word of

truth . (1 Tim . 2:15) The truth must be rightly divided in order that the different phases of the truth may fall into their proper places . We want to be certain that all things for which we earnestly contend are consistent and in harmony with each other and with the scriptures . We desire to be able to stand in the strength of our Lord and in the power of His might , when the Captain of our salvation so orders . We want to be acquainted with all the rules of honorable warfare when we engage in this spiritual fight . It is sometimes painful to have to part with pet theories , but this is necessary in our basic training . Our ignorance must be exposed in girding up the loins of our minds . This girding will so acquaint us with the fundamentals of the doctrine of Christ as our Saviour , that we will know better what we believe and why we believe it . It will better enable us to classify the experiences and beliefs common to all the Household of Faith , and those peculiar to only some . You have heard it said among our people about several customs and practices : “ We do not make this a test of fellowship . ” When you are asked , “ Why , ” what do you say ? Is it reasonable to answer , “ We just do not . ” I think that those who question us should , for their information , be answered more fully . What are the essentials of belief and practices upon which a test of fellowship should be based ? What are the essentials and non-essentials in our belief and practice ? Is it true when people say , “ There is not much difference between us ? ” Do we believe that the “ Scriptures are the only rules of faith and practice ? ” If we are not acquainted with the scriptures , are we acquainted with the

rules? If we do not know the rules, are we ready to take our stand as a good soldier? May God impress upon us the necessity of "Girding up the loins of our mind," that we may be able to give the right and proper answer to those who inquire of us! May we be given to much reading, meditation and prayer!

The second piece of the armour is the Breast-plate of Righteousness. We may know the rules of honorable warfare to such extent that we may appear as a good soldier, but if we do not have on the proper breastplate we will fall when the test comes. We may be so well informed in true theology that we put on an excellent appearance, yet our hearts be far from it. The truth may be in our minds, yet be void of pure righteousness in our hearts. As Christ is our only pure Truth, He is our only pure righteousness. We desire to be right as well as truthful.

We read in Exodus 28th chapter that the high priest wore a breastplate of judgment with the names of the children of Israel inscribed thereon. Jesus is our High Priest. He wore the breastplate of judgment that we might wear the breastplate of righteousness. As our names are inscribed on His breastplate, so is His righteousness imputed unto us. This breastplate was to be fastened with two rings of pure gold. Two things must be before this breastplate can be properly attached to our armour. 1st — Christ's righteousness must be imputed to us. 2nd, His righteousness must be implanted in our hearts. This breastplate was purchased by Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost applies it or bestows it on us. If we have on this breastplate, it shines so

brightly that all our righteousness appears as filthy rags. As the whole armour is called the "Armour of light" in Romans 13:12, the breastplate of righteousness shines radiantly. It proceeds from the Father of Light. It is purchased by the Light of the world for the children of Light. If your armour is graced with this breastplate you can detect the counterfeit. You will know that the theory of Christ's works mingled with creature works and merits, is not right. Right will prevail and finally triumph over the works of unrighteousness. This breastplate will stand the fiery trials and severe persecutions without its beauty being marred. May we be given to understand what is right as well as what is true!

The third piece of this armour protects our feet. Our feet are to be "Shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace." We walk with our feet. Do we tread in the ways of destruction and misery? Are our feet swift to shed blood? Do we walk in a way that seems right unto man, yet the end of that way is the way of death? Do we waver in a broad way instead of the narrow way? The pathway of holiness is the pathway of peace. God says through Isaiah 55:7, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, 'Thy God reigneth!'" We read in Romans 10:15, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." We walk slowly and steadily together when we are so shod. The tidings we bring are good. We publish things that bring

peace . We do not step hastily for fear of causing confusion . The way must be prepared , and we must be prepared , to walk in it before it is safe to venture . When God prepares the way and prepares us to walk in it , we are thoroughly convinced that this action will tend toward lasting peace .

We stand upon our feet . If our feet be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace we stand on a firm foundation . Jesus is the chief cornerstone of this foundation . If we be on this foundation it shall ever hold us up . It will never become weak . It is the foundation of the prophets and apostles . How firm is that foundation ! No man has ever laid a foundation so stable and firm . Those who stand on that foundation cry , “ Our God reigneth . ” When we are fully convinced that our God supremely reigns , we are prepared with the gospel of peace that the world knows nothing about , and can never suppress .

Peace in Zion is the good soldier’s objective . He does not wish to sacrifice peace in order that he may win personal plagues for outstanding service . A good soldier will not surrender any of his comrades to the enemy in order that he may receive personal honors conferred by the enemy . A good soldier will not retreat from the foundation principles and forsake them in order to please the enemy . A good soldier stands firm when the Captain , Jesus Christ , so orders . When the Captain says , “ March , ” we press on toward the mark of victory .

The Shield of Faith is the fourth piece of this armour . It is impossible to please God without it . Faith shields us from the fiery darts of Satan . It protects us from the persecutions of

the world . It causes us to bravely face the enemy without fear of being subdued . Faith that God controls the actions of all his creatures and miraculously and wonderfully work them together for our good , is so great a shield that we do not fear what man can do against us . It is that wonderful gift that encourages us to press on regardless of seeming difficulties . Faith in the power of His might shields us from the fear of the power of Satan and all his allies . The faith that our Captain has gone before us and subdued such great enemies as our sins and eternal death for us , shields us from their terrible consequences . The faith that this same Captain imputes unto us His strength to fight our warfare here , shields us from the fear of our own weakness . Faith in the power of the Holy Spirit calling , sanctifying , and preserving all His people unto Eternal Life , shields us from the fear that any of the elect of God will finally fall away . What a durable shield that so resists the fiery darts of Satan that all of the Lord’s people shall finally triumph without the loss of any of the blessings of the Spirit stored in Christ for them from the foundation of the world !

The Helmet of Salvation is the fifth piece of this godly armour . Eternal salvation and the hope of it are the saint’s helmet . Both of these render saints bold and courageous in their spiritual warfare . “ But let us who are of the day , be sober , putting on the breastplate of faith and love ; and for an helmet , the hope of salvation . ” (1st Thess . 5:8) The helmet is a cap to protect the head of a warrior . It is the uppermost piece of the armour . Salvation is uppermost and the highest goal to which we hope to experi-

ence fully in Heaven. We are crowned with the helmet of salvation and do not fear the vengeance of God falling upon us as it fell upon Christ when He obtained our salvation for us. Salvation through the merits of Christ, and the hope of it being upon our head, shields us not only from the judgments and vengeance of God, but also points us out to Him as worthy of His blessings through the merits of His Son. This hope saves us from fainting and causes us to lift our heads high. This hope awakens us from sleep and makes us stand erect and face the enemy. This helmet of salvation makes us to realize that the enemy can never take our head. Christ is our Head. He is our helmet. He can never be destroyed. This helmet preserves unto Eternal Salvation. Natural bodies may be destroyed as natural helmets may be pierced so that the head of the body may die with the body. As certain as Jesus, the Head, lives, just that certain will His spiritual body, which is the church, survive unto eternal life. The helmet of salvation is our crown of glory.

The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is the sixth piece of this complete armour. Jesus is the Word of God, according to the first chapter of Saint John. This Word cuts to the heart of those who oppose Him, and pricks in the heart of His people. God's Word was not only clothed with flesh and dwelt among us in Jesus Christ, but also spoke this world into existence. This Word was spoken through the inspired writers of both the old and new testaments and becomes our only rule of faith and practice. This Word is indeed a sword wielded by the Spirit of God. It returns

not unto Him void, but accomplishes that which He pleases and prospers where unto He sends it. (See Isaiah 55:11) .

This Sword divides the spiritual from the carnal. It separates the works of man from the works of God. It separates the precious from the vile. "The Word of God is QUICK, and POWERFUL, and SHARPER than any TWO-EDGED sword, PIERCING even to the DIVIDING asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a DISCERNER of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12) It is wielded promptly enough to keep the enemies from getting such strong hold as to infringe upon our rights. It is powerful enough to subdue all enemies and make a thorough work. It is sharp enough to pierce the stony heart. With this sword we can discern to the minutest extent any evil intents and so separate them from the good intents that no lasting damage will be done. This sword is two-edged. The psalmist prayed, "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand: to execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishments upon the people. (Psalms 149:6-7) One edge is for vengeance upon the heathen and the other edge is for the chastening of His people. One edge will cut off our pride and trust in self, and the other edge will bring to nought the evil intentions of the enemy. One edge will give us a trimming and the other will slay those who oppose us. When we are given to wisely wield this sword truth will prevail, and we will through the Spirit and Word of God overcome all of our enemies. One edge will eradicate the evil that is within and so subdue it until we will finally be victorious. The other

edge will bring to destruction those evils without so that they can never be victorious in overcoming us .

I trust the reader will be blessed to glean some inspiring and encouraging thoughts as you meditate upon this article . Many thoughts that were mine to enjoy while writing this , I was unable to express herein . May we be enabled to put on the whole armour of God in this evil day and be proven as good soldiers , so that in the end of our journey here we may say as Paul , " For 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 Timothy 4:6-8 4:6-8) .

Elder E . J . Lambert

MEETINGS

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

The one hundred forty-seventh session of the Staunton River Association will convene with the Church at Canaan on July 8, 9, 10th, which is the second weekend .

The Church is located in Pittsylvania County , west of Danville , Virginia , on State Road 844 . From Danville , follow Highway 41 about 12 miles and turn left at Frances Store . The Church is located about 3 miles on the right from this store . Watch for signs to direct you from Highway 41 .

Harvey Wood
Association Clerk
Elder J . R . Williams
Moderator

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR MARCH 1988

- John S . Collie , NC 2.00
- Mrs . Bennie Clifton , VA 2.00
- Mrs . Fannie D . Wiles , VA ... 10.00
- Dan Anders AL .
- In loving memory
- Mrs . W . D . Griffin 10.00
- Mrs . Carl L . Bryant , LA 2.00
- Mrs . J . D . Neely , AR 2.00
- Mrs . W . H . Spires , VA 2.00
- Eld . J . T . Austin , PA 2.00
- L . W . Nichols , VA 2.00
- Mrs . Verta Hanning , WV 10.00
- Mrs . Mattie Underwood , VA ... 10.00
- Alpha & Mary Sears , OH 2.00
- Mrs . Wilma Sasser , AL 5.00
- Mrs . Elizabeth Barnes , OR 5.00
- O . P . Murphy , TX .
- In mem . Eld . Joe Hamrick ... 100.00
- Charles M . Coates , VA 7.00
- Mrs . D . W . Jones , VA 2.00
- W . P . Potter , VA 2.00
- Richard Stegall , VA 2.00
- Mrs . Grace Manly , FL 5.00
- Mrs . Opal E . Hiatt , VA 2.00
- Mrs . Pearl A . Law , VA 5.00
- Mrs . Flora B . Berry , NC 2.00
- Mrs . Betty H . Lovitte , NC 2.00
- Harvey Blalock , NC 10.00
- J . E . Potter , NC 2.00

PROVERBS 3 : 13 .

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

 OBITUARIES

TILLMAN KYLE DALTON

Tillman Kyle Dalton departed this life November 30, 1987, at the age of 84 years. He leaves to mourn him two sons, Kyle Dalton, Gary Dalton and four daughters, Mrs. Rebecca Hawks, and Mrs. Howard (Rachel) Stump, Mrs. J.R. (Elizabeth) Chisom, and Mrs. Martha Wright. Also there are eighteen grandchildren, and twenty-one great-grandchildren. Also, a dear friend, Mrs. Dorothy Worley.

He was married to Lelia Beck on March 10, 1923 and she preceded him in death on July 2, 1974.

Brother Dalton joined the Roanoke Church sometime in the 1930's and was ordained to the office of deacon on January 31, 1942. Later he moved his membership to Weatherford Church near Gretna, Virginia

In his declining years, he moved his membership to Laurel Ridge Church near Cave Spring. Brother Dalton served as a deacon of the churches where his membership was and was faithful to the end. He was also a good song leader. He loved the little D.H. Goble song book, and there was but few songs in that book that he could not sing. He loved to sing and I would sing with him. It seems I can almost hear him now.

He had trouble with his eyes the last few years of his life, and some of the time he couldn't see to read the hymn book. I loved Brother Dalton and I believe he loved me. I could go to him and ask him something and could expect an honest answer.

The last few days of his life he was weak and short of breath and he desired and I believe prayed to the Lord to take him and the Lord granted that request.

His funeral was conducted December 3, 1987, at the Weatherford Church by his pastor, the writer, and assisted by Elder H.W. Wray at the request of Brother Dalton. He was laid to rest in the church cemetery beside his wife, also where he himself had worked so hard to keep the grass mowed and the regular upkeep of the cemetery of which he was instrumental in designing.

Written by one that loved him and by the request of the family,

Leonard J. Brammer

REUBEN ROY DAVIS

Brother Reuben Roy Davis of route 2 Axton, Va. was born Oct. 1, 1905 to the late Rollin Davis and Mary Jane Clark Davis. He died Dec. 9, 1987 at Memorial Hospital in Martinsville, Va. He was a retired farmer had been treasurer of the Blue Ridge Soil Conservation District and was chairman of the board of Assessors of Henry County, Va.

Surviving is his wife Mary Hurd Davis of the home, daughters Mrs. James G. (Shirley) Burchell of Eden, N.C., Mrs. Raleigh J. "Polly" Robertson of Axton, Va. and Mrs. Robert "Cynthia" Chivolonia of Washington, D.C. Sons are W. Filmore Davis of Axton, Va. and Allen Clark Davis of Richmond, Va. Nine

grandchildren , a brother William Tensley Davis of Axton , Va . , a sister Mrs. R.C. Thompson of Danville, Va. He joined Dan River Church August 24 , 1958 , was baptized Sept . 27 , 1958 . His funeral was conducted by Elder Wallace Smith. He was buried in the family cemetery . He was a faithful member , generous to the church — always willing to help in anything as long as he was able .

A man of strong convictions he believed in Salvation by Grace , and that God worketh all things and without him you can do nothing . He believed in the promises of God as John 14:23 Jesus said if a man love me , he will keep my words : and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him . Hebrew 13:2 He has said I will never leave nor forsake thee . To these promises our brother has said yea and amen . He also believed in Romans 8:2 That the law of life in Christ Jesus has made his soul free from the law of sin and death , and that he would sleep in the paradise of God and awake on the Resurrection morning to cry Abba father . It has been my privilege to visit his home . He loved to talk on the Scriptures and was always willing to give a reason for his Hope .

We at Dan River will miss his presence at our meeting . Unto Sister Mary and family May God Bless You and Keep You in the way .

Written by order of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church while in conference .

Elder Kenneth Key , Moderator
Boyd Minter , Clerk

ELDER WILLIAM HOLLAND

Dear Lord , I pray you will bless me to write the obituary of our dear beloved Pastor of Republican Church .

Elder William Marvin Holland , born July 2 , 1914 , died December 4 , 1987 . His funeral was conducted by Elder W . Lane Carter . We all loved him so dearly . He was so kind and loving , our hearts ache at our loss , but we feel it is his gain .

He preached the doctrine so plain it seemed , indeed , he was a mouth piece for our Lord . Never afraid to say what the Scriptures teach because he trusted in God Our Savior .

He was married to Nellie Bussy Holland , who is a loving lady and was so good to Brother William . They had four children . Two girls and two boys , seven grandchildren , one granddaughter-in-law , one grandson-in-law , two daughters-in-law , two sons-in-law , four sisters and five brothers .

He joined Republican Church , January 16 , 1949 , and served there until his death .

He was ordained August 18 , 1956 .

He also served Pigg River Church , Basham Church , and Little Creek Church .

The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away , Blessed be His Holy Name . We hope to meet again on the other side with all Gods Children , where there will be no more sad farewells .

We thank our God for so great a gift as Brother William was , and we feel sure he is resting in perfect peace ' til Jesus calls . Then all His Saints will arise in a moment , be changed like His Glorious Body never to know no

HEBREWS 11 : 1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen .

more sorrow or pain , but be with our Lord forever and forever .

Written by one who loved him dearly ,

A little sister ,
Lessie V . Guilliams

THOMAS EVAN LANDERS

Brother Thomas Evan Landers was born in Bradley County , Arkansas , on December 27 , 1907 and after spending the last two years of his life in the Pine Lodge Nursing Home at Warren , he passed from this life on December 10 , 1987 making his stay here nearly 80 years . Brother Evan married Helen Nettie Ross on August 27 , 1938 and they had a son Charles Thomas Landers of Jacksonville , Arkansas and a daughter Shirley Jane (Landers) Jackson of North Little Rock . Brother Evan had two brothers living : Leland of Little Rock and Doyle of Kingsland ; also three grandsons and one granddaughter .

Brother Landers and his wife Helen joined Antioch Primitive Baptist Church at Warren on October 30 , 1966 and were baptized by the late Elder John L. Sander. Brother Evan's father, Jefferson Davis Landers, was a member of Antioch Church at his death and his mother was Lovella McCone . He was the grandson of Elder Charles Bussey and Mary Catherine (Evans) Landers . This Elder was born in Georgia on December 26 , 1817 and joined the Primitive Baptist Church in 1834 and was ordained shortly thereafter . He moved to near Warren in 1840 and was a school teacher . He studied and became a medical doctor . Also , several

churches were organized in the 1840 's in Arkansas as well as the Ouachita Association which was organized in November 1848 and Elder Landers was the first moderator (was moderator until 1855). Around 1890 the Ouachita Association was divided into the North and South Ouachita Association because of the size and area . The South Ouachita Association held its Ninety-seventh Annual Session in September 1987 . Brother Landers was a firm believer in salvation by the Grace of God and God 's determinate council will stand . God has shown unusual mercy to this Landers family . Brother Evan 's only son is also a believer in a sovereign God and His free grace salvation . In memory of Brother Landers , let us remember the words of David in Psalms 116:15 " Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints ."

Funeral service was conducted by the writer and Elder Paul Daniel at the Frazer 's Funeral Home in Warren on December 12 , 1987 and the body was laid to rest in the Oakland Cemetery in Warren .

Written at the family request ,
Gerald D . Shipman

SISTER LILLIAN SMITH

Once again , seemingly all too often for our natural minds , God , in His infinite wisdom , has called home one of His little ones . Having known her over the years , I am honored and consider it a privilege to have been asked to pen a few lines in memory of this precious sister .

Lillian Dorothy Ore Morrison

Smith was born June 30 , 1907 in Patrick County (Stuart) , Virginia to the late Jim and Anna Bryant Ore . On December 19 , 1923 , she married Homer Moier Morrison , who preceded her in death by many years . To this union were born three sons — Ralph Moier and Millard Wallace of Eden , North Carolina , and James Revell of Greensboro , North Carolina . There are also seven grandchildren (four girls and three boys) who survive .

On July 4 , 1951 , Sister Lillian married James Samuel Smith . Brother Sam , a dear member at Dan River survives also to mourn her passing .

Sister Smith joined Dan River Primitive Baptist Church in 1938 and was baptized by her pastor , Elder D . V . Spangler .

She enjoyed her church meetings and the members and friends as much as anyone I have ever known . She had a beautiful countenance and clearly loved the doctrine of salvation by grace . Her favorite hymns were “ Amazing Grace , ” and “ There Is A House Not Made With Hands . ” I am convinced that she loved the God she knew and knew the God she loved .

Sister Lillian did not question her fatal illness nor did she complain about her condition . Rather , she seemed to sense that her time on Earth was growing short and longed to go home to her Lord . In visiting her at home shortly before her death , she could still smile and say that everything was all right .

Sister Lillian died at her home on November 2 , 1987 . Her funeral was conducted at Dan River by her pastor , Elder Kenneth Key and Elder Haywood Wray with burial following in the church cemetery .

We shall all miss this precious sister but feel that she has gone home to her Lord . Sympathy is extended to the dear family with a sincere hope that they may be made reconciled to the will of the Father .

It is requested that a copy of this obituary be made available to the Signs of the Times and that a copy be given to the family .

Written at the request of the church in conference Saturday night , February 27 , 1988 .

One who loved her ,
Bob R . Collie

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION ?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 6 / 88
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE .

PSALM 118:14 .

*The Lord is
my strength and
song , and is be-
come my salva-
tion .*

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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EDITORIAL

THE DELIVERANCE OF ISAAC AND HIS BRETHREN Genesis 22:14



Elder W.D. Griffin

The choice of His people in Christ did not save them. By man came sin, and sin has passed upon all men for all have sinned. The world has been laying the charge at our feet that we believed that God saved His children before the foundation of the world. We have not advocated any such doctrine. We have said, and we do say,

that God chose His people in Christ unto salvation. We do say that every chosen vessel was safe before the world was, but them being safe and them being saved are two things that are different. God having chosen them in Christ unto salvation was His guarantee that Christ would come as their sin bearer. They had an eternal standing in Him, the Lamb of God having stood as slain from the beginning.

This is one of the most beautiful features of the Covenant of grace. Jesus Christ was assigned to suffer and bleed and die for every heir of promise. But the pledge of God the Father to that end was clinched by an oath that God made that Christ was standing in a pledge owned by both Father and Son that the Son was not only pledged by His Father to that end, but that the end in view had been vouched for by the Son agreeing to stand in the council hall of His Father to guarantee payment, and the beauty and the surety of payment being made, the Father swore to that binding agreement. The promise and the word of God was forever settled in heaven to that end. (Psalm. 119:89)

There was a time for that to be made manifest. It was at the right time, the full time, but why be so set about the time? Because we are a people that believes that God does things in the fullness of time. The reason that we desire to hew to the line, is because of God's work in begetting His children. God did not send forth His Son until the fullness of time had come. When it had come, then He sent Him forth, made of a woman, made under the law. That all was in the salvation of His chosen people.

The time came in the life of Abraham and Isaac for God to tempt (prove) Abraham . In talking and writing of these lovely things so often a spy is watching for the careless use of a word so that they might have something with which to cast reflections on the bright banner of love . Let us step aside for a moment to say that our God does not tempt any man with evil neither is He tempted with it . But I am glad that the Lord tries every vessel in His kingdom as to the kind that it is , and this trial is extended to every elect vessel of mercy . Peter addressed his lovely letters to the elect children of God this letter so filled with comforting and instructive things and I am glad I know , and I hope that I am thankful to the Giver of every good gift to the children of men . Peter tells us , Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing had happened to you . This safe and sound instruction was addressed to every one of them , and if we meet up with people that know so little about this trial that they show clearly that the trial does not mean anything to them , it may seem sad that the Lord has seen fit to leave the trial out of their lives , we will , as blessed with the guidance of His leadership , be thankful to Him . It is a happy privilege and a great honor for our God that Isaac and His father , Abraham , were both tried , along with the whole family of God , in the fiery furnace .

The further we move into the works of God in dealing with Father Abraham in the faith of God 's elect , the more precious it becomes . Isaac was a promised seed or heir . The doubts and fears , the tossings to and from , were sore indeed . Likewise

Abraham faced insurmountable odds as far as humanity overcoming them , but He that first appeared to him never for a moment , in either case , left the issue up to them . Isn't that a marvelous doctrine ? Isn't it beyond the comprehension of dull mortality that from the morning of creation until the day in which Jesus Christ arose from the grave that there was not any anxiety , and doubt , not any casting about for a safer or a better way , but that God 's purpose was declared before hand and that there was not any deviation from that declared purpose . Truly , the grace taught apostle was right when he left it on record for the comfort of the brethren at Galatia , and of us , as we humbly hope , of our day that as Isaac was , are the children of God 's eternal purpose .

First , let us prove by ourselves whether we believe in God as per our profession . How many of the parents that read these lines that would have begin preparations to sacrifice their only son as Abraham did ? Have you known of anybody making a sacrifice like that ? Could you do it ? Frankly , I could not as matters stand today . However , if any of us were put in a place like unto this that Abraham was put in , I can tell you what we would do . We would begin to make ready our only son for the sacrifice . That is what we would have done , had we been delivered into the same surrounding conditions . That is what God given faith will produce in His people (Read Hebrews II) .

Let all nature stand still on such a scene . Let every work mongering eye be prevented from a sight or a sound of what is going on . The Lord is here . Grace and mercy and justice is all

meeting in the sacred scene before us. The skeptic will say that Abraham was a hypocrite ; that he misled by innuendos his only son . That is a falsehood . Abraham did not mislead his son and heir . He was telling the truth . Faith was active in him ; faith was in command of his mind . Abraham believed God (who can believe without faith?) , and there is not a time in the offering up of Isaac that Abraham did not believe that God would raise up his son Isaac . This is not new it is not false ; it is not misleading . Peter believed in the resurrection of David although it had been a long time since he had been buried . David himself believed that he would go to his son . Job believed in the future resurrection of the body . Abraham , is , at the present wonderful moment of which we are treating , a believer in the resurrection of his son , Isaac .

There has never been a procession with any more pathetic setting unless it was when they were moving towards the place of crucifixion of the Saviour . God had commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son . Here is a spectacular sight . Come near poor sinner and look in astonishment on the scene . The sacrifice is there . The wood for burning the sacrifice . The fire is there for the consumation of the sacrifice . The knife for slaying the offering is there . The one to perform the task is there . The skeptic says , You would tell us that Abraham believes God as he is moved by the circumstances to the sacrifice place . I certainly do tell you that . The writer of Hebrews tells us that Abraham offered Isaac by faith . You do not believe that ? Well be gone with you . The Bible tells us that He believed God and evidently it was true belief

because God counted it for righteousness .

The entire little assembly bears the marks of saints . All of them are resigned to the fact that God is the potter and that they are the clay . Oh , that the Lord would grant unto us grace to be submissive to our lot as was Isaac . At times we question the wisdom of our Father . What poor mortals that we are , that we are so ready to question His molding of us into vessels that His wisdom would dictate . At first Isaac questioned his father about the lack of an offering . Blind unbelief is sure to err , and at times like that , with us it is , Why are you going to the place of sacrifice with no offering ? But Faith answers , My son , God will provide Himself an offering . Let us draw near and let us watch the proceedings and how that the participants are dealt with in the glorious episode of this our deliverance along with Isaac . When Abraham assures the lad that God will provide Himself an offering , it satisfies him . However , when they continue , and still no offering , still no lamb there is no further complaint . Faith is abounding . Grace is breaking asunder and driving the dark clouds away . When they get to the place of sacrifice each object of the sacrifice is put in order . The wood is placed on the promised child . The hope of Abraham and Sarah , the hope of Isaac himself , and untold millions is , seemingly about to be dashed . But not a word from Isaac ; not a groan from the old father whose hopes are all in the lad , and not a word from the lad himself .

O precious readers , what a boon is the faith of God 's elect children . What a stronghold it is when the

power of God can clear the darkening and lengthening shadows and give poor troubled sinners rest and hope . The power that caused the Israelites to be still and wait at the Red Sea and the quietness and the submissive waiting for living water as Moses was ready to strike the Rock made itself known again in this momentous moment and everyone was quiet and submissive to the will of the Potter .

The hour is at hand . Destiny is about to strike . The father draws his hand to take blood , to take life . In an instant , but in plenty of time a Voice stills the drawn hand . It doesn't come from a single one of those that are going to lose everything by this sacrifice . It came from above . Come close dear brethren and sisters . It came from above . It came from the same place that the instructions to another tormented soul , to wit , Joseph . His hand was staid . It came from the same living source when a Voice from heaven staid the barbarous march of Saul of Tarsus . It came from the same country the two men in white came from that said , Why stand ye here gazing into heaven ? This same Jesus that ye see go away will , in like manner come again . And the witnesses from heaven are abounding around us as the promised son and child is delivered . Be assured dear wayworn pilgrims that every good and perfect gift comes from above . This gift from above , which certainly was from God , saved the day for all of Abraham 's hosts of heirs , and for all of the dear brethren who were children of promise from that day until now .

We , if we are included in the text , have received the same deliverance that Isaac received . The only thing

that saved him was the fact that he was a promised child . That has saved God 's children evermore , for God cannot lie . What a joy it is , yea , dear beleaguered soul surrounded by foes from without and within , that God cannot lie . Dry your weeping eyes , dear saint . Give no heed to tempting malicious voices that would spread gloom and desolation in the camp of Israel . God is on the side of Israel . He did not decide because of an emergency arising , but He swore His promise to Abraham , and He cannot lie . It is acknowledged by every son of Adam (that is not a promised heir) that some of every order in the world will be lost . That isn't the concern nor the business of Israel's God . He has promised to save His children and He does not , nor He cannot lie .

If you are beset by insurmountable difficulties , if you have family problems , anxieties , doubts and fears assail you , lift up your tear stained eyes on high . God is in His heaven and this ungodly world is in obeisance to Him . By Him planets roll and by Him worlds spring into existence , and by Him are spoken out . And by Him His Son was made of a woman , made lower than the heavens , made in the form of a servant , made under the entanglements of the intricate law of Moses , caught in the nick of time , at the right time , in the right place to assure the salvation and complete deliverance of Isaac and every little brother and sister .

When it goes well with you remember me to the King .

Elder W . D . Griffin

CORRESPONDENCE

Roanoke , Virginia 24015
December 5 , 1985

Elder and Mrs . Leonard J . Brammer
Martinsville , Virginia 24112

Dear Brother and Sister Brammer ,

I need to talk to you both , but it has not been possible . I may not be blessed to put it in writing about the dream I had , but I must try , the Lord willing .

You remember , Brother Brammer , I told you I needed to tell you why I felt I knew that someday you would be our pastor at Roanoke Church .

Sometime ago before Elder Turner became ill with leukemia , I had a dream . I was sitting in Roanoke Church and it was just as we were waiting for the meeting to begin . I could see the brethren and sisters in their usual seats . Then I saw Elder Turner and you come down the church aisle , walking side by side , you on Elder Turner's right . You both walked up on the stand and as you both got to the level of the pulpit , a white cloud that cannot be described it was so beautiful , covered Elder Turner . It was white and it sparkled as dew on the morning grass when the sun was shining on it . It seemed but a minute or two , then the cloud disappeared and Elder Turner was no longer there . Then you walked to the pulpit and started speaking . Your text " I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills , from whence cometh my help ." As you spoke , I looked at the bottom of the pulpit around the table and there was

a row of little lambs all standing in a half circle , their little heads all looking up at you as you spoke . They all was just the same size and all as quiet as could be . I woke up .

In my heart and soul I knew that one day you would stand in Roanoke Church pulpit as our pastor . I did not see a little goat in with those lambs , for if I had , then I would have known that the goat was me .

About twenty-eight years ago , I was burdened to move my membership from Head of the River Church to Roanoke Church , and I had tried to pray to be shown what to do . In the summer of 1957 I dreamed that I was at Roanoke Church and Elder Turner was in the pulpit preaching , " I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills , from whence cometh my help ." In the back of the pulpit was a wave of crystal clear water flowing down , and around the front of the pulpit was a row of little lambs , all listening quietly to the gospel . I brought my letter to Roanoke Church in September , 1957 .

As you were unanimously received the first Saturday in October (1985) as our pastor , I wanted so badly to tell the church about my dream . But I know I could not .

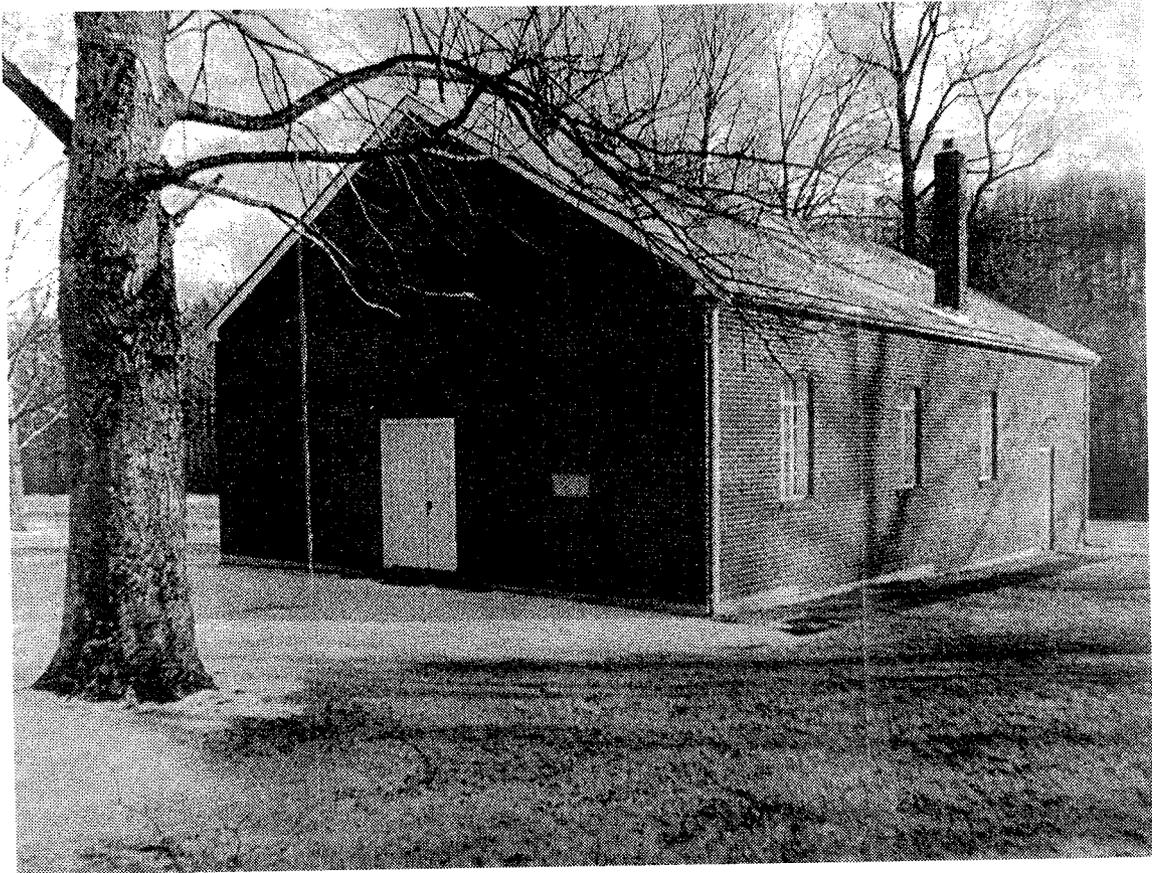
Dear ones , I love both of you and pray the Lord will give us many years in sweet fellowship and that He will ever keep me at brethren and sisters' feet .

Unworthy me ,
Rlee B . Houchins
Roanoke , Virginia

PSALM 119 : 105

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet ,
and a light unto my path .*

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



PIGG RIVER PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Pigg River Primitive Baptist Church was organized in 1773 present meeting house built in 1954 on Virginia 751 near Callaway, Va.

Meeting on 4th Sunday and Saturday before at 11:00 a.m. Communion meeting on 4th Sunday in July.

W. P. Lane Carter present pastor

HISTORY OF PIGG RIVER CHURCH

This church is situated in what is now Franklin County, Virginia, but at the time of its organization was Henry Co; and is on the south branch of the Pigg River, near the Blue Ridge mountains.

According to Semple's History it

was established by Elder Randolph Hall in 1773, and tradition puts this meeting at a private home, but the record has been lost. The record is complete from 1796 to the present. The first record in the old book is as follows:

“Met according to appointment on the 4th Friday in August, 1796. The

following brethren were requested by the church to attend on the ordination of our beloved Brother Moses Reutfro, John Trout, John Larence, Henry Carter, Robert Simpkins, William Howard, Thomas Goodson, Robert Jones and Joseph Jones.

Elder Larence, Mod. "

Then this note follows :

" The above brethren composed a presbytery for the purpose of the ordination of the said Brother Reutfro, which was done, and the brethren were then dismissed in order."

From evidence this man was ordained an Elder and from the record, he asked to be dismissed from the church the next year, 1797. The last named in the above presbytery Joseph Jones, was a deacon of the church.

The first delegates sent to the Strawberry Association was done at the September meeting, 1797. David Barton and Joseph Jones were sent.

At their meeting the 4th Saturday in April, 1797, they returned an arm that had been extended to Remnet fag, and was excepted by the church in the year 1805. The church granted liberty to James Sewel to improve his gift in the bounds of Elder William Howard's church, then in 1806 he was dismissed from the church.

In conference the 4th Saturday in July, 1807 the church asked Elder Joseph Pedigo to serve them as pastor, and he accepted. In this request it was stated that they had been without a regular pastor some time. This evidently was an able servant and served this church until his death which was Dec. 1, 1837. He was also the first Moderator of Pigg River Association, which was organized at Little Creek Church, the second Saturday

in August, 1825.

The first deacons that were ordained was on Friday before the 4th Saturday in June, 1809, were Bros. Peter Young and David Lemon, and the names of the Presbytery were not recorded, but as stated before, Joseph Jones was a deacon. The next deacons ordained were James Welsh and Capselton Wade, at their August meeting, 1821; Elders Moses Greer, John S. Lee, Wilson Turner and Joseph Pedigo, made up the Presbytery. Then John Jones was ordained deacon the 4th Saturday in July, 1829; then the 4th Saturday in May 1833, Brother Peytan Ellison was ordained; the Presbytery was not named. Then at their meeting 4th Saturday in July 1853, the Presbytery consisting of Elder G. W. Kelly and Arnold Walker, was called and met at the October meeting and ordained John Trout as deacon; then A. B. Cannaday was ordained as deacon 4th Saturday in October 1867 by Elders John R. Martin, G. W. Kelly and John C. Hall; then Benjamin Cooper was received by letter, (church not stated) in the year 1858, who was a deacon, also Clerk till his death. J. P. Hollandsworth and John C. Roberson was ordained deacons at the July meeting, 1896, the names of the Presbytery was not recorded. Then at the May meeting, 1919 Brother Lee Willis and S. M. Prilliman was ordained as deacons, with Elder David Sumner and T. F. West as a Presbytery, and it can be said of Deacon Lee Willis, who could not read or write, that no church at any age has had a deacon who excelled him in manifesting a love for his church. There was nothing that he could do too much for him. Then at the October meeting,

1930 S .G . Akers was ordained as deacon by Elders J .E . Burgess , E .L . Blankenship and George F . Dyer as Presbytery . This completes the deacons so far as the record shows , and Deacon S .M . Prilliman and S .G . Akers are living , and are Godfearing , faithful deacons , and do not lord over God 's heritage .

As recorded before , Elder Joseph Pedigo was chosen Pastor July 1807 ; Brother George W . Kelley united by letter (church not stated) at the Sept . meeting 1819 , and was licensed to exercise by his church , and a presbytery consisting of Joseph Pedigo and Moses Greer ordained him the 4th Saturday in September , 1833 . Elder Joseph Pedigo died Dec . 1 , 1837 . Then Elder George W . Kelley was chosen Pastor at the July meeting , 1838 . This Elder continued to serve the church till the 4th Saturday in September , 1862 . He resigned as Pastor and the church requested Elder John C . Hall to serve them , and he agreed (Elder George W . Kelley died Nov . 17 , 1878) . Elder John C . Hall served the church faithfully and well till age beset him ; then the Church selected Elder W .A . Via to assist him as pastor at the June meeting 1892 , and they both served till April 1901 when Elder J .C . Hall died . Then at the April meeting 1901 , Elder W .A . Via was chosen Pastor , and about this time there was a great revival in the church , and Elder Via baptized 20 at one time . This meek and useful servant died Feb . 1903 . Elder Peter Corn was chosen pastor and accepted at the March meeting 1903 . Elder Corn served this church in a very acceptable manner , and because of age and having to travel some distance , resigned the 4th Sat .

in Nov . 1909 , and the same meeting Elder David Sumner was made pastor , and this servant served that church faithfully and in meekness , often walking to this church even in winter , and he lived over 25 miles from the church . He would leave his home on Friday and return Monday , was a poor man , but the Lord provided for him , and he continued as Pastor till his death , Aug . 21 , 1934 . At the August meeting , 1934 , Elder J .P . Helms accepted the care of the church and has tried to serve them faithfully till the present time .

Above is set out in order the deacons and pastors of this church , but the Lord has blessed this church so wonderfully with faithful members , fathers and mothers in Israel . There has been and now are some of the outstanding mothers in Israel , who love and labor for the welfare of their church .

The first church building was of log construction , a small crude house with stone chimney and a fire place to furnish heat , later there was an addition built of logs and a gallery built for the benefit of the colored , as there were many colored members of this church from its earliest days to about 1890 when the colored members were granted letters in full fellowship to establish a church of their own and let the record show that many of these brethren and sisters manifested that they had been with Jesus and their lives was an adornment to their church . Slaves and masters worshipped the same Lord and partook of the emblems of Him together . About the year 1890 a frame house was built a few yards from the first church , which still is used by the church at present . The first deed to the property was lost

or destroyed with the court records of Henry County , but a deed was made by Robert Slone and wife , John Fralin and wife and Brother Richard Paine about 1890 to a plot of about 3 acres , including the cemetery . A few years ago Mrs . Julius Becket , whose ancestors were life-long members of the church , the Jones family gave one acre to the church grounds , and the same time the church purchased about one and one-half acres . So at this time the church has ample grounds , and well cared for .

This church as we trace them in the record , has been compelled to exclude members for various causes against good order , as they have maintained good order all these years but if there has ever been any disturbance because of the doctrine we have no record of it . When the mission movement caused a division in 1833 , there is no mention of this disturbance in their record . Pigg River Church was asked to send a committee to Black Water Church and the church sent their Pastor and deacons to advise and labor with this church , which joined the Mission side and changed its name to Fairmont , which today is New School , but not one member left the Pigg River Church in this disturbance . In the uproar of conditional-time-salvation , again there was no notice of trouble . The church seems to always have been sound in faith and of one mind in reference to doctrine .

The articles of faith of Pigg River Church and Pigg River Association , are the same , and their articles of faith or their rules of decorum has not been changed so far as the record shows . This always has been a body of predestinarians who maintained

gospel order and demanded an orderly walk of its members , and have always denied that predestination was the cause of sin , but that God causes good , and overrules evil . This church has never practiced foot-washing , but has never made it a test of fellowship , and members who favored foot-washing or were against it , have lived in peace and love .

This church from the record has been as low as 14 in membership to 102 , and at the present about 85 . It has had the services of some able gifts as pastor . Elder Pedigo was and able gift , and Elder John C. Hall was a great man , and said to have been as able a gift as any man of his day , stood extremely high in his county of Franklin , was Treasurer of his county for several years , Clerk of New River Association for year , a great defender of the doctrine of God our Savior . Elder Wiley Via was a wonderful pastor , a free grace preacher who preached with his feet and hands and was followed by my grandfather in the flesh , Peter Corn , who was as good a pastor as any man of his day , served Pigg River Association as Moderator thirty-four years , a good able God-sent servant . He was followed by Elder David Sumner , a meek and faithful servant of the church . All these men were sound in faith and faithful in the ministry , and in this day as we examine the record , we can say with feelings of assurance , that surely the Lord has planted us , and as we leave this record for posterity , let it be always kept in mind that we thank the Lord our Shepherd and King for all of it and pray for grace to keep us and those that may be brought in , throughout the ages to come .

This the 4th day of November ,
1947 .

Elder J . P . Helms
Vinton Va .

Elder J . P . Helms served faithfully
from 1934 until his death Sept . 29 ,
1965 . Elder William Holland served
protem until May 1967 . Chosen as
pastor He served until his death
December 4 , 1987 .

Present Deacons W . R . Bernard ,
John Plunkett and W . W . Abshire .

W . P . Lane Carter

ARTICLES

EXPERIENCE

Dear Sister Beadie ,

In answer to your repeated
requests , I'm writing what I
hope to be my experience of grace
and joining the church , trusting God
will guide me in the attempt . As you
know I was raised in a Missionary
home , always present at Sunday
School unless illness prevented and I
felt I was doing a good work . I was
often begged to join the church by my
friends , but deep down in my heart , I
felt one must have a change and
repent before joining any church . I
had never been made to feel sorry for
my sins , really I didn 't think I had
many . I was living in my self right-
eousness and I knew it not .

After I married I attended the
Primitive Baptist Church . Not that I
cared for the doctrine that was

preached there , but a part of my
husband 's people belonged there ,
his father being the later Elder
Charles Meads .

The first time I realized just how
helpless I was and how dependent I
was for support from one higher than
man , was on Sunday night , May 24 ,
1925 when I held my first born son in
my arms and saw him die and all I
could do was watch . Without God 's
mercy I could never have stood the
mournful days that followed . I felt I
could never overcome this great loss
of my only child . I often visited his
grave , then I'd cry , pray , and beg God
to have mercy upon me . Late one
evening standing along at the foot of
his grave looking at the sun which was
about to set , I said aloud " Oh , God ,
why did you ever take him from me ? "
The answer came sin . It seemed a
mountain rose between me and the
sun representing my sins . Yes , my
sins stood before me as a mountain in
all their original depth and coloring . I
cried , " There is no sorrow like my
sorrow ." I went mourning in the days
that followed for the God of Creation
had commanded the light to shine out
of darkness in my heart to give the
light of the knowledge of the glory of
God in the face of Jesus Christ . This
light pierced the most vital recess of
my soul . I saw the blackness of my
inward parts , what I was by nature ,
what I must be made by grace . My
self-righteousness became as filthy
rags and I cried , " Oh , Lord , Thou art
too holy to behold the blackness of
this sinful being whose soul is laid
bare before Thy righteous eyes . "

I knew justice would demand that
I perish in everlasting woe for these
sins . I prayed daily that God would
have mercy and save me from the pit

of eternal darkness that lay before me . Not wanting anyone to know of these things I told no one and the agony I suffered in the years that followed , those who have traveled through the wilderness of sin only know .

In March , 1937 I was taken very sick and went to Duke Hospital for an operation after which I was sent home to die , as I thought . As I stood in the hospital for the nurse to help dress me I was so weak the sweat ran down and stood on the floor . I realized there must be a renewed strength other than what I possessed for me to make a trip of about 200 miles alone . While the nurse talked I prayed a silent prayer unto a living God and He answered . I did not use the rolling chair the nurse had for me . I walked to the elevator and out to the waiting taxicab , made two changes of buses without help and reached home safely .

A few days later I was taken very sick , was unconscious part of the time . I was so weak I couldn't even raise a finger . I saw death's door and it seemed I must enter . I'd go down and feel I could not get another breath then two arms would appear out of this gray mist , bear me up and I'd breathe again . This is where I feel I passed from death unto life because I was made to love the brethren . I was shown the redeemed of God enclosed in a gold band with crowns upon their heads and staffs in their hands . They comforted me by reading the scripture , singing and speaking words of comfort . The Son of righteousness appeared with healing in His wings . I soared away in the spirit to worlds before unknown . Without any effort on my part I felt that upon

me there was bestowed a wonderful gift of light , life , love and happy immortality of the soul . Christ appeared to me the chieftest among ten thousand and altogether lovely . The Redeemer of sinners , He was my Saviour . He was the true and living God who in the beginning of time made the earth and all things therein . In the fullness of His wisdom He created a people on whom to bestow His bountiful light and love , made provision from before the foundation of the world to conform His righteous seed to the image of His Son , Jesus Christ .

When I was better Elder Ayers and some of the church members visited me . All I remember saying was " There is no other way but God 's way ." Elder Ayers talked beautifully and prayed that I might be healed of my affliction , that I bear witness to these great things I'd passed through .

In all my happiness my only thought was the church and when I was well I'd go tell them of the great things the Lord had done for me . Behold , I had forgotten the teachings of my childhood , my family and friends . No , I could never go to the church that would hurt my people . I must never let anyone know I desired above all things to join the Primitive Baptist . But a city set upon a hill cannot be hidden . People began to question me of my hope and desire to join the church of this faith . I lied , only to suffer for it later . Soon I began to doubt my experience as many had spoken of it as only delirium .

On Saturday before the fourth Sunday in July 1937 I was in church . They were singing hymn 142 and as they were singing , " Come ye to the waters , freely drink and quench your

thirst with Zion's sons and daughters," it seemed a light shone around me and the veil of doubt was lifted. I felt I must cry out, "Oh, little children of God, let me travel with you for the veil of doubt has been lifted. I've seen His marvelous light," but I kept silent for I could not join that church. From this time on I knew no rest for there was a continual warfare within, the Spirit against the flesh. The church was on my mind all the time, I could hear singing, praying and preaching. I'd toss to and fro at night trying to get rid of this burden. Often I'd be awakened it seemed by a bright light shining on my face. I prayed for relief and found it for awhile, for the spirit does not always strive with man. When the burden returned it was with greater force. In June 1938 I decided regardless of what my friends thought I'd join for I could but perish if I went. Just before meeting I had a dream concerning joining the church that distressed me. Not knowing the meaning of it I did not join that meeting but kept attending church trusting I might feast upon the crumbs that fell from the Master's table. My desire became so strong to join the church I'd not trust myself to sit among them in conference, fearing I might give way to my feelings. After each meeting I'd be nervous, upset, wanted to tell my troubles but didn't want anyone to know. I so often desired prayers but was ashamed to ask for them for I knew I wasn't fit for a door mat for God's children. In July, 1940 the sermon Elder Ayers preached so completely wrecked me I stayed away from church a few times only to suffer for it later.

In August 1941 the joy and comfort of the doctrine of salvation by

grace melted me into tears and I asked for prayer that I might be strengthened. Elder Ayers said, "Why not go by the dictates of your own conscience, my friend?" It seemed all fear was removed for a while I knew the dictates of my conscience were to "go home to thy friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you."

There wasn't any meeting in September and I could hardly wait until October to offer myself to the church. On the fourth Saturday morning in October 1941 I laid out the dress I wanted to be baptized in and went to church feeling so happy it seemed everything was praising God. Elder Jones was a visitor that day and he and Elder Ayers preached beautifully the things I'd experienced. I thought, "How glad I will be when the doors of the church are opened", When the time came I found myself without strength to go. I sat as one in a trance, cold and nervous. When I reached home I wept much and said, "Oh, Lord, if indeed I am Thine, why am I thus tossed about?" My faith was weak. I lost confidence in my prayers. Feeling you were indeed one of His, I felt if you prayed for me surely He would supply, so that's when I told you of my desires and asked you to pray if it be God's will I'd be strengthened to go next time. After this I had several beautiful dreams in which you were present. Surely you are one of His to speak words of comfort to the poor and needy in Christ Jesus. It would take too much space to tell all my dreams, I'll tell the last one. You and I were out in a boat and it seemed my feet were overboard and they became chilled. I said, "I can't stand this any longer." You said, "If the

water is clear we will go in . I said , " Clear as crystal ." As we turned to go ashore we saw a beautiful , big white boat coming . I said " Do you see that boat ? Surely it can never come into this shallow water ." You said , " If it's in the channel , it can ." Just then a man came on deck and started down the ladder and there was no place for him to step but into the water . As he stepped a path appeared under his feet and as he walked the path continued before him over the mud and water . There were flowers blooming on this little narrow path . You asked me if I knew the man . I said , " Yes , it's Mr . Rob Perry and he's going to the Union Meeting . "

On November 22 , 1941 I was blessed to go before the church and tell a little of my feelings and ask them if they felt they could add another burden to their shoulders for that was all I felt to be . I was received in full fellowship the joy of this the children of Zion only know . I was baptized at 3 p . m . the same day , which was a cold , bleak day . As we came up out of the water you dear people looked beautiful to me . There was a deep stillness which spoke of His boundless love His very spirit beamed in your faces and attested to your love , the one for the other and for God . Old things had passed away ; all things became new . I had received a joy and consolation the world can never give or take away . This joy , comfort and peace within is beyond expression by mortal tongue . I thought , " Oh , is this just a dream ? Surely I'll soon be awake for one as sinful as I could never possess such calmness within . "

On the third night after my baptism I prayed " Oh , Lord , Thou know-

est my ignorance . Make it plain . " After a chilly spell I fell only half asleep it seemed and from the place in my room where I use to see a light the same two arms that raised me up in my illness in 1937 appeared with an open book across them and I heard a voice as one reading . It began the 18th day of April , 1937 in Duke Hospital and read the interpretation to every dream I'd had pertaining to the church down to my baptism . I'll tell the interpretation to the last dream . It said , " The muddy water was your past life . When you became chilled and could stand it no longer there was one with you (and that was you) who knew when the harvest is fully ripe it will be gathered for she said , ' If the way is clear we will go in , ' meaning the church . You said , ' Clear as crystal . ' The place had been reached where there was nothing to do but stand still and see the salvation of the Lord . The white boat was the sinner made white by the shedding of Jesus' blood . The channel was God and if you are chosen in Him He will prepare a path before you on which to travel through this muddy world . " I awoke and felt I could say " Praise the Lord , O my soul . All that is within me praise His holy name . " With the world , flesh and the devil set in array against me I have been tempted many times and my hope shaken as a reed by the wind but it's never completely left me .

Dear sister , pray that I may endure as a good soldier of the cross and at the end of this life hear Him say " Child , come home . "

Your Unworthy sister ,
Maud Meads
Route 4
Elizabeth City , N . C .

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

ADMONITIONS AND EXHORTATIONS

Should some one suggest that he wished to admonish me , I would expect a warning , notice of danger , rebuke , reprimand , severe criticism , or reproof . Should he state that he desired to exhort me , I would be listening for words of inspiration , encouragement , persuasion , or earnest recommendation to pursue some specific course of action . Exhortation implies urgent advice , and admonition implies warning against some danger . These two words blend in their meaning but they are not strictly synonyms . We will find examples in the 27th chapter of The Acts where the two words are used , which prove their difference . The 9th verse says : " Now when much time was spent , and when sailing was now dangerous because the fast was now already past , Paul Admonished them . " Now let us read the 22nd verse : " 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 " ... In the first quotation the prevailing dangers were that which necessitated the admonitions , while in the second , the need for encouragement and inspiration to cheer them brought about the exhortation . I recall a familiar quotation which I shall paraphrase in order to further define the difference between the two words . Swift asks , " How is it possible to expect mankind to take advice when they will not so much as take warning ? " My para-

phrasing is , " How is it possible to expect mankind to take Exhortation when they will not so much as take Admonition ? " .

The Holy Bible contains too many admonitions and exhortations for us to ignore them and pass them by as not being applicable to us . There are too many for us to even mention in this article . However let us treat upon a few passages in which these terms are mentioned : notwithstanding , there are hundreds of them where the terms are not mentioned .

Let us examine Colossians 3:16 , in view of the aforestated conclusions : " Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom ; teaching and Admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs , singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord ... Let us re-arrange this quotation in order to show what Paul said : " Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom : singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs teaching and Admonishing one another . " (E.J.L. Arrangement) A person cannot teach or admonish the Lord . If the word of Christ richly dwells in us , we are enabled to sing with grace in our hearts in hymns , psalms , and spiritual songs to the Lord . If we be so richly blessed , we can teach and admonish one another . We sing to the Lord . We teach and admonish one another . This includes warnings , notices of dangers , rebuke and reproof .

Let us notice 1st Corinthians 10:11 , " Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples ; and they are written for our Admonition , upon whom the ends of the world are come . " Paul is warning us by giving

historical experiences of Israelites who conducted themselves in such manner that it was not well pleasing to God. Even though they were among the number who were delivered and had part in the same spiritual meat, drink, and Rock, many were overthrown in the wilderness. Paul tells of the bitter happenings to many Israelites who were idolaters, fornicators, and tempters of Christ. Even those who murmured were "Destroyed of the destroyer". These same conditions are prevalent today. We not only read these admonitions in the Scriptures, but if we look around us, we can see the same principle in force now. We have both the scriptural admonitions and presentday examples to doubly warn us of the dangers of falling into these snares. Therefore we strongly urge a positive course of action. While doing this we are exhorting you in accord with the statement of Paul in 1st Thesalonians 4:1 — "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

Let us quote from The Acts Of The Apostles, chapter 14, verse 22: "... And exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Steadfastness in the faith is evidence of God-given faith. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, If We Hold The Beginning Of

Our Confidence Steadfast Unto The End." (Heb. 3:12-14) Many who seem to have a good beginning fall by the wayside. When troubles come some become offended and step aside. Some hear the gospel preached and follow it for awhile; yea, as long as things are pleasant and going to suit them they appear to be true believers. They fall from their own steadfastness. The gospel has not profited them for it was not "Mixed with faith in them that heard it." "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest any of you should seem to come short of it." See Hebrews 4:1-2. Peter exhorted them to continue in the remembrance of the exceeding and great promises of God to His children to give them all things pertaining unto life and godliness. He exhorted them to be diligent in adding to their faith the many virtues the Lord has given them in order to walk Godly in this present world. He tells us that if we do these things we shall never fall. He admonishes us against walking after the flesh by citing many examples of destruction and ungodly vices that were prevalent among those who followed the false prophets who led them astray. Peter plainly states that "There shall be false teachers among us who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves Swift Destruction." Peter admonishes us against these seducers and gives a full vivid description of their many deceptive ways to allure disciples — to get and hold a host of followers. Yes, they promise them liberty and speak great swelling words of vanity; yet they themselves are the servants of corruption.

Peter further reasons : “ For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour , Jesus Christ , they are again entangled therein , and overcome , the latter end is worse with them than the beginning . For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness , than , after they have known it , to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them .” (2 Peter 2:20-21) Evidently those who are of these characteristics afore described and do these ungodly things only possess a head-knowledge of Jesus Christ , and have resolved to begin to walk in covenant-relationship with the Lord’s people to take away their reproach . They only profess to know Christ and surely do not possess the great gifts , nor the virtues of Faith , Hope , and Charity . As Peter says : “ But these , as natural brute beasts , made to be taken and destroyed ” ; and , “ But it happened to them according to the true proverb , The dog is turned to his own vomit again ; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire .”

It is interesting to note that there is a limit placed upon the times of admonition to those who will not heed them . There is no such limit placed on exhortations to the true believers . Jesus limits the number of times for one to tell his brother of his trespassing against him , to two times . See Matthew 18:15 , 16 , 17 . Paul places a limit on the times to admonish an heretick . “ A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject .” Paul instructed Timothy to “ ... Exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine ” . We read in the concluding chapter of Paul’s second epistle to the

church of the Thessalonians : “ But if any man obey not our word by this epistle , Note That Man , And Have No Company With Him , that he may be ashamed . Yet count him not as an enemy , but admonish him as a brother .” If Paul had said , Exhort him as a brother , it would mean that we should not cease in our endeavor to keep company with him . Since he used the term , admonish , it is consistent with the advice to note him and have no company with him . Jesus’ instructions and Paul’s advice limited to two the times to admonish before treating him as an heretick , heathen , or as one from whom we shall withdraw our company . When we admonish one as a brother — not as an enemy — , we should use the softest terms and the utmost delicacy in delivering painful truths . Admonition free from harshness which is meekly administered often is like snow upon the earth : the softer it falls , the longer it stays , and the deeper it sinks into the heart . However , if a man will not heed to admonition how could we expect him to receive exhortations ? Therefore , if one does not heed after the first and second admonition , it would be of no avail to keep harassing him . There are too many of the Lord’s little ones who are in need of exhortation whose hearts are prepared of the Lord to hear them , for us to waste time and energy admonishing heathens and hereticks . We are in much better work when we are feeding and eating with sheep than for our time to be spent in skinning or petting goats .

You who have been possessed with enough interest upon the subject of Admonitions and Exhortations to read this treatise to this point , I consider you as fit subjects for admoni-

tions and exhortations . If you , dear reader , are among those who have departed from the old paths , I sincerely admonish you of the dangers and terrible consequences that are in store for those who are careless relative to their deportment . I admonish you of the pit-falls that are certain to engulf those who “ Walk after the flesh ” . I warn you that to be carnally minded means death . I sincerely rebuke those of you who are inclined to put your whole mind in laying up for yourselves treasures here upon earth . I frankly tell you , “ Where your treasure is , there will your heart be also . ” (Luke 12:34) You may be some of the Lord’s people who have been deceived by false teachers , who , to cover their own sinful walk , have tried to make you believe that it makes no difference what you think , say , or do . It does make a difference because the Spirit of God works mightily in effecting a change in the thoughts, desires, conversation, and actions of His little ones .

The above admonitions are sufficient now . If you have not been affected by what I have said in these warnings , what I might hereafter say , would do you no good : I have come to the place in this treatise when further admonitions would be a waste of time and space . Let us leave admonitions and go into exhortations , and meditate upon the value of a Godly walk , and cheer and encourage those who are despondent and depressed , and advise all of you to forget those things that are behind , and reach forth unto those things which are before , and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus .

I trust that you have been examining yourselves while reading this to

ascertain whether or not you are in the faith . Paul exhorted , “ Examine yourselves , whether you be in the faith ; prove you own selves . ” (2 Cor . 13:5) If you find that you have left your first love and have become entangled with the unbelievers , and are yoked with them : I earnestly exhort you , “ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers : for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ? and what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols ? for ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said , I will dwell in them , and walk in them ; and I will be their God , and they shall be my people . Wherefore come out from among them , and be ye separate , saith the Lord , and touch not the unclean thing AND I WILL RECEIVE YOU , AND WILL BE A FATHER UNTO YOU , AND YE SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS , SAITH THE LORD ALMIGHTY . Having therefore these promises , dearly beloved , let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit , perfecting holiness in the fear of God . ” (2 Cor . 6:14-18 ; 7:1) If your heart has been turned by the Lord , I exhort you , turn yourselves from this generation who have no goal to press toward . “ Why tarriest thou ? arise and be baptized , and wash away thy sins , calling on the name of the Lord . ” Baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but is in answer to a good conscience toward God . It is a step toward following and walking in the footsteps of the flock . Baptism is a sign that you desire to bury your past and henceforth by God-given strength to walk in

newness of life . Baptism is an outward manifestation of your trust in being baptized in Jesus Christ and into His death . Baptism shows that your trust in self is being buried , and is an outward sign that Christ's life merited all the blessings ever to be bestowed upon and in the Lord's people , as well as paying the penalty of all their sins by His death .

I exhort you to put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil ; yes , that you may be able to stand in the evil day . " Stand therefore , having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of righteousness ; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace . Above all taking the shield of faith , wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked , and take the helmet of salvation , and the sword of the Spirit , which is the word of God . Praying always with all prayer and supplications in the Spirit ; and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints ." (Eph . 6:14-18) If you have the will that God worked in you — it is a strong will . God has also promised to work the do . If you have both , you will persevere even through great tribulations . If God has begun it He will perform it . Do you have the confidence that " He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ ." H .W . Beecher said , " The difference between perseverance and obstinacy is , that one often comes from a strong will , and the other from a strong won't ." The will that the Lord works in stronger than the won't which the devil works .

" Now we exhort you , brethren ,

warn them that are unruly , comfort the feeble minded , support the weak , be patient toward all men . See that none render evil for evil unto any man : but ever follow that which is good , both among yourselves and to all men . Rejoice evermore . Pray without ceasing . In everything give thanks : for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you . Quench not the Spirit . Despise not prophesyings . Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good . Abstain from all appearance of evil . And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ . **FAITHFUL IS HE THAT CALLETH YOU WHO ALSO WILL DO IT .** Brethren , pray for us ." (Thes . 5:14-25)

I exhort you , brethren , " To know them which labor among you , and are **OVER YOU** in the Lord , and admonish you ; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake , and be at peace among yourselves ." (1 Thes . 5:12-13) Those who have the rule over you and truly serve in the capacity as pastor , have been made your overseers by the Holy Spirit . Heed their admonitions and exhortations . Know that they have been called as God's servants to the church . They are the under shepherds who have been called by the Chief **SHEPHERD OF YOUR SOULS** . Their service is not to please you but rather to please God . They are not under your dominion in their ministrations . They are servants of Jesus Christ to you . " Let the elders that **RULE WELL** be counted worth of **DOUBLE HONOR** , especially they who labor in the word and doctrine . For the Scripture saith , Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that

treadeth out the corn . And the labourer is worthy of his reward . Against an elder receive not an accusation , but before two or three witnesses .” (1 Timothy 5:17-19) Provide for his natural sustenance by giving to him some of your earthly treasures as the Lord has prospered you , that he may be able to spend more time in studying the Scriptures and in administering spiritual things to the household of faith , without being hindered with lack of funds . Do you possess earthly treasures ? If so , use them as your servants in the right way . Do not let them possess you and use you to serve them . A covetous person is a slave to his earthly possessions . He lives to take in everything he can and parts with as little as he can . Give as the Lord has prospered you to those who are in need .

I exhort you , deacons , be faithful to your charge of relieving your pastors of some of their responsibilities in order that they may devote more time to prayer and ministry of the word . Deacons , visit the sick , widows , orphans , the poor of the flock , and your pastors , to acquaint yourselves with their needs , and to see that not any of them are neglected . It is not your sole responsibility to supply the funds . It is your business to distribute the funds that have been supplied by the church . Let the church know the needs if funds are not sufficient .

I admonish the deacons who have been led to believe that you have any authority whatsoever over your pastor , that the result of this error is deacon rule . Anytime a deacon attempts to interfere with the spiritual welfare of the church to regulate its functions , you are out of your place .

You must recognize the fact that God calls and sends forth His ministers and holds them accountable only to Him in their ministrations of preaching the gospel and baptizing believers . You ; deacons , are selected by the church upon the recommendation of your pastor . I have never read in the Scriptures of the New Testament anywhere of an occasion or a stipulation which gave the authority for a church to select or choose a pastor . Let us read Acts 14:23 “ And when they had ordained them elders in every church , and had prayed with fasting , they commended them to the Lord , on whom they believed .” Let us quote Titus 1:4-5 , “ To Titus , mine own son after the common faith : grace , mercy and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour . For this cause left I thee in Crete , that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting , and ORDAIN ELDERS IN EVERY CITY , AS I HAD APPOINTED THEE .” There is no hint that these selections were left to the vote of the churches .

I exhort you , elders , bishops , pastors , and , or , evangelists : “ Take heed unto yourselves therefore , and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers , to feed the church of God , which he hath purchased with his own blood .” (Acts 20:28) “ Exhort with all long suffering and doctrine .” “ ... Give attendance to reading , to exhortation , to doctrine . Neglect not the gift that is in thee , which was given thee by prophecy , with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery . Meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear to all . Take heed unto thy self , and unto the doctrine ; continue in them :

for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself , and them that hear thee .” (1 Tim . 4:13-16) This was Paul’s instruction to his son in the ministry . Gospel ministers continuously study the Scriptures . This is necessary in order to rightly divide the word of truth . May God forbid that we , the ministers of gospel , ever be enslaved in the clutches of designing men who would dictate for us where , when , and how to preach . May we never be brought into captivity of those who would set themselves to the task of limiting us as to what we preach , and what not to preach . If the Lord has impressed you to comply with a request to preach in a place where His providence has directed you , do not let threats of men hinder you from going . Threats of non- fellowship and breaking off affiliation come only from those who would usurp authority over you and bring you under the jurisdiction of their selfish pride . Dear elders remember that “ A man’s gift will make room for him .” Go wheresoever and whensoever God in his providence sends you . Preach the word in the fear of God — not of man . Baptize believers who bring forth evidence of repentance . May God grant us strength and grace us with His Spirit that we be enabled to break the bars asunder which man has put up that hinders the inter-communion of the Lord ’s little ones . May we fight the good fight of faith . May God bless us to rule well the churches of our pastoral care . Do not permit other elders of other flocks to dictate to you whom you shall fellowship or accept in to your membership . You are not accountable to men for your ministrations in the capacity of pastor , because the Holy Spirit has made you

overseers — not man . You are accountable to the church of your membership , dear pastor , as a member . Each and every member of your church has a right to say with whom they shall walk and affiliate . Dear pastors , preaching the gospel , baptizing believers , feeding the sheep , and taking the oversight of the flock , is your sole responsibility under the command only of the Chief Shepherd , Jesus Christ . I have baptized some , as Philip baptized the eunuch — a man of Ethiopia , before their cases came to the church for consideration . When these persons presented themselves to the church for membership , I informed them that my baptizing them did not make them members of that individual church , and that the members of that church had the right to reject them in their own local covenant relationship as members of that individual church . On the other hand , I have refused to baptize those who stated that they did not want to walk with any group in church relationship . Individual churches have the right to determine ; or select , with whom they shall walk . Yet , churches and , or , pastors have the right only within their own dominion . Respect the judgment of other churches in dealing with their own affairs , and reserve the God-given right to tend your own business and let not outside intervention rob you of this liberty . Do not let your church be governed by decrees passed by other bodies . You cannot speak for your church relative to a matter until it has been taken up and orderly disposed of in your church conference .

This treatise has been written after much reading , meditation , and prayer . I am convinced that it is timely

for such scriptural admonitions and exhortations . I submit it with the prayer to God to use it to your good and His praise . This treatise contains my views . It is not necessarily the views of the other editors of this periodical .
Elder E . J . Lambert

MEETINGS

OLD PINE CREEK CHURCH

An annual all day meeting will be held , the Lord willing , at Old Pine Creek Church on the 4th of July , 1988 . The church is located off Highway No . 221 , 5 miles north of Floyd , Va . Those coming from Floyd turn left on to Road # 682 . Those coming from Roanoke , turn right on to Road # 682 .

All lovers of the truth are invited and especially all ministers of our faith and order .

Elder Hale Terry

PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION

The one hundred and sixty-third annual session of the Pigg River District Primitive Baptist Association will convene , the Lord willing , at Laurel Ridge Church , beginning on Friday before the first Sunday in August , 1988 .

The church is located on Roselawn Road , just off Route 221 (Brambleton Avenue) at Cave Spring .

For those coming into Roanoke from the south on route 220 , turn right at Exit 419 ramp , then left at traffic light onto Route 419 (also called Electric Road) go 2 3/10 miles , turn

left onto Route 221 south (also called Brambleton Avenue) go 9/10 mile , turn right at the Orange Market onto Roselawn Road , go 9/10 mile and the church is on the right . Please bring your own folding chairs .

For those who plan to bring lunch , please do not bring plates , cups , napkins and forks as these will be furnished all three days of the meeting .

DANVILLE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

As per precepts and examples as set forth in the written word of God Danville Church looked out among themselves and recognized a certain gift . They therefore called for a presbytery to be formed on the 7th of May at 2:45 at Danville Primitive Baptist Church , Danville , Va . , for the purpose of examination of this gift , brother Irvin Holley and if found 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 Denver Simpson son . Elder H . W . Wray was elected as moderator and deacon B . B . Williams to serve as clerk . Brother R . T . Holley acting as spokesman for the church delivered brother Irvin Holley to the presbytery .

The qualifications for deacon was read as set forth in scriptures Acts 6 Chapter read by Elder Kenneth Key and Tim . 3-8 by Elder J . R . Williams . Examinations followed by Elders Goad , Soloman , Williams , Simpson Tench and Key . The presbytery

being satisfied as to the qualifications of this candidate proceeded with the laying on of hands and prayer was offered by Elder Kenneth Key . The charge was delivered to brother Holley by Elder O.K. Tench. He was then delivered back to the church as an ordained deacon .

The minutes of the work of the presbytery were read and adopted. A copy to be placed in the church records , a copy to be sent to the Signs of the Times for publication and a copy to be given to Brother Irvin Holley along with a certificate of ordination .

Presbytery was dismissed by prayer by Elder J.R. Williams .

Elder H.W. Wray , Moderator
Deacon Burnell Williams , Clerk

Ministers present were Elders H H.W. Wray , Kenneth Key , Kinsey Tench , Julian Williams , Tom Solomon , Raymond Goad , Denver Simpson , and licentiates Brother Marvin Brumfield and Clarence Stone .

Deacons present were Brethren Harvey Wood , Clifton Robertson , Willie Neal , Oscar Pickeral , Silas Payne , Wilson King , Richard Stegall , Russell Holley , Edgar Horseley , Fred Murphy , Stafford Houston , Coley Strader and Burnell Williams .

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR APRIL 1988

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Mrs . Harry Payne , VA.....5.00
Mrs . Armedia Taylor , LA.....2.00
Mrs . Florence Maxey , VA.....5.00
Mrs . Sara R . Cody , AZ.....15.00

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OBITUARIES

GERTRUDE ADKINS AUSTIN

At has pleased our heavenly Father to take from our midst a dear and lovely sister , Gertrude Adkins Austin .

Sister Austin was born November 13 , 1887 in Wicomico County , Maryland . After a long illness , she departed this life on January 12 , 1988 at the age of 100 . Surviving are one son , Rodney E . Austin of Winston-Salem , N . C . , one daughter , Margaret Holmes Warren of Manteo , N . C . , eight grandchildren , and four great-grandchildren . One son , John Edward Austin , preceded her in death .

Sister Austin was received into the Fellowship of the Salisbury Church and was baptized by Elder David V . Spangler . On September 26 , 1965 , she moved her membership to

Dan River .

Our beloved sister was firm in the doctrine of the power and wisdom of Almighty God , and the total depravity of man .

Prior to her illness, she made her home with her son , Rodney E. Austin where she had the best of care as her family was truly devoted to her . Whenever friends visited her , she always asked about the brethren and “ her church .”

A graveside service was held at Mardela Springs , Maryland by Elder James Poole . Her favorite hymn , “ Amazing Grace ” was sung in the service .

We feel our loss is her eternal gain , and it is our hope that we may all be reconciled to the will of our heavenly Father .

Juanita M . Law

FRANK W . MILLER

Brother Frank W . Miller was born December 31 , 1917 and passed from this life May 21 , 1987 . He was married to Beatrice Carter , June 1 , 1946 , who survives him . To this union was born three children , Frank Wayne Miller , Dan Lee Miller and Mary Margaret Abbot . Also surviving are six grandchildren .

Brother Miller joined Dan River Church May 23 , 1982 and was baptized by his pastor , the late Elder David Spangler . He was a faithful and devoted member until his death . It was always a pleasure to talk with him and his main thoughts and meditations were concerning spiritual things This was much comfort to him especially in his latter days and during his illness . He believed in a God who

ruled and controlled all things , and that everything works together to the good for the Lords chosen people . When told of his terminal illness he accepted it with no fear , but seemingly a great desire and looking forward to seeing his Lord . He was a dear friend , a loving husband and a good father and grandfather . Many precious memories , I am sure will remain and be cherished by his family and all those who knew him .

Our love goes out to Sister Bee who stood so close by Brother Frank to the end , ready always to administer to his needs .

Brother Franks Funeral was conducted at Dan River Church by his pastor , Elder Kenneth R. Key , assisted by Elder H. W. Wray . His body was laid to rest under a mound of beautiful flowers , his spirit resting , we feel with his Lord and waiting for that day to hear the voice of his savior saying , “ Come ye blessed of my Father , inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world .”

Kenneth R . Key , Moderator
Brother Boyd Minter , Clerk

Copy placed on church records
Copy to Sister Bee
Copy to Signs of the Times

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POEM

*When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my Lord;
All the vain things that charm me
most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.*

*See from his head, his hands, his
feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet?
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

*His dying crimson like a robe
Spreads o'er his body on the tree,
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

Watts

MOVED OR MOVING ?

To assure you of getting your "Signs" and without missing any copies, be sure to inform us of any change of address.

Editors

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EDITORIAL

“ Therefore said I unto you , no man can come unto me , except it were given unto him of my Father .



Elder R. H. Campbell

The above are the words of Jesus and is a simple and direct statement of the only way that man can come to him and yet the world today is probably spending more money , time and effort to deny this one simple statement than on any other thing in the world . There are more people involved in this one project than have ever been aligned in a single endeavor in the entire history of mankind . Anytime that this basic truth is declared today , it will receive the

same response that it did on that occasion , when Jesus made this statement to the crowd of people around him , the scripture continues , “ From that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him . ” This will always be the response of the man who has not received the grace of God which causes them to come unto Jesus and to follow him , and those who have been given this grace will never cease to follow him . This gift of the spirit which enables the children of God to know and to follow after the truth is not a trial and error method , it is never given for a season and then rescinded . Those who have been given this precious gift will respond as the twelve Apostles did when Jesus turned to them and said , “ Will ye also go away . ” they said , “ Lord to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life . ” When quickened to spiritual life the blessed will always plead to whom could we turn , this is the word of truth , there is only one truth , and the truth is the only thing that will satisfy those who have been given to know it .

When man is born into the world he is of the earth , speaketh of the earth and knows nothing but the things of the earth . He is , as all men have been , since Adam was driven out of the garden of Eden , alienated from God and receiveth not the things of the spirit of God neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned . In this state man is incapable of accepting Jesus as his personal savior , as the world claims , because he does not know him and would not know him if he saw him , would not believe him if he heard him and could not if he wanted to , be-

cause he does not have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within his heart. Just as he was born into the world of nature to enable him to know the things of nature and experience life here on earth, he must be born of the Spirit of God to know the things of the spiritual realm and experience the joys of the righteous as they are brought to Jesus and made aware of who he is and what he has done for them.

It is impossible to explain this phenomenon to anyone that has not experienced it since there is no common basis on which you can approach it with carnal reasoning. How can you explain, to the natural man, two separate and distinct entities dwelling in one body, each with a different set of values, separate likes and dislikes and yet this is exactly what happens when one is born again. The new creature judges and is critical of the old man as though it was another person and there is, there can be no peaceful coexistence when such a situation exists. The new creature delights in the law of God after the inward man, which is the spiritual nature that is born of God and rejoices in communion with Him and those of like precious faith who manifest their heavenly calling in their walk and conversation. The new creature and the old man in nature are as different as can be imagined and this causes a continual warfare in the life of the child of God and this makes them depend solely upon the one who has called them to follow him for all of their wisdom and strength. They know that they cannot overcome or control the other self but they can endure the conflict with him by the sustaining Grace of God in their life and the faith given them that He will

never leave them nor forsake them in trials and tribulations which they endure.

The blessed assurance that they will not fail is based upon something else that Jesus said on this same occasion, which was, "All that my Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." This shows that there is no phase of the work of the salvation of the saints of God that is subject to chance. All that were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world will come to him here in time and none will ever be cast out, and these are the only ones that can come to him. This truth is the basis of the hope that dwells in the hearts of all who truly worship God. They realize, by their own experience, that if left to their own devices they would have never come to him and here Jesus is saying that all who were given him by God shall come and those who come shall dwell with him forever. This is not the beginning of something new, but rather, the continuation of a work that was determined and began before the world was formed and will continue after this old world is gone. This causes the strong consolation of those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that was set before them, the hope which is the anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast and entereth into that within the veil where Jesus is. This work is a perfect work and all who are given this hope in time are as sure to enter heaven as the fact that Jesus is there because the scripture continues "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." If he entered for us,

doesn't that ensure the fact that we will enter into heaven where Jesus is.

O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out . We , in nature , will never be able to comprehend the fullness of the great truth regarding our salvation but praises unto his Holy name we are given the earnest of the inheritance and this is sufficient for now . It is a constant witness within of this work of grace in our lives and so occupies our time and thoughts that it enables us not to despair but rather inspires us to press on looking to the end of that which is promised to all of the heirs of grace . It renews our hope and makes us content in the way that we are going believing as the Apostles did that this is the only way , that Jesus only has the words of eternal life . As Jesus told the Apostle shortly before his death , " I am the way , the truth and the life : no man cometh unto the Father , but by me . " This is the way of salvation and our faith is that we are in the way .

In bonds of love ,
Elder Richard H . Campbell

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Readers of the "Signs":

The following is a circular letter taken from a Minute of the Smith River Primitive Baptist Association in 1915 . This letter was written by Elder S . A . Thompson . We hereby share it with you .

Kenneth R . Key

The Smith River District Primitive Baptist Association , now in session with our sister church at Salem , Floyd County , Va . , September 24 , 25 , 26 , 1915 . To the churches whose messengers we are and the Association with which we correspond sendeth greetings in the Lord .

Dear Brethren :—We , in this our annual Circular letter , will call your attention to the second chapter of the epistle of Paul to Titus , beginning with the first verse , and extending to the sixth verse inclusive , which reads as follows : " But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine : That the aged men be sober , grave , temperate , sound in faith , in charity , in patience . The aged women likewise that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness , not false accusers , not given to much wine , teachers of good things , that they may teach the young women to be sober , to love their husbands , to love their children , to be discreet , chaste , keepers at home , good , obedient to their own husbands , that the word of God be not blasphemed . Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded . "

Here the Apostle was giving instruction to Titus as to what he should speak among the Churches in the course of his ministry . It was a direction to him , in a general way , as to what ought to be the trend of his teaching among the saints of God . And this admonition of Paul to Titus is equally applicable to all ministers of the gospel in this day and age of the world . These things were to bespoken in that day to the children of God ; likewise these same things should be spoken and taught among the children of God in this day . And a sufficient reason why this should be done is

given later on in this same chapter , the eighth verse ;— “That he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed , having no evil thing to say of you .” And again , a further reason is given in verses ten to fifteen in the same chapter , as follows :— “That they (the children of God) may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things . For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men , teaching us that , denying ungodliness and worldly lusts , we should live soberly , righteously and godly , in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope , and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ; who gave himself for us , that he might redeem us from all iniquity , and purify unto himself a peculiar people , zealous of good works .” This was the teaching that Titus was admonished to set forth among the brethren , and the reasons therefor .

It will be observed that nothing of the hidden mysteries of God which Paul in another place says ,” are past finding out ,” are directed here to be discussed among his people ; but it is all along the line of righteous living and correct behaviour of the children ; and Titus is also admonished in this same chapter , as follows ; “ In all things showing THYSELF a PATTERN of good works .”

While it is clearly taught that in the days of the Apostles , the gifts of God’s ministers varied , but still all of the same spirit , and it is evident in the present day and age of the world that the gifts of God’s ministers vary ,— some seeming to run in one channel and some in another to some extent ,—there are deep unfathomable hidden mysteries that are unprofit-

able to discuss among God’s children . These deep mysteries belong to God , and when his children , whether ministers or laymen , attempt to dive into these things that cannot be grasped or comprehended by the finite mind of men , they are almost sure to get into the broadfield of guess and speculation , and in so doing , get away from the experience of God’s people , get away from their comprehension and understanding and confusion and the squandering and scattering of the flock is the result . There are a number of these deep mysteries that we have no way of accurately determining or demonstrating the correctness or incorrectness of what may be said concerning them ,—such as the absolute predestination of all things , the soul sleeping doctrine , &c. &c. which only tend to strife and confusion when discussed among God’s people , and in my opinion , the less said about them the better for the unity of the Church and the peace of God’s children .

God’s decrees concerning these things and many others are infinite , in fact He and all His ways are infinite , and the fullness thereof cannot be grasped or comprehended by the mind of men so long as it remains incased in the flesh , as so long as it remains in the flesh it remains finite . And so far as within us lies , we should steer clear of those unfathomable mysteries that lie within the gulf between the domain of the comprehension of the finite mind and the infinite wisdom of God . These mysteries are the ways of God , and are “ past finding out .” God’s ways are as high above man’s ways as are the heavens above the earth , which is simply another way of saying that

God's ways, and God's thoughts and reasons are not measured by, and are not to be compared with, the ways, thoughts and reasons of men. He and his ways, thoughts, &c., are infinite while man and his ways, thoughts, &c., are finite, and we cannot understand any more than it has pleased Him to give or reveal to us. And He has given us a sufficiency for our welfare here in the world.

The scriptures are full of plain simple admonishments and exhortations to the children of God, as to how they should live and act in this present world. They are exhorted to obedience, to sobriety, honesty, virtue, patience, temperance in all things, uprightness, long suffering meekness, charity and that they love one another.

Then let us all, so far as within us lies, live in humbleness, peace and thanksgiving before God for his great love and mercy toward us, and not wrangle and strive among ourselves over the deep mysteries and questions that we do not understand; knowing that our God is love and whatsoever he doeth He doeth right and that he has dealt with us not according to our deeds, but according to grace, which is unmerited favor and much mercy. Let brotherly love abound, realizing that we need each other's prayers and comforting and strengthening influence in these perilous times. Brethren, strive for the things that make for peace.

Respectfully submitted,
S. A. Thompson

ARTICLES

THE WORKING OF ALL THINGS
TOGETHER FOR GOOD

Preached at Providence Chapel, Eden Street,
London, on Lord's Day Morning, July 8, 1849.

"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."—Romans viii. 28.

The child of God seems to me often to resemble a benighted traveller. He has left his home, and is struggling onward to a certain destination. He is surrounded on every side with mists and darkness; still he struggles onward. But looking up into the sky, he sees a star glimmer through the clouds; by-and-by another appears; and by-and-by another; till at last all the mist and fog are dispersed, and the stars shine forth in all their beauty and glory. Thus is it often with the child of God. He has left the world; he is struggling onward to his heavenly home; but he often walks in darkness and has no light; little else but mists and fogs surround the path he is treading. In this state, perhaps he opens the word of God; or as he is musing over his many trials, a text, a promise breaks in upon his mind, and that shews him the mist and fog are breaking up; by-and-by another portion of God's word another sweet promise comes into his soul; and this encourages him still more, till by-and-by the Bible seems full of promises, shining forth in the pages of the sacred volume more thickly and gloriously than the stars

that spangle the midnight sky .

Among these bright stars that glimmer in the firmament of Scripture , there is scarcely one more resplendent than our text . Let us travel through the promises upon record , and we can scarcely find one more sweet or suitable to an exercised child of God than this , “ We know that all things work together for good to them that love God , to them who are the called according to his purpose . ”

In looking at these words this morning , I shall , for the sake of greater clearness , somewhat invert the order , and show ,

First , who the characters are that are interested in this promise .

Secondly , the promise itself , and

Thirdly , the knowledge of the promise , and of our personal interest in it . The Lord grant his presence ; and enable me to speak such things as he shall bless to our souls .

1 .—First , then , let us consider the characters to whom the promise belongs . Now it is necessary to make the ground good here ; for if we err here , we err everywhere . Let me illustrate this by an example or two taken from the things of common life . A man makes a will ; when he dies , and the will is opened and read , the very first thing to be settled is the person in whose favour the will is made . Until that is settled , there is no going a step further . Or , there is a society founded for a certain object . This society has certain objects in view , certain characters on whom it bestows its liberality . There are prescribed limits ; as age , poverty , being members of the household of faith ; and if these qualifications are not in the individual , he cannot be a candidate . So it is spiritually . Unless we

make the ground good at first by coming to some clear decision who are the characters interested in this promise , we are all in confusion ; we do not make straight paths for our feet ; our eyes do not look onward , nor our eyelids straight before us . It is absolutely necessary , therefore , in order to make the ground good , to clear up who the characters are in favour of whom the promise is made .

If we look at these characters , we shall find them described as bearing two distinct marks , (1) that they “ love God ; ” (2) that they are “ the called according to God ’ s purpose . ” If a man , then , does not love God , and be not called according to God ’ s purpose , he has no manifest interest in this promise . And if , on the other hand , he bear these two marks , that he loves God , and that he is called according to God ’ s purpose , the promise is intended for him , and is ready to discharge its full contents into his heart .

1 . First , then , let us look a little more closely at the character set forth as a lover of God . We are very certain this never can be true of any man in a state of nature , for “ the carnal mind is enmity against God ; ” and if so , there cannot be any love to God in his heart . He is therefore excluded from the benefit of the promise ; his name is not in the will .

But , in order to make this weighty matter more clear and plain , let us see what the Scriptures say of those who love God . I think we shall find in the first epistle of John three marks given us of those who love him ; and by these three marks may we try our state . Let us , then , bring our hearts and consciences to the test of God ’ s unerring word , and see whether we

can find these three marks of the lovers of God in our soul . We read , “ Love is of God , and every one that loveth is born of God , and knoweth God .” (1 John iv . 7 .) Here , then , are two marks which the Holy Ghost has given of him that loves God , that he is born of God , and that he knoweth God . And if we look a little lower down , we shall find a third mark , “ This is the love of God that we keep his commandments .” (1 John v . 3 .)

These , then , are the three marks of a man being a lover of God : 1 . that he is born of God ; 2 . that he knoweth God ; and 3 . that he keepeth God ’ s commandments .

1 . But what is it to be born of God ? We read of those who were followers of the Lord Jesus Christ , that they were “ born not of blood , nor of the will of the flesh , nor of the will of man , but of God .” (John i . 13 .) A heavenly birth is contrasted here with the birth of the flesh ; the one is set aside , and the other set up . To be born of God is to be quickened into spiritual life by the Holy Ghost ; to have passed from death unto life ; to have faith , hope and love brought forth in our hearts by the operation of God the Spirit ; to be made new creatures in Christ ; to have the kingdom of heaven set up , and the power of God felt in our souls . If , then , a man can feel that he is born of God ; that a mighty revolution has taken place in his soul ; that he is a new creature in Christ ; that old things are passed away and all things become new : if he has the witness of God in his conscience that this divine change has taken place in him , and that a measure of the love of God has been shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost—then he has an evidence that he is one who loves God , and

therefore has an interest in the promise before us .

2 . Our second mark of one that loves God is , that he knows God . This we cannot know by nature , for there is a veil of unbelief over our heart . We are born in darkness and the shadow of death ; but when God is pleased to shine into our souls , and give us “ the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ;” to take the veil of unbelief away , and give us that knowledge of himself as the only true God , and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent , which is eternal life—then we know God ; we know who he is , and we fear his great Name

3 . The third mark is , that we keep his commandments ; that we come out of the world , and are separate from it ; that we desire to do his will , to serve him , and to walk before him in simplicity , humility , and godly sincerity ; that his fear is alive in us ; that we obey him , and do those things that are pleasing in his sight .

But why do I mention these marks ? For this reason ; because the children of God are often tried and exercised whether they do love him . There are so many things in their hearts to oppose the love of God . There is the world ; a going out in their carnal mind after the things of time and sense ; sin working in them , bringing them continually into bondage ; darkness of mind , so as to be unable to see their signs ; deadness of soul , so that the love of God seems reduced to the last spark . All these things are so opposite to the love of God that they seem at times not to have one grain of it in their hearts . And when they would fain look back to certain spots , times , and seasons , when they did feel the love of God

shed abroad in their hearts , when they could delight themselves in the Almighty , when his word was sweeter than honey and the honeycomb , and they could walk before him in holy obedience and love , I say , when they would fain look back upon these favourite spots , times , and seasons , they often cannot . Such is the darkness of their minds they can scarcely see the hill Mizar , or remember him from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites . Therefore , it is necessary to look to certain marks of God 's word . The landmarks in our experience are sometimes swept away , or clouds of darkness cover them . We therefore must look to the unerring landmarks of God 's word , which , unlike the landmarks of experience , are never swept away , but stand there firmly fixed by the pen of the Holy Ghost . If therefore , with all our doubts and fears and misgivings , our hardness of heart , our unbelief , darkness of mind , and deadness of frame , we can find these three marks in our souls , that we have been born of God , that we know him , and that we are keeping his commandments and desiring to do his will , we have Scripture testimony that we are of those who love God , and therefore have an interest in this promise .

II .—Our second mark is , that such are the “ called according to God 's purpose .” This seems to be added as a kind of supplement to clear up the first mark ; and added for this twofold purpose . First , to exclude all men in a state of nature . A man , in a state of nature , might say , ‘ I love God ; I love to walk abroad , and mark his glory in the beauties of creation . I look up by night , and as I see the stars in the sky I recognize in them

a heavenly Architect . I am sure I love God .’ A man in a state of nature may do this . Now this seems added to cut off such . It says , ‘ No ; all those that love God are the called according to his purpose .’ A man must be called ; there must be a work of grace upon his soul before he can be a true spiritual lover of God .

But there is another purpose also . The child of God may say , ‘ Do I love God ? If so , what love do I now feel ? Are my affections now in heaven ? Do I feel my soul now desiring the Lord more than thousands of gold and silver ? Is my heart now softened and melted by the sweet operations of his grace , mercy , and love ? No ;’ the poor child of God says , ‘ I feel too much the contrary—hardness , darkness , carnality—perhaps enmity , rebellion—how can I , then hope I am the character for whom this promise is made ? Yet if I be not a lover of God , I have no interest in it .’

To clear up this dark path , it seems added by way of supplement , “ called according to God 's purpose .” His purpose is not affected by what we are , or what we have . His purpose is still going on . We may be in darkness and deadness ; but our darkness does not alter God 's purpose ; our deadness does not change his decree . We may not have the sweet enjoyment of his love in our hearts ; but still his ‘ purpose ’ remains unchanged and unchangeable , like its divine Author .

But how can we prove we are called according to God 's purpose ? Love may flag ; evidences may fade ; hope may droop ; enjoyment may cease ; but the calling still remains . Can we , then , look back to any time or spot when the Lord signally called

us ? Can we cast an eye on the path we have trodden in the ways of grace , and say that none but the Lord could have separated us from the sins in which we were entangled , the company with which we were mixed , the course we were pursuing ? Can we remember there were at the time certain feelings which none but God could inspire ? certain operations in our hearts which none but God could perform ? certain effects which nothing but a heavenly hand moving upon the soul could create ? If we cannot now trace distinctly that we are the lovers of God ; if we cannot now feel the love of God shed abroad in our hearts , yet we may compare ourselves with the three marks I have given , and take some comfort from them ; or even if these three marks be buried in obscurity , we may still cast an eye along the vista which we have trodden , and see the hand of God stretched out in a manifestive way to call us out of nature 's darkness into his marvellous light .

I have been thus particular , and dwelt thus long upon this portion of the text , because I love to make sure ground . Let us make the ground good—then we can step safely on ; but if the ground be sandy , the foundation uncertain , we are faulty at the very outset . There is no advancing a single step till the ground be made good . I will suppose , then , the ground is thus far made good , and that there are in this congregation those who have some internal testimony that they are lovers of God , and that they are “ called according to God 's purpose .”

II .—But I proceed to the substance of the promise , “ that all things work together for good ” to such

characters . Every word here is pregnant with blessed import : we could not part with a single syllable . And yet , what an exalted view does it give us of the wisdom , providence , and power of God ! Look at this complicated scene . Here are God 's people , surrounded by a thousand mysterious circumstances , travelling in the various paths of life—station , age , sex , circumstances , all widely different . Here is the world lying in wickedness around them—a crafty adversary ever on the watch to beguile or harass them,— a heart full of sin to overflowing , except as kept down by the mighty power of God ! Look at all our varied circumstances ; and then to believe that if we are the lovers of God , all things we experience are working together for our spiritual good , what a view does it give us of the wisdom , grace , and power of a wonder-working God ! Let us bear with all our weight upon the text : it will bear all the strain that we can put upon it . “ All things !” Look at that ! All that concerns our body and soul ; everything in providence , everything in grace ; everything you have passed through , everything you are passing through , everything you shall pass through .

Let each of you who love God , and fear his name in this congregation , take everything belonging to you , and lay it upon this text , as you might lay hymn-books and Bibles on the table before me . There is not a single thing in providence or grace that concerns any person in this congregation who loves God that the promise cannot bear . “ All things ! all things !” What ! is there not a single thing , however minute , however comparatively unimportant , that is not for my good if

I love God? No, not one. If there were a single thing, this text would not be true; God would speak an untruth. If there were a single thing which befalls me, be it in providence, or be it in grace, that is not working together for my good, if I am a child of God, I say it with reverence, that this would be a lie in God's book. And yet, when we consider the variety of things that affect us—to believe that all of them are working together for our good, how must we admire the wonderful wisdom, and power, and government of God.

But let us, by the way of casting a clearer light upon the words, "all things," look at them more minutely. All things that take place are either according to God's decretive appointment, or according to his permissive appointment. Many things that try your mind, and exercise your souls, are according to God's decretive appointment. Everything with which sin or Satan are not intermingled, we may say, comes from God's decretive appointment; and if we are lovers of God, they are working together for our good. Are we tried in our circumstances? This is according to God's decretive appointment. Is it the Lord's will and pleasure to bring us down in the world, by sorrows and adversities in providence? This is still according to God's decretive appointment. Have we afflictions in the family? It is still according to God's decretive appointment. It comes from him. Nothing can happen in body, in property, in family, that does not spring from God's decretive appointment. Are children taken away? They are taken by the hand of God. "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away." Is wife or husband

afflicted? The hand of God is in it. Is the body brought down with sickness? It cometh from God. Is the mind tried with a thousand perplexities, anxieties, and cares? It is still the hand of God. All these matters spring from his decretive appointment! But is Satan permitted to harass and distress our minds? This is only by God's permissive appointment. He could do nothing against Job until God gave him permission. Have we enemies in the church or in the world? Have we to endure persecution for Christ's sake? slander, calumny, and opposition? Shimei was permitted to curse David; and Jeroboam was raised up in consequence of the idolatry of Solomon. All is still according to God's permissive appointment. Are we tried by the evils of our fallen nature? It is still according to God's permissive appointment; for nothing can take place, either in providence or in grace, except as God in his infinite wisdom has decreed to perform, or decreed to allow.

But all these things, however trying to our minds, however hard to bear, however painful to our flesh, are decreed to work together. They do not work singly, but they work together with something else. It is like my watch. The wheel that turns the hand is not the same wheel that is moved by the spring; but one wheel works within another wheel, and one cog catches in another cog, until at length the time of day is shown upon the dial. So with respect to our afflictions, our exercises, the trials of our minds, the various disappointments and perplexities we have to endure; they do not work singly, but together with something else; and it is by this

working together with something else that they produce a divine and blessed result .

But what is that with which they work . The grace of God in the soul . The wheel of providence works with the wheel of grace ; and the wheel of grace works with the wheel of providence ; and together a blessing is the result . For instance . Some affliction befalls your body ; you are laid upon a sick bed . That affliction will do you no good in itself ; but it works together with the grace of God in your soul ; and by its working together with the grace of God in your soul , a blessing is the result . Or , you are brought down in circumstances : you have a very difficult path to tread in providence . This will do you no good in itself ; there are thousands of persons in bad circumstances who get no good from them . But it works together with the life and power of God in your soul ; and so it produces a blessing . Or , you may lose a wife , or a child , or have sickness in your family ; in themselves no good is produced by these things ; but they work together with the life and power of God in your soul ; and this brings about the blessing . In this word lies the mystery—they work together .

But what do they work together for ? “ For good . ” But what do we call good ? We must not take our idea of good , but God ’s idea of the matter . We must not take what we fancy to be good , but what is really and truly so in his eyes . For instance . A man may say , it is very good to have health ; it may be so in his eyes , but not so in God ’s . Another may say , it is a very good thing to get on in the world , to have a flourishing business , and prosperous trade ; that may be good in

his eyes , but not in God ’s . Another may say , it is good for me to have a family growing up in health and strength , and well provided for : it may be so in his eyes ; but it does not follow that it is good in the Lord ’s . Another may say , it is good to have no troubles , no temptations , no wicked heart , no devil to beguile or harass ; it may seem very good in his eyes , but it does not follow that it is so in God ’s eyes . He is judge in these matters .

What , then , are we to say is “ good ? ” Whatever produces spiritual profit and a blessing ; that which is really good in the eyes of a heart-searching God .

Now just see whether all these things do not in this sense work together for good to them that love God , and are the called according to his purpose . You have had an afflicted body . Well , that in itself did you no good ; for it incapacitated you for business , troubled your mind , made you a burden to yourself and a burden to all around you . There was no good in that . But suppose it weaned you from the world ; suppose it set death before your eyes , made you die daily , stirred up a spirit of prayer and supplication in your heart ; suppose it opened up those promises of God which are suitable to his afflicted family ; suppose it was the means of blessing your soul with some sweet manifestation of your interest in the love and blood of the Lamb— are you then to say , that your sickness , your affliction has not been for good , when it worked together with the grace of God in your soul to bring forth a real blessing ? Or , you have had reverses in the world , have lost money in trade , and are now in distressed circumstances . There is no good in these

things considered abstractly ; but do they stir up the life and power of God in your soul ? do they give you an errand to the throne of grace ? do they shew you what is in your heart ? do they call forth confession before God ? do they make Jesus near and dear to your souls ? do they wean you from the world ? then they have worked together for your good . You have lost a child , or have an afflicted wife , and unhealthy family ; there is no good in that ; for the sorrow of the world worketh death .” But suppose that this wife or child has become your idol ; that you have worshipped it instead of worshipping God,—why , then , this affliction works together for good , if through it your heart’s affections are now fixed on the Lord Jesus alone .

Thus we are to measure this good , not by what the creature thinks , but by what God himself has declared to be good in his word , and what we have felt to be good in our soul’s experience . Have your trials humbled you , made you meek and lowly ? They have done you good . Have they stirred up a spirit of prayer in your bosom , made you sigh , cry , and groan for the Lord to appear , visit , or bless your soul ? They have done you good . Have they opened up those parts of God’s word which are full of mercy and comfort to his afflicted people ? They have done you good . Have they stripped off the covering that is too narrow ? They have done you good . Have they made you more sincere , more earnest , more spiritual , more heavenly-minded , more convinced that the Lord Jesus can alone bless and comfort your soul ? They have done you good . Have they been the means in God’s hand of

giving you a lift in hearing the preached word , of opening your ears to hear none but the true servants of God , those who enter into a tried path , and describe a gracious experience ? They have done you good . Have they made the Bible more precious to you , the promises more sweet , the dealings of God with your soul more prized ? They have done you good .

Now this is the way , that “ all things work together for good .” Not by puffing you up with pride , but by filling your heart with humility ; not by encouraging presumption , but by raising your affections to where Jesus sits at the right hand of God ; not by carrying us into the world , but by bringing us out of it ; not by covering us with a veil of ignorance and arrogance , but by stripping this veil off , and power into the soul . In this way , “ all things work together for good to them that love God , and are the called according to his purpose .”

III.— And this leads me to our third point , which is our knowledge of these things . “ We know that all things work together for good .” How do we know it ? We know it in two ways . We know it , first , from the testimony of God’s word ; and we know it secondly , from the testimony of God in our own conscience .

1 . Let us look at the record of God’s word . See the saints of old ; how afflicted they were ! But did not all things work together for good to them ? Look at Jacob ! What sorrows , trials and afflictions the aged patriarch went through ! his whole life one continued scene of trouble and sorrow . But did not all work together for his good ? Was there one too many , or one too heavy ? Could he not in the end lay his head upon his dying

pillow , and bless and thank God for them all ? Look at Joseph ! Did not all things work together for his good ? His brethren 's enmity ; his being sold into Egypt ; the wicked conduct of his master 's wife ; his being cast into prison ; his interpreting the chief butler 's and baker 's dreams . How all these things worked together for his good , and brought him out to occupy the next place to Pharaoh himself , and be the means in the hand of God of keeping alive the people of Israel . Look at David ! Hunted on the mountains like a partridge ; continually exposed to the spear of Saul ; on every hand nothing but persecution and distress : on all sides affliction and sorrow . Yet all things worked together for his good . What blessed Psalms we have in consequence ! What a sweet treasury of comfort for God 's people through David being thus hunted about on the mountains and in the wilderness ! How suitable they are to God 's poor tried and tempted family ! If David had not had all these persecutions and afflictions, he never could have written the Psalms , nor would there have been in them such treasures of consolation . Look at Job 's troubles and afflictions ! Children taken away ; property swept off in a moment ; his body plagued with boils ; his friends turned to enemies ; and God himself appearing to be against him . Yet , how all things worked together for good in his case !

2 . And have we not in our measure proved the same ? When trials came , we could not see that they were working together for good . No ; perhaps you have sometimes been , as I have felt , in such a state as to believe we never should see the day when they

would prove for our good . They were so dark in themselves , so mysterious , so painful , so trying , so perplexing , that in the unbelief of our mind , we could scarcely believe that God himself could ever convince us they were working together for our spiritual good . But has there been any trial , any temptation , any exercise , any affliction , any sorrow , which has not in some way or other worked together for our spiritual good—in humbling us , shewing us more of what we are , opening up the Scriptures to us , stirring up a spirit of prayer , making Jesus precious , throwing light upon God 's truth , or applying that truth with a measure of sweetness and comfort to our souls ? Thus , we know from our own experience as well as Scripture , that “ all things work together for good to them that love God , and are the called according to his purpose .”

But , you may say , ‘ I do not see it now .’ No ; there is the trying point . ‘ I do not feel it at this present moment .’ No . Did you see your past trials at the very moment that they were working together for your good ? When the Lord afflicted your body , brought you down in circumstances , sent disease into your family , suffered your mind to be tried with the fiery darts of the devil , and a thousand temptations and perplexities—I want to know whether at the time you could speak confidently , ‘ I know that what I am now passing through will work together for my spiritual good .’ If you could say that , then I will add this—it was not half a trial . If you are passing through any trial , sorrow , or temptation ; and can look up unto God , and say , ‘ I know and am persuaded that this very thing is working together for my spiritual good—if you can say that ,

you have got through more than half the trial . It is this which aggravates the trials , temptations , and exercises of God 's people for the most part , that when they are in them they have not this blessed confidence .

But say , that they have faith to see that all the trials and afflictions that grieve and burden them are working together for their spiritual good , then they do not want much comfort from God 's word , and have no communion with God 's tried saints . If I can fight my own battles , I do not want a precious Jesus to bring me off more than conqueror . And thus we should lose all the blessedness of having something to look back upon , and to say , ' I was in this trial , and it did me that good ; I was upon that bed of affliction , and it brought me this blessing ; I had that reverse of circumstances , and it did me good ; I had that trouble in my family , and it did me good ; I was harassed with this temptation , and it did me good ; I was put into this furnace , and it did me good ; sifted in that sieve , and it did me good ; had these oppositions , and they did me good . ' When we can look back and say , ' there has not been a single trial that has not worked in some measure for my good '—that experience encourages us to look forward , and to believe that present trials will have the same result—and that all things are working together for good to us as far as we love God , and are the called according to his purpose .

Thus we may resolve it all . There is no man that can say , ' I can make my trials work together for good . ' He cannot manage that . He must have them ; and it is a mercy to have them . It is a mercy when we are enabled to

bring our trials , our exercises , our temptations to the Lord 's feet , and say , ' Lord , here I am , with all my trials , troubles , exercises ; I cannot manage them ; they are too much for me ; do thou undertake for me ; do thou bring me off more than conqueror ; do thou appear for me ; do thou bless me ; do thou cause all my trials , exercises , and temptations to work together for my spiritual good ; let the trial be sharp , let the affliction be heavy , let there be nothing in it but what is most painful and grievous , yet , Lord , if I can but believe that they are working together for my spiritual good , I can bear them all ! ' If we have found that this has been the result of all that has passed , it may enable us at times to believe it for all that is to come , and to look up in confidence that nothing can happen to us , be it in providence or in grace ,—but can and will " work together for good to them that love God , and are the called according to his purpose . "

J . C . Philpot

will with this poor , little , weak hand try and write something of the wonderful book that John saw that was sealed with seven seals , if the blessed Lamb that had the power to open the book and to look thereon will open this poor weak mind of mine and enable me to see some of the wonderful things in that book , for no one can see anything in it except the Lord reveals it unto them . The book as I see it is the will , decrees , purposes , predestination and foreknowledge of God , which embraces all events that have ever taken place

from the foundation of the world and on through eternity . “ 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 read the book , neither to look thereon . And one of the elders saith unto me , Weep not : behold , the Root of the tribe of Juda , the Root of David , hath prevailed to open the book , and to loose the seven seals thereof .” God alone can open the book and reveal his will and purposes and wonderful works to his children . He alone can open the book and turn the leaves of time , and as the leaves of time are turned it often reveals the wrath of God upon the people ; but it is right , for everything that has ever taken place in this world or will come to pass in the worlds to come , even every wicked or good event , is recorded in the book of the knowledge of God . There are no new or old things with him , and he is just in punishing the people in any way he sees fit for their sins and wickedness , and all the blessings that his poor people receive in this world and in the world to come are alone through the great mercy and love he had for them before the world began . All the wonderful works of God , and his precious written word , are a sealed book to every human being on the earth unless the blessed Lamb loose the seals and enables them to see by an eye of faith some of the things recorded in it . Under the law covenant the Lord loosed the seals and enabled the old prophets to look to the coming of Christ and to look for their redemption in him . Under the law covenant they had the law written on stones and their wor-

ship was obedience to the law . Now Jesus is the end of the law worship . He seeketh such to worship him as do worship him in spirit and in truth . He said , I will write my laws in their hearts and print them in their minds , and I will be unto them a God and they shall be unto me a people .

“ 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 .” The Lamb had seven horns , which is all power in heaven and in earth , to open the seven seals of time , and had seven eyes to look thereon , which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth , from the foundation of the earth until the end of time . God sees all things , yea , his Spirit searches all deep things ; nothing is hid from him .

“ And they sung a new song , saying , Thou art worthy to take the book , and to open the seals thereof : for thou wast slain , and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood , out of every kindred , and tongue , and people , and nation .” Then John saw all God’s people giving him all the glory , honor , power , riches , blessings and praise . God’s people have always given him all the praise . David , the sweet singer of Israel , gave God all the praise for everything in heaven and on earth , and called on everything that hath breath to give God all the praise . The Primitive Baptist is the only church on earth today that is giving God all the praise . They are still singing that new song , and will be singing it when their blessed Lord comes to gather up his precious jewels from this earth . This

new song was new in the beginning of the world and will still be new at the end of the world. The praises of God never grows old, that is why our old primitive songs never grow old, because they give God all the praise, glory, power, honor and blessings. They suit our experiences because the blessed Lamb has loosened the seals and let us see that we are nothing but poor sinners in the sight of a just and holy God, and all the blessings we poor sinners receive at his precious hand are absolutely free gifts, that is why we want to praise him all the days of our unprofitable life in this world and through eternity, even then the song of his praise will still be new. I sometimes feel that if I could praise him every minute of my life in this world and through eternity I could not praise him enough for the many blessings he has seen fit to bless me with. I do not feel worthy of the very least blessing, and if I ever reach heaven and immortal glory it will be by free grace, and grace alone.

Your unworthy sister,

B. A. Crowley

“ For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. ”—I John iii. 8.

There will be no thorough destruction of sin within until the body drops into the grave, and the soul mounts aloft to be with the Lord; nor a full destruction of its effects in the body until the resurrection morn, when the body shall be raised from the sleeping dust and changed into the glorious image of the body of the

Son of God, meet companion for the immortal soul. Then will the victory be complete; then will Christ appear, shining forth with the lustre of a million suns; then will be the glorious manifestation of the Son of God, and the works of the devil thoroughly destroyed. The burden of heaven's anthem, the grand theme of eternal adoration, will be the manifestation of the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil. The redeemed will look down from the battlements of heaven and see what works have been executed by the devil; they will see millions of fellow-beings consigned to eternal misery, weltering in hell, whilst they view themselves safe in the arms of eternal love. They will see the Son of God, without a veil between, manifested to their eyes in such heart-ravishing glory as the three disciples had but a feeble, dim view of on the Mount of Transfiguration. It will be their joy to see him as he is. He will always wear his human nature; he will never lay that aside. That will always shine resplendent with all the glory of Godhead; that will be the object of eternal admiration and love; and to that glory of the God-man all the saints in bliss will be for ever looking and for ever adoring, for sin will no longer have a being in them, but they will be conformed to the glorified image of the Son of God, and be celebrating for ever the grand triumph of the cross.

J. C. Philpot

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 8 / 88
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



LITTLE CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Little Creek Church is located in Franklin County, Route 4, Rocky Mount, Va. on road 641. The church was founded in 1823. Their meeting times are First Sunday after-

noon at 2:00 & Saturday before, each month except first Sunday in September. This meeting has morning and afternoon service. Present Pastor Elder Lane Carter.

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

"A MAN SHALL BE A HIDING PLACE"

"And a man shall be as 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." (Isaiah 32:2)

Prophecy, as we understand it, is the foretelling of events to come. In the foregoing scriptural quotation the Prophet has spoken of a

"man" who is a refuge under certain prevailing circumstances. The person or people under consideration are those who find themselves in need of a refuge from conditions over which they have no control.

The man referred to by the Prophet is, as we understand, Jesus, for what he is in the quotation could not be fulfilled by any other than He. For He is the Eternal Son of God; the Creator, the Redeemer, the final Preservator; and resurrection of the dead.

The depraved nature of natural fallen man cannot know or foresee his

needs . Neither is he capable of reviving himself to the higher order, or spiritual life as it is in Jesus . Nor can he provide for himself a refuge from the menacing and deadly effect of sin and death .

The Prophet has spoken of elemental power and influences which man has always yielded to . Even though the ingenuity of men has devised many inventions , yet God “ hath determined the times before appointed , and the bounds of their habitation .” (Acts 17:26)

In our text Jesus has made reference to the uncontrollable power of the elements by man . This has reference to the uncontrollable power of sin in the mortal nature of man . It is a debt that must be settled not by the resolution of fallen man in a self-righteous change — “ For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God .” (Rom . 3:23) The law cannot be a refuge , “ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight : for by the law is the knowledge of sin .” (Rom . 3:20) Since God is holy the debt of sin must be settled by the holiness of God in His own Son . It is true the unregenerate find rest and comfort in their deeds of self works until the Holy work of Jesus plants the incorruptible seed of holiness in the heart which reveals the depraved and lost condition . Then there is an awakening to the lost condition and the deadness of self-righteous works . David ’s horrible pit is then an experience . (Ps . 40:12) Pharisaical preaching loses its charm , for natural strength is dead . David in the horrible pit and Peter in the sea are sinking . They could not revive by the strength of nature . The same works that had before lifted

them us were now taking them down . The bottomless pit of sin and the roaring waves of destruction can never be conquered by self works . The natural trend of fallen nature is to sin and disobedience to the law of God . This is a known truth to every child of God by sad experiences . “ For the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God , neither indeed can be .” (Rom . 8:7) When the holy spirit is born in the soul and the old man nature is fully revealed in its ghastly form there is often a longing to hide from self . Sin and its evil effect is a strong , chilly wind to the Lord ’s humble poor . Jesus is their covert .

The Prophet speaks for himself in deep , humiliating words of sorrow : “ Then said I , woe is me ; for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips , and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips : for mine eyes have seen the King , the Lord of hosts .” (Isaiah 6:5)

My dear poor in spirit , when you pause in deep meditation , loathe and deplore your state , whisper deeply within the heart : “ Lord if my brethren knew me as I am , they ’d have no more fellowship for me ,” you may take courage in a most precious hope , for your eyes have been opened to see the King (Jesus) . The Prophet did not find these defects of depraved nature until his spiritual eyes had been opened to see the King . This is when we feel to need the covert (Jesus) from the tempest of the powers of sin , its destruction and destitution .

It is not infrequently when the Lord ’s humble poor recline at night with a desire to pray , before they are aware they have left off praying and the mind wandering on some earthly

object. How barren it makes one feel; how dry. It takes the "Rivers of waters" (Spirit of Christ) to revive the dry places, to water the barren soul poverty.

How often do we hear many of our aged brethren complain of their desolate condition, that their seasons of hearing and rejoicing seem to grow further apart as though a famine had begun. (Amos 8:11) The more the revelation of Jesus the greater the destitution. He must increase, but I must decrease. (John 3:30)

It is the gospel that gives a sure hiding place and a refuge. It creates a need and fills that need, creates hunger and feeds the hungry.

It is the gospel that gives the knowledge of light and darkness. "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." (Isaiah 45:7)

Formation and creation are here accredited both to the holy and divine work of God. The light of the gospel in all its virtue and power is formed by revelation in the heart of the redeemed. This formation creates a knowledge of the darkness and horror of sin in its deadly nature. The revealed peace of God in the soul is as a rest in the shadow of a great rock (Jesus) when the knowledge of evil is created within by Him who is our peace. (Eph. 2:14) Light and peace would have no meaning except from their opposite effect. How beautifully the scripture sets forth the complete destruction, eternally of darkness and evil by the atoning blood of Jesus for His redeemed. He is our hiding place, covert, as a river of water in a dry place and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

Submitted in love and for truth's sake.

Elder W. E. Turner

MEETINGS

ORIGINAL SOUTH ARKANSAS PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The next session convenes with Pilgrim Rest Church. Located off Highway 167 North of Fordyce, Ark. Take highway 273 about one half mile to church. Session beginning on Friday before the 3rd Sunday in September 1988 for three days. September 16, 17, 18. Beginning at 10:00 a.m.

Elder John C. Townley, Moderator

UNION MEETING

The West Country Line Union meeting will be held, the Lord willing with Moons Creek Church the 5th Sunday in July. We invite all lovers of the truth to meet with us and especially ministers of our faith and order.

Elder Kenneth R. Key

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR MAY 1988

Mrs. Erby Dalton, VA 2.00
 Mrs. Eunice Thompson, NC ... 20.00
 Mrs. Ruth W. Blair, VA 10.00
 Mrs. Nannie W. Wiggins, NC ... 2.00
 Hartzel B. Nelson, WV 2.00

Mrs . A . R . Patterson , LA	7.00
Glen Fisher , MD	2.00
Mrs . Ernestine Sharp , LA	7.00
Mrs . Roma H . Smith , AL	7.00
Mrs . Peggy West , NC	7.00
Mrs . T . H . Graham , TX	7.00
Mrs . Muriel M . Strader , NC	1.00
Horace E . Walker , VA	3.00
Mrs . Julia R . Garner , NC	5.00
R . Vernon Furr , NC	2.00
Mrs . H . A . Harlow , TX	5.00
William E . Mitchell , VA	2.00
H . R . Toney , MS	2.00
Mrs . Clemmie Bishop , AR	7.00
Miss Reidy Pickral , VA	50.00
Lawrence W . Myers , VA	2.00
Mrs . Cecil R . Massey , NC	5.00
Mrs . G . B . McAdams , MS	2.00
Mrs . Olive Hastings , MD	5.00
Eld . Willard Cox , VA	2.00
Frank & Ella Simpkins , VA	4.00
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In memory Eld . Joe Hamrick , TX .	
Paran Prim . Baptist Church	50.00
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Friends in Texas	35.00

OBITUARIES

FOYE BENTON

Sister Foye Benton , a member of Durham Primitive Baptist Church passed away on September 8 , 1987 .

She had moved to Durham with her daughter Elma Benton . On July 19 , 1970 , she was received into the fellowship of the Durham Church by letter from Mt . Zion Primitive Baptist

Church in Birmingham , Alabama .

She was able to attend her meetings regularly for a while , but her health began to fall rapidly . Her daughter Elma looked after her faithfully as long as she was able . Sister Benton died peacefully in her sleep at Tyson Manor Nursing Home in Alabama and was buried in that state . She was a lovely , soft-spoken humble woman who truly loved the doctrine of election and salvation by grace .

We are grateful to have known her in sweet fellowship and friendship .

Catherine M . Humbarger , Clerk

DEACON H . B . CANNADAY , SR .

I have been requested to write a memoir of Deacon H . B . Cannaday , Sr . After obtaining the necessary information from his widow , like names , dates , etc . I was at a loss for a preliminary . I retired to bed meditating on it . I dreamed I saw Brother Harry sitting in a large room . I had to pass in front of him on my way to the pulpit , where I was appointed to speak in his memory . Someone suggested the lights to be turned on . I ask that they not be turned on . I felt my unworthiness to such a great extent I preferred to not be seen . Brother Harry ask . “ Why not turn them on ? ” They were turned on confronting me was an audience of God ’s children . I reminded them of how we were blessed to have Brother Harry for Deacon . I realize this is a very peculiar dream , however it seems I must use it as a preliminary .

How encouraging it was to see Brother Harry and have him speak to me .

He also served as Assistant Clerk and Clerk from September 1964 until

September 1987 when he offered his resignation due to failing health.

He was born in Roanoke City, to Bernice A. and Clydie Brammer Cannaday Sutphin May 15, 1924. He was married to Marie Dobbins December 26, 1942. Dr. R. Gambill See officiating. To this union was born one daughter, Brenda G., two sons, H.B. Jr., and Roger D., all surviving, together with their mother Marie Dobbins Cannaday. Also surviving, grand-children: Amy M., Melissa, Steve, Todd M. and Laura C. Cannaday. Half Brothers George A. and Wilton L. Sutphin, Step-sister Ola S. Latta, Step-brothers: Elvin, Jessie and Isaac Sutphin. Others survivors: Step-grandmother: Mrs. Ethel Cannaday, Uncle: Stanford A. Cannaday. Preceded in death by his Father Bernice A. Cannaday, Mother: Clydie Brammer Cannaday Sutphin, Brother: Roy A. Cannaday, Sister: Hazel Cannaday Helms, Half Brother Norman Odell Sutphin.

Brother Harry and Sister Marie were received into the fellowship of the church June 1944. They were baptized July 2, 1944 by Elder J.P. Helms, membership with Paynes Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Floyd County, Virginia.

Following a lengthy illness from cancer, it pleased God to call our dear Brother, Deacon Harry Brammer Cannaday, Sr. from our midst January 8, 1988. Funeral services: Oakey's Vinton Chapel, 1:00 p.m. January 11, 1988. His pastor Elder Hale Terry assisted by Elder Amos Hash officiating. He enjoyed singing. Was a good song leader. His favorite hymns were sung at the funeral: I know that my Redeemer lives; What comfort this sweet sentence

gives!

He lives, He lives, who once was dead,

He live my everliving Head.

He lives to bless me with his love,

He lives to plead my cause above,

He lives my hungry soul to feed;

He lives to help in time of need.

He lives, my kind and gracious Friend;

He lives and loves me to the end;

He lives and while He lives I'll sing.

He lives, my Prophet, Priest and King.

He lives, all glory to his name!

He lives, my Jesus, still the same

O sweet the joy this sentence gives,

I know that my Redeemer lives.

and:

Amazing grace how sweet the sound!

That saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved.

How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed.

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

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

Brother Harry was a firm believer in salvation by the grace of God. Therefore he could witness with Paul 1 Cor. 15:10 By the grace of God I am what I am. Also Psalm 18:1,2 I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, My God my strength in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

By the grace of God, he was able in prayer. His body was laid to rest at the Cannaday Family Cememtery,

Floyd County , Virginia , to await the second coming of the Lord .

May God bless the family with his Love and Mercy . May He reconcile them to their great loss and graciously enable them to remember that their husband and father's life was one of God 's greatest blessings given to each of them to enrich their sojourn here on earth .

May it please God to comfort all who mourn .

In need of mercy ,
Gaye A . Thompson

Pastor Elder J . T . Prescott at Jones Funeral Home in Jacksonville , NC . She was laid to rest in Onslow Memorial Park to await the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ .

Written by request of North East Primitive Baptist Church in conference November meeting . Request 3 copies by made , one sent to the Signs of the Times , one copy sent to the church and one copy sent to the family family .

Written by Lewis Sammons , Clerk
Elder J . T . Prescott , Moderator

SISTER DONNIE MORTON

It has pleased our heavenly Father to remove from our midst our dearly beloved Sister Donnie Morton , who was a member of Northeast Primitive Baptist Church . She was born to Banistor & Mary Morton April 2 , 1893 in Onslow County . She died October 8 , 1987 making her stay on earth 94 years and 7 months .

Sister Morton was married to Earnst Morton at an early age to this union was born 7 children , 4 sons , Earnest , James , John and Lester Morton , 3 girls , Mary Gibson , Margaret Collins , Nellie Lovett , all of Jacksonville , NC .

She is survived by 3 sisters , Mable Kellum of Jacksonville , Mary Lena Southerland of Willard , NC and Vera May Dean of Ohio and 15 grandchildren .

Sister Morton was firm believer in Salvation by the Grace of God . She attended church regularly as long as her health permitted .

Her funeral was conducted by

RUTH LANIER POLLARD

Sister Ruth Pollard , a member of the Durham Primitive Baptist Church passed away on December 14 , 1987 . Her funeral was conducted by Elder Cleo Robertson at Hall-Wynne Funeral Chapel and her body was returned to Jacksonville , North Carolina , for burial . She offered to Durham Church on May 19 , 1956 and was received by confession of faith . She loved the doctrine of election and salvation by grace and enjoyed sound doctrinal preaching .

For many years she looked after members of her family who needed her and she was blessed with a spirit of generosity toward the church where needed . She retired from Southern Bell Telephone Company , where she had worked for many years . She is survived by a cousin , nieces and nephews . Sister Pollard bore her afflictions with patience and trust in the Lord and we feel that her spirit is now resting in that perfect peace that belongs to the children of God .

Catherine M. Humbarger
Clerk

RALPH B. TATE

God who doeth all things well has seen fit to remove from our midst our kinsman and Brother Ralph B. Tate on December 23, 1987 at age 86.

Brother Tate and his wife Florence Palmer Tate attended church many, many years and both contributed of their time and labor in the repair and upkeep of our church in many ways.

On June 25, 1978 he asked for a home with Friendship Primitive Baptist Church near White House and Baptized on June 29, 1978 by Elder Swayne Young.

He attended church faithfully until ill health prevented his coming.

He begged and was brought from the nursing home to our meeting November 1, 1987.

His wife preceeded him in death and was laid to rest on their 50th wedding anniversary July 4, 1976. Elder Richard Campbell conducted his funeral December 26.

He is survived by daughter Wynell Whittaken, sons Joe J. and Douglas Tate, nine grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. He will be sadly missed but we hope our loss is his eternal gain.

Submitted by Marjorie Cook

ADOLPHUS M. WALKER

Our Heavenly Father, in his infinite wisdom, Love and Mercy has called from our pesence a

dear Brother Adolphus Walker. This sovereign God is too wise to err, to good to be unkind.

Brother Walker tho we loved him and miss him, we would not wish him back to this world of trials, tribulations, and heartache.

We believe he is experiencing a peace and rest that we who are left behind know not.

Brother Walker was born Aug. 22, 1910, the son of J. Willie Walker and Annie Cobb Walker.

He is survived by his wife Sister Hattie Griffith Walker, three daughters, Ruby Jones, Danville, Va., Doris Salmons, Cascade, Va., Patricia Dishmon, Eden, N.C. and one son Elwood Walker, Charlotte, N.C. Also one sister Lucy Burgess and one brother Howard Walker.

Brother Walker and wife Sister Hattie joined Dan River Primitive Baptist Church Aug. 23, 1975, and was baptized Sunday following Brother Walker's funeral was held at Fair Funeral Home Chapel Tuesday Jan. 5, 1988 by his pastor Elder Kenneth Key, burial was in Dan View Cemetery.

He was a meek and humble person and was loved by those who knew him. He was steadfast in the doctrine.

His toils and cares of this life are over, and his work on earth is finished. Indeed it was well done and his memory at Dan River Church and among his Friends shall not fade, but will linger on.

May we be made reconciled to the Lords will, especially his dear companion, and his lovely children.

This memorial was written by one who loved and appreciated him very much.

Coley S. Strader

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POEM

IN THE VALLEY HE RESTORETH MY SOUL

*When I'm low in spirit I cry,
" Lord, lift me up, I want to go
higher with Thee."
But the Lord knows I can't live on
the mountain,
So He picked out a valley for me.*

*It's dark as a dungeon and the
sun seldom shines,
And I question, " Lord, why must
this be?"
But He tells me there's strength in
my sorrow,
And there's vict'ry in trials for me.*

*He leads me beside still waters,
Somewhere in the valley below;
He draws me aside to be tested
and tried,
But in the valley He restoreth my
soul.*

MOVED OR MOVING ?

To assure you of getting your " Signs " and without missing any copies, be sure to inform us of any change of address.

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EDITORIAL

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me, and this is the will of him that sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up the last day.



Elder R. H. Campbell

Read the above scripture again very carefully. Consider what is being said and who is saying it. Then consider the doctrines that are being preached in the world today and determine which one can subscribe to

the truth as set forth in these verses of scripture. Who among all of the religious orders in this day and age, who name God as their deity, declare the finished work of God as the only cause of the salvation of the saints. Who, in all of the Christian, so called, denominations in the modern age declare that it is all of God and that it was his own wisdom and power that designed this plan of salvation, is executing it and will assure the completion of his perfect work simply because it is his own good pleasure to do so. Who among them view the salvation of the sinner as the extension of the sovereign grace and mercy of God to a wretched undone mortal who is oblivious of his condition and at ease in his environment and spiritually dead. The scripture above is a simple statement of the truth that very few who profess to be Christians will accept as the doctrine of God our savior, and yet, it is the only way that the sinner will ever come to Christ.

These are the words of Jesus, on one occasion, as he taught his disciples and they set forth the absolute certainty of the salvation of the whole household of faith since it is the work of God and the scriptures teach that his work is perfect. It seems that from the statement and the direct reference to the reason that all come to and believe in Jesus that all who use the scriptures as their rule of faith would understand the sovereignty of God in their conversion. Jesus said that all of them were given to him by his Father and that they would come to him. This means that regardless of what they may encounter in the way, they will come to him and that they will be received by him into the church which is his body. This includes every

step in the experience of the Apostle Paul both before and after that day on the road to Damascus , it includes the total experience of one as destitute as the Gadarine , as blind to the things of God as Bartimeous or as lame as the man who lay at the gate of the temple begging Alms of all who entered the temple . If the Father has given them to Jesus in that covenant before the foundation of the world , then at some point in this time world they will be converted as was Paul , clothed and civilized as the Gadarine , given sight as Bartimeous and walk as the lame man and they all shall , not may , come to Jesus and be received into his kingdom .

The doctrines of the world depict Jesus as wanting all men to come unto him to be saved and his will is that all would receive him into their life . Jesus declares in the above scripture that he did not come to do his own will , but rather the will of his Father , and the will of his Father is that he would save all that were chosen in Jesus before the foundation of the world . All of those who were predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself , according to the good pleasure of God 's will , these and these only .

All of these truths are based upon what has already been done and are not , in any way , contingent upon what may or may not happen in the future . They are based upon the sovereign work of God in the birth , life , death and resurrection of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and his obedience to his Fathers will . This is why Jesus said , " All that the Father giveth me shall come to me , " and again , " no man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father . "

This is the only way of salvation and it is by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God the Father and this is , " to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed ; not to that only which is of the law , but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham ; who is the father of us all . " Jesus is the way , the truth and the life to all that the Father giveth him and they shall come unto him , they shall be born again , and and they shall see and enter into the kingdom of God .

Jesus said , " I go to prepare a place for you . And if I go and prepare a place for you , I will come again and receive you unto myself ; that where I am ye may be also . " The world loudly proclaims that Jesus came to make a way whereby anyone who desired to do so could , at their own option or , as they state it , surrender their lives unto him and be readily accepted by him into his Fathers kingdom . The truth of the matter is that he has gone to prepare a place for a certain people , not the world at large , which he did with his death on the cross and resurrection from the grave and at the appointed time he will return and receive those certain people unto himself that they may ever dwell with him . He is not waiting for them to make a decision to come unto him as the world implies but rather by his going he finished the work that his Father gave him to do , and in so doing he has secured the purchase of the prized possession unto his Fathers kingdom as per the covenant made between the members of the trinity before time began . He is seated at the right hand of the Father til the last member is brought into the fold and the body stands manifestly complete as it has ever stood in the mind and

purpose of the creator who made it for his own majestic glory . Then Jesus will return according to his promise and receive them to himself and present them unto God without spot or blemish to the honor and glory of his matchless name . The scriptures declare that God will not give his glory to another and for man to presume that their salvation is accomplished by their decision , their works or efforts is to claim the glory that wisdom teaches is God 's alone . God speaks and it is done , he commands and it stands fast and this fundamental truth applies to all of the scriptures in both the old testament and the new testament since they are Him speaking by the mouth of his servants . One scripture is just as sure and certain as any other whether spoken by the patriarchs and prophets of olden times or the Apostles in later years , they are all profitable for doctrine and are spiritual food for nourishment of the saints of God during their pilgrimage here on earth . The truth is just as profound if it appears one time or one hundred times in the scriptures , as one minister said on one occasion when a point which appears only once was mentioned how many times does God have to say a thing to make it so . All scripture is given by inspiration from the same source and inspiration teaches that even as He has thought so shall it come to pass . The lines of truth that are woven throughout the old and new testament are given by the same inspiration that stirs the hearts of God 's children today and quickens them to rise up and walk in newness of life . These truths do not dim with the passing of time nor do they become obsolete because of the social and technical progress made in

the world around us . In my lifetime I can remember when the standards of technology of the day were primitive when compared to todays and yet the heart of man has not changed or improved by these things . The heart of man today is evil and subject to the same vanity that the first man was created subject to . If there is a change in the heart of an individual it is not because his environment but rather because of a work that is done within and for him , and this is the work of a sovereign , loving and merciful heavenly Father . The scripture that says , " he spake and it was done ; he commanded and it stood fast , " seems to explain this change in the heart of an individual according to the experiences left on record of many who have been changed from the ways in which they once walked . This is according to my experience if I have indeed had one . I pray that it was of God , for if it was , it shall continue to stand fast and all of the turmoil and strife of the world around me cannot prevent it from standing firm and sure til the day of Jesus Christ .

The Apostle Paul evidently was of the same opinion as he wrote , " For I am persuaded , that neither death , nor life , nor angels , nor principalities , nor powers , nor things present , nor things to come , nor height , nor depth , nor any other creature , shall be able to separate us from the love of God , which is in Christ Jesus our Lord ." These scriptures are especially beautiful and comforting to anyone who has been made to see themselves as they are in the flesh . Their prayer is as David 's was when he had sinned and God commanded Gad , Davids seer , to say unto David " I offer thee three things ; choose one of

them that I may do it unto thee .” The options were , seven years of famine , three months to flee before his enemies or three days pestilence in his land . David said unto Gad , “ I am in a great strait : let us fall now into the hands of the Lord ; for his mercies are great : and let me not fall into the hands of man .” David did not want his fate to be in the hand of man , either his own or others but let it stand in the hands of the Lord . When man is given to see his wretched undone condition he knows that the arm of man is too short and only the mercy of God is sufficient to reach his case . In this conditions the scriptures which stress the absolutes of God such as the one above which says , “ All that the Father giveth me shall come to me me , and he that cometh I will in no wise cast out ,” are the bulwarks in which we trust and the high towers which we look to are , the times of our conversion and the seasons of refreshing which we have experienced along our journey in life . Oh that we can just dwell in the hands of God ’s mercy and never depend upon the hands of man , even our own , for anything pertaining to our salvation , is the fervent prayer of each one and they do not view it as a hard doctrine but rather the only plan of salvation that is sufficient for their case .

Jesus closed the above scripture with , “ and this is the will of him that sent me , that of all which thou hast given me I should lose nothing , but should raise it up the last day .” What a grand and glorious legacy , this is , that has been left to all of the heirs of promise assuring them that they shall be with him where he is . The foundation upon which it is built is that it is the will of the Father through the suffering

and death fo the Son and is manifested in the heart of each by the Holy Spirit . There could never be anything that is more sure and certain to be fulfilled than this because it involves the integrity of each member of the trinity .

May God , in the riches of his grace bless this writing to the honor of his holy name and to the comfort of the hearts of those to whom these promises are made , if it be the truth and may he enable you to discern the error if it is not .

In bonds of love ,
Elder Richard H . Campbell

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

PSALM 128

Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord ; that walketh in his ways .

For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands : happy shalt thou be , and it shall be well with thee .

Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house : thy children like olive plants round about thy table .

Behold , that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord .

The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion : and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life .

Yea , thou shalt see thy children ’s children , and peace upon Israel .

 ARTICLES

DOING THE WILL OF GOD .

Preached at Zoar Chapel , Great Alie Street, London, on Lord's Day Evening, July 13th, 1845 .

“ For ye have need of patience , that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise . ”—**HEBREWS x . 36 .**

Man's ways and God's ways differ in well - nigh every respect . Man's ways are hastily planned , and for the most part imperfectly executed ; God's ways are designed with infinite wisdom , and performed with infinite power . Man's aim is the aggrandisement of self in some shape or form ; pleasure or profit , of some kind or other , is the main - spring of all his actions ; the aim of God is His own eternal glory . Man , when bent upon any particular object , leaps hastily towards it , and cannot brook the slightest obstacle ; God slowly brings about His own eternal purposes in the face of every obstacle , and in spite of all opposition or contradiction from earth or hell . Man's purpose is to bring things to a rapid conclusion , no sooner does he scatter the seed than he wants to reap the harvest ; God's plans are carried out through a series of years , and as they are planned with infinite wisdom , so they are brought to pass by a succession of apparently opposing and contradictory events .

The reason , then , why the Apostle plainly intimated to his believing

brethren that they had “ need of patience , that after they had done the will of God , they might receive the promise , ” was to remind them that God's ways were not as their ways , nor God's thoughts as their thoughts ; but that , in the execution of His own eternal purposes , there would be such obstacles and apparent contradictions , that it needed on their part “ patience ” to wait the result . It is , therefore , as if He bade them stand still and see the salvation of God ; to put themselves into His hands , and lie with submission at His feet .

By way of bringing out , as the Lord may enable , the mind and meaning of of the Spirit in our text with greater distinctness and clearness , I shall adopt three leading divisions of my subject , and show :

First , what it is to do “ the will of God . ”

Secondly , why we have “ need of patience , ” after we have done His will . And ,

Thirdly , in what way we “ receive the promise , ” when patience has had its perfect work .

I . But at the very beginning it will be necessary to settle certain points . If the beginning of our sermons be wrong , as in religion , the whole will be wrong ; and if we set out with false premises , the conclusion must needs be vitiated . I like , therefore , as the very outset of my discourses , to lay down my points clearly that , with God's blessing , we may start fair ; that there be no obscurity , haziness , mist , or fog upon the mind , but that , by laying down my positions with clearness and distinctness at the beginning , there may be no mistake in my meaning , except a man will

mistake wilfully .

Let me then , first , settle from the Scriptures of truth what is meant here by “ the will of God . ” “ The will of God ” may be divided into two branches : there is the revealed will of God , and there is the secret will of God ; and these two are often contradictory . I will explain my meaning by a few instances selected from God ’ s own inspired record .

1 . It was the revealed will of God that Adam should not touch the forbidden fruit . God specially commanded him not to eat it ; therefore that was the revealed will of God . But it was the secret will of God that Adam should eat of it , because by the bringing in of sin into the world through Adam ’ s transgression , the glorious plan of redemption , which was in the mind of God from all eternity , was brought to light .

2 . It was the revealed will of God that Abraham should slay his son ; and Abraham , acting upon the revealed will of God , took the knife for that purpose , so that but one moment intervened betwixt the blade being drawn and being sheathed in Isaac ’ s heart . But the secret will of God was that Isaac should not be slain , but that the ram should be caught in the thicket , and be offered up in Isaac ’ s stead .

3 . It was the revealed will of God that Saul should slay Agag root and branch . But it was the secret will of God that he should not ; for it was by means of Saul ’ s transgression in this matter that he was put away , and David set upon the throne .

4 . It was God ’ s revealed will that David should not commit adultery , for God has said , “ Thou shalt not commit adultery ; ” and that revealed will of

God David was bound to look to . But it was the secret will of God that David should fall ; for it was God ’ s secret purpose to give him Solomon from the wife of Uriah .

5 . It was the revealed will of God that the Jews should not put the Lord to death ; for God has said , “ Thou shalt do no murder . ” But it was the secret will of God that Jesus should be crucified ; as we read , “ Him being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God , ye have taken , and by wicked hands have crucified and slain ” (Acts ii . 23) .

6 . It was the revealed will of God that Peter should not deny his Master ; but it was the secret will of God that he should deny Him , to teach him experimentally his weakness .

Thus I have endeavoured to show show , in a variety of scriptural instances , how the revealed will of God often clashes with the secret will of God .

II . But what is “ the will of God ” that we are to do—God ’ s revealed will , or God ’ s secret will ? There cannot be a shadow of a doubt which will we are to do . To say we must do the secret will of God is bare-faced antinomianism . To steer our course by the secret will of God would be as much a delusion as if the mariner were to steer his course upon the trackless ocean by the newly discovered planet , invisible to the naked eye . Shipwreck would alike terminate his voyage and ours . No ; it is the revealed will of God we must obey . It is that which God has designed us to walk by ; and He will take care if we walk by any other rule than His revealed will that we shall smart for it in time or in eternity . “ Secret things belong unto the Lord our God ; but

those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever" (Deut . xxix . 29) .

" The will of God in our text , then , is the revealed will of God—the mind of God , as declared in the inspired writings .

But what is it to do " the will of God " ? Here we must be equally clear , if the Lord enable . Our trumpet here , too , must give a certain sound . What is it to do " the will of God " ? Now , observe , to do " the will of God " is to do it in the way in which God would have it done ; and three things are absolutely needful in order that we should do " the will of God " as God would have that will to be done . " Thy will be done on earth , as it is in heaven . " We must do it from right motives , from right ends , and under right influences . But what are right motives , right ends , and right influences ? Are they to be found in fallen man ? Are they the product of nature ? They are not . Right motives are spiritual motives , right ends are spiritual ends , right influences are spiritual influences . And therefore , only so far as our motives are of grace , our ends are of grace , and our influences are of grace , do we " the will of God " as God would have it done .

There is a great deal of talk about doing " the will of God , " and the precept is much insisted upon by those who never felt the power of God 's truth in their souls . Men think that " the will of God " can be done by the creature ; and so long as " the will of God " is done , it matters not how it is done . But a man may do " the will of God " from a mere selfish feeling , to gain heaven thereby . Yes , a man may do what he calls " the will of God , " and yet self be his end , self his motive ,

and self his influence .

III . But having , as the Lord enabled , laid down , I hope , in accordance with divine truth , what " the will of God " is , and what it is to do " the will of God , " let us enter into some particulars wherein " the will of God " consists , and whereby " the will of God " is done . And observe , the Apostle is writing to gracious characters ; not to sinners dead in trespasses and sins , not to professors dead in a graceless profession , but to living souls , to those who have ears to hear hear , hearts to feel , and consciences to tremble at God 's word .

There is , then , a variety of particulars wherein we have to do " the will of God , " but it is only so far as God is pleased to work in us " to will and to do of His good pleasure " that we do " the will of God " at all . For instance ,

1 . It is one part of the revealed will of God that His people should repent of their sins . " Repent ye , therefore , and be converted , that your sins may be blotted out " (Acts iii . 19) . Now , when the Lord is pleased to pierce the heart , to lay conviction upon our conscience , to work sorrow and distress in our mind on account of sin , then we are doing that branch of God God 's revealed will by repenting of our sins and confessing them before God ; and not only so , but forsaking as well as confessing . " He that covereth his sins shall not prosper ; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy " (Prov . xxviii . 13) . Every poor , sorrowing child of God that is grieved and troubled on account of sin is doing " the will of God " by groaning and sighing under sin as a burden upon his conscience .

2 . Again , to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is the revealed will of

God . What said the Lord Jesus when they asked Him , “ What shall we do that we might work the works of God God ? ” “ This is the work of God , that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent ” (John vi . 28 , 29) . “ And this is His commandment , That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ ” (1 John iii . 23) . Thus , when the jailor , fearing he should perish and his soul filled with horror , cried out in the agony of despair , “ What must I do to be saved ? ” what was the answer ? “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ , and thou shalt be saved , and thy house ” (Acts xvi . 31) . Faith was given him to believe ; and thus he did “ the will of God . ” Not that the creature was able to put forth this mighty act of faith ; but with the word power came into his soul , and the Holy Ghost raised up faith in his heart to see Jesus , and to believe in His precious name . To believe , then , in Jesus is to do “ the will of God ”—to do it from the heart ; “ for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness , and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation ” (Rom . x . 10) .

3 . To come out of the world , to forsake it utterly , and never more to walk in its alluring paths , this is the revealed will of God ; as He says , “ Come out from among them , and be ye separate , saith the Lord , and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you , and will be a Father unto you , and ye shall be My sons and daughters , saith the Lord Almighty ” (2 Cor . vi . 17 , 18) . To forsake the world , all its vanities , pleasures , and charms , and like Ruth of old , to cleave to the people of God , saying , “ Thy people shall be my people , and thy God my God ; ” thus to feel , and thus to act , is to do the revealed will of

God , under the Spirit ’s secret influence in the soul .

4 . To come out and be separate from professing churches , which have a name to live while dead , is to do “ the will of God ; ” for we read , “ Having a form of godliness , but denying the power thereof ; from such turn away ” (2 Tim . iii . 5) . Therefore , to come boldly out of all letter churches , be they ever so high or ever so low in doctrine , if the Holy Ghost is not in their midst , if the power of godliness is denied , or the things of God are not vitally felt by them ; to come out and turn away from them is to do “ the will of God . ”

5 . To forsake the ministry of letter preachers , heady , notional Calvinists , with the doctrines in the head , and enmity against the power of vital godliness and the living experience of God ’s children in the heart—to flee from such a ministry is to do “ the will of God ” ; for the Lord commends the church in Ephesus for “ trying those who said they were apostles , and were not , and found them liars ” (Rev . ii . 2) . And if any of you who fear God are sitting under letter ministers , sound in the head , but devoid of experience in the heart , you are to do what God praises the Ephesian church for doing—to try them by the Word of God and your own experience , and if you find them liars , lying against the truth of God in any of its blessed branches , you are to come out from among them , and forsake the tents of these wicked men . This is to do “ the will of God ”—to turn your back on the false apostles , and cast your lot among His poor , despised and persecuted family .

6 . To seek the Lord ’s face ; to pour out your heart before Him ; to

wrestle with Him for spiritual blessings, as Jacob wrestled with the Angel; to give Him no rest until He manifest Himself in your soul, and shed abroad His pardoning love in your heart—this is doing “the will of God”; for the Lord says, “Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us” (Psa. lxxii. 8). “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near” (Isa. lv. 6). “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else” (Isa. xlv. 22). The Lord has given these invitations as a part of His revealed will, and when we are enabled to seek His face, to cry, sigh, long, pant, and pour out our hearts before Him, it is doing a part of God’s revealed will.

To wait at His feet; to take no denial; to persevere; to press through the throng of doubts and fears, like the woman with the issue of blood, and not to rest till we touch the hem of the Redeemer’s garment, and find virtue flowing out of the blessed Immanuel into our souls—is to do “the will of God.” What said God Himself from heaven? (and I remember once how sweet those words were to my soul) “This is My beloved Son! hear ye Him.” As though God said, “Turn away your eyes from everyone else; listen not to the breath of the creature; ‘This is My beloved Son; hear ye Him.’ He has the words of eternal life.” His words are the words of man that shall die, of a creature that shall come to nought; but the words that He speaks, “they are spirit, and they are life.” To wait, then, upon the Lord till He be gracious; to beg of Him to manifest Himself to our souls, and keep plead-

ing with Him, as Job said, “I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments” (Job xxiii. 4)—to do this continually and unceasingly, as He enables, is to do God’s revealed will.

8. To endure afflictions, to wade up to the very neck at times through a sea of trouble, is to do God’s will. He has left a “poor and afflicted people,” and they are “to trust in the name of the Lord.” It is “through much tribulation we are to enter the kingdom.” Afflictions are our appointed portion, if our names are in the book of life. We have to be conformed to the image of a suffering Saviour below if we are to be conformed to His glorified image above. And, therefore, to endure a great fight of afflictions, to be buffeted by Satan, hated by the world, and troubled, daily troubled by a body of sin and death, is to do God’s revealed will.

9. To bear whatever God may lay upon us; when one cheek is smitten, to turn the other also; not to render railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing; to submit to every stroke that God may lay upon us in providence or in grace; to see the rod, and Him who hath appointed it; and to know that every rod is the mouth of God—thus to endure “the will of God” (for “the will of God” is done by suffering as well as by acting) is to do “the will of God.”

10. To resist even unto blood, striving against sin; not to give way to it, but to fight against it with every power of our soul; to cry and sigh, to grieve and groan, to wrestle and plead with the Lord that sin may not drag us down into open shame—thus to sigh and cry is to do “the will of God.” And there is a special promise

to those who resist unto blood, resist Satan, take up the cross, deny self, put off the old man, and crucify the flesh with the lusts thereof. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13).

11. To endure to the end; not to give up, not to yield the fight; but though all weakness, and all helplessness, and exercised within and without, as Hart says:

"Still to maintain the battle,
With soldier-like behaviour;
To keep the field,
And never yield,
But firmly eye the Saviour."

—this patient continuance in well-doing is doing is to do "the will of God."

11. But why have we "need of patience" after we have done "the will of God"? which is the second part of my subject. Because we may do "the will of God" (though we only can do it under divine influence) and yet the promise be delayed. We may sow in tears, and yet be very long before we reap in joy. We may have years of painful exercise before the Lord comes into our soul in the rich manifestations of His glory and love. And therefore we need patience; as James says, "Let patience have her perfect work" (James i. 4); and he quotes to us (v. 7) the instance of the husbandman who "has long patience," and does not expect a harvest to be reaped in the same week that the seed was committed to the furrow. Is it not so in nature? Winds and storms, nipping frosts, blight, mildew—all these things pass over the

corn; and yet when harvest comes it is ripened and reaped in spite of, and through, every contrary influence. And so with the grace of God in the soul. God has no mushroom Christians in His family; no Jonah's gourds that spring up in a night and wither in a night, soon ripe and soon rotten. The oak is the growth of a century, the mushroom the growth of a single night; and so, if we are to be oaks, "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified," we shall not grow very fast. Parents, you know, do not like to see their children run up too quickly. "Oh," they say, "I am afraid by my child's shooting up so tall, he is growing beyond his strength." And parents never like to see the heads of their children grow very large, in disproportion to their bodies. "Ah," says the anxious parent, "I fear lest there be disease in the head, lest there be water upon the brain." And is it not so with professors? I never like to see people's heads grow faster than their hearts; it is sure to be at the expense of their bodies. Their spindle shanks show that the vital fluids of the body are being exhausted by this morbid growth. Many professors you may find in this day with large heads, but with small hearts; active tongues, but their limbs trembling, and their hands and feet so weak, that they can scarcely move a step in God's way. God keep you and me from resembling them.

Thus we have "need of patience." But what does patience imply?

1. It implies, first, endurance. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." "Ye are they that have continued with Me in My

temptations ; and I appoint unto you a kingdom , as My Father hath appointed unto Me .” Contrast the disciples that endured with those that fell away. When the Lord told them they must “ eat His flesh , and drink His blood ,” “ Oh , ” said they , “ this is a hard saying : who can hear it ? ” (John vi . 60 .) And when He told them , “ Ye shall know the truth , and the truth shall make you free ,” their pride rose to resent it , and they said , “ We be Abraham ’s seed , and were never in bondage to any man .” And what was the end ? “ Then took they up stones to cast at Him .” Oh , it is a mercy to endure ! When we look around , and see those who started with us in the Christian race—where are they ? It is almost with us like those who came to Job : “ And I only am escaped alone to tell thee .” Some have gone into the world , others fallen into sin , others drunk down deadly draughts of heresy and error ; so that , like a shipwrecked sailor , we almost seem to have escaped with our lives in our hands . But if we endure for a single year , or a single day , it is only by the grace of God . It is now ten years since I first preached in this Metropolis , and what has kept me in the truth to this day ? The grace of God , I hope . But it has been through exercises and trials , temptations and afflictions ; and therefore I must preach them , because I feel them ; and though my coward flesh shrinks from them , I can see what need there is for this heavy ballast , that the vessel may sail safely . It is to bring us low , and keep us low . By the pressure of sin , temptation , sorrows , and exercises , we are kept fast by the truth of God ; for when we are brought into these painful places , we are made to feel that

nothing short of the truth of God can save or bless our souls . We lean upon error , and it cannot hold us up ; we lean upon self , and it is a lying refuge ; we lean upon the truth , and find the truth to be that which supports our hearts . And thus , having bought the truth in the furnace of affliction , we love the truth , and we cleave to the truth , because the truth , through affliction and exercise , is the only thing which can comfort and support us in the trying hour .

But we have “ need of patience ” when the Lord does not appear , does not bless our souls , does not come into our hearts , does not visit us with His gracious presence , withholds His smiling countenance , and leaves us to grope for the wall like the blind , and to grope as if we had no eyes . But what makes us endure ? A sense of the consequences of not enduring . Can I go into the world ? I cannot ; my heart will often go there , but I get stung with guilt if my heart goes after the world , and my body follows it . Can I go into sin ? If I do it makes my conscience bleed . Can I go into error ? I cannot ; it is hateful to my soul . Can I drink down deadly draughts of heresy ? I cannot ; there is poison in it ; no sweetness , no power , no savour , no life , no unction . Shall I go into dry doctrines and a graceless profession ? That will leave my heart like the blasted hearth ; no heavenly dew , no rain , no fertilizing showers , no divine down-comings or inshinings . No ; I must cleave to the truth , let men say what they will ; by it I must abide , for I know , well know , there is none other . Nay , I would sooner give up all my religion , go into the world , and be as I was some twenty-five years ago—a carnal , proud , self-

conceited man altogether—than have a name to live, entrench myself in crude notions, or lose myself in a labyrinth of dry doctrines. No; if I have not the grace of God in my soul, and the power of His truth in my heart, I would sooner make no profession at all. And if I preach, I must (God enable me ever to do it!) “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,” and for the power of vital godliness; for I know nothing but the power of it can do for me, or save my soul from the bottomless pit. And yet we “need patience.” When sin presses and Satan harasses, when clouds lower, when all is darkness within and gloom without, when God hides His face, when we have to wade through a sea of trials, we “need patience.” But He who has begun the work in the souls of His people will carry it on for His great Name’s sake, and will make them endure, that He may crown His grace with eternal glory.

2. But “patience” also implies submission. And what makes us submit? Seeing “it is the will of God;” that is our resting-place. For instance. Do I see it is “the will of God” that I should endure afflictions? I can submit. Do I see it is “the will of God” to lead me through sufferings to inherit His glorious kingdom? I can submit. Do I see that to call upon His name, seek His face, pour out my heart before Him, is to do “the will of God”? I can submit. When I can see what “the will of God” is, and when I can see that I am doing, or desiring to do, “the will of God,” then I can submit; not otherwise. Rebellion, enmity, hardness, all work, when we cannot see that we are doing “the will of God.” But when, with a measure of

singleness of eye to God’s glory, we can see that we are doing “the will of God,” then submission is wrought with divine power in our soul.

Thus these two things, endurance and submission, make up divine “patience.” It is not a man being very quiet, very meek, very contented, and very amiable; a man may be all these, and not have divine patience. We read of “the patience of Job.” But if we examine the Book of Job, we shall not find much patience in the usual sense of the word; as though Job were all meekness, amiability, quietness, and resignation. No; but we find endurance: Job did not “curse God and die,” as his wife would have persuaded him. And we find, too, submission; for we find that Job loathed and abhorred himself in dust and ashes. And so you and I may find much murmuring, much repining, much hardness of heart, much darkness of mind, and much working up of the sea of rebellion; yet we may have “patience”—patience in the new man of grace, and yet rebellion in the old man of sin and death; patience as the work of the Spirit, enabling us to endure and submit to “the will of God,” and yet many secret murmurs from that old nature which is ever enmity against God and godliness.

III. But we pass on to consider what is intended by the expression, “receive the promise.” Here is a deep vein of experimental truth: God enable you and me to feel that we know it. Now, it does not say, “Ye have need of patience, that before ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise;” but, “Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”

1 . But let us see what is meant by " the promise . " The grand promise is Jesus Christ ; " For all the promises of God in Him are Yea , and in Him Amen , unto the glory of God by us " (2 Cor . i . 20) . He is the promised seed . He is the sum and substance of every Scripture promise . Now , there is " a receiving of the promise , " and what is that but receiving Christ into the heart , in all His fulness , preciousness , blood , obedience , and divine suitability ; feeling Him precious to the soul , enjoying His presence , tasting His love , and having a sense of acceptance in Him ? But do you not see , we have , first , to do " the will of God " ; and not only so , but to have " patience " before we receive this promise ? How men mistake this ! " Believe in Christ ; all you have to do is to believe in Christ ! " — how this sounds from a thousand pulpits ! How , too , these worse than Egyptian taskmasters will lay on their scourge on God 's poor tried and tempted family , and try to whip them out of their doubts and fears ! " Why do you not believe in Christ ? Away with doubts and fears ! " This is worse than Egyptian oppression ! These are worse tyrants than the taskmasters ; for they could only scourge the body , while these scourge the soul ; they could only wound the back , but these wound the conscience ; and inasmuch as the soul is more valuable than the body , and the conscience than the back , so are these worse taskmasters and tyrants than the Egyptians of old . Believing in Christ is no such easy matter . A letter faith is easy enough ; to say , " I believe in Christ , " is no hard matter , except for an honest conscience — hard work then . But for a seared conscience , and a dead

professor , nothing is so easy as to say , " My Lord and my God ! " or , " My dear Jesus ! " He can sing at the top of his voice , " My Jesus and my God ! " when God has never dropped one taste of His love into his heart . But it is no such easy matter to believe in Jesus ; no such easy matter to receive the promise ; no such easy matter to know our sins are pardoned through atoning blood ; no such easy matter to bring the kingdom of God , with divine power , savour and blessedness , into the soul . This the Lord 's people well know , and they alone . They are doing " the will of God " in their mourning , seeking , crying , praying and waiting . But they have " need of patience " ; for the Lord long delays , the promise does not come , the smiles are withheld , the sweet manifestations do not drop into their hearts . But yet , in due time , they will " receive the promise . " They have done " the will of God " in seeking His face , calling upon His name , and groaning after the whispers of His love . They have endured many storms of inward temptation , and many gusts of outward persecution ; many a hard blow from letter ministers , and many a thrust with side and shoulder from the rams and he-goats of the flock . Yet they have endured , have not given it up , though Satan has often suggested , " Your religion is vain , your faith a delusion , your hope a lie ; I shall have you at last ; you will die in despair , and lie under the wrath of God to all eternity . " Still they are doing " the will of God , " and cannot give it up ; still they cry , sigh , groan , pray , and endure patiently and submissively till morning break in upon the soul , and dispel the long night of darkness .

2 . But there are many promises

connected with the grand promise . There is the pardon of sin revealed to the soul . Many of the Lord 's dear family are doing " the will of God " in seeking His face , crying for the manifestations of His pardoning love , and enduring a great fight of afflictions in their conscience , because forgiveness is not sealed home upon their hearts . Well , you shall " receive the promise " in due time . " Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour , for to give repentance to Israel , and forgiveness of sins " (Acts v. 31) ; and He will give you them both . If He has given you repentance , He will also give you remission . It is a twofold blessing in the hand of Immanuel ; and if He has given you the one , He will not withhold the other .

3 . The love of God shed abroad in the heart . Is there not a " promise " that the Lord will make known His love to the soul ? " I have loved thee , " He says , " with an everlasting love ; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee " (Jer . xxxi . 3) . Has God drawn thee ? Has your heart been softened by a sense of His mercy ? Has your heart been melted and broken down in an approach to the footstool of grace , and a sweet hope sprung up in your soul that the Lord would soon appear for you ? Have you come out of the world under the light of divine teaching , and come needy and naked to a Saviour 's feet ? What are these but the drawings of God in the soul ? " No man can come to Me , except the Father which hath sent Me draw him " (John vi . 44) . Every desire , every cry , and every longing petition that Christ would come into your soul in His blood and love , is a drawing of the Father ; and if He has drawn you to His footstool , it is be-

cause He has loved you with an everlasting love , and means to shed abroad that love in your soul ; and then you will " receive the promise . "

4 . That all things work together for the good of God 's family—for you and me , if we are of the royal seed—is also a part of " the promise . " What , all things ? Yes , all things . It is a large word , the largest that could be used , and yet not too large . " Well , " say you , " but how can this temptation , or this trial , or this affliction , or this exercise , work together for my good ? " God has said , " All things shall work together for your good . " Do not make God a liar ; do not add to His Word , or diminish it either , " lest He reprove thee , and thou be found unto Him a liar " (Prov . xxx . 6) . The temptation shall work for thy good ; the affliction shall work for thy good ; the trial shall work for thy good ; whatever be laid upon thee , in providence or in grace , it shall work together for thy good . You cannot see the secret springs ; but they are all working , one within another , like some curious machine , and your good is to be the divine result . But you must , first , do " the will of God " in endurance and submission , in putting your mouth in the dust , and in seeking His face ; and then will you " receive the promise , " that all things work together for good to them that love God . "

5 . Then , at the last , a crown of glory , immortal bliss , unfading joys—is not this part of " the promise " that God has given to them that love Him ? " In My Father 's house are many mansions ; if it were not so , I would have told you . I go to prepare a place for you " (John xiv . 2) . " Father , I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me , be with Me where I am ; that they

may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (xvii . 24). But we must do " the will of God " first . Did not Jesus do " the will of God " perfectly , we imperfectly ? Did not He endure a great " fight of affliction , " and " the contradiction of sinners against Himself " ? How He suffered ! how He was persecuted ! how He was tempted , hated , scorned , abhorred ! Yet in all things He did " the will of God , " and now He sits at the right hand of God in glory , " able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him . " But whilst here we must do " the will of God , " and to do " the will of God " is to patiently suffer all things that may come upon us from without and from within ; to exercise ourselves unto godliness ; to endure the hidings of God ' s face , darkness of mind , temptations from Satan , the evils of our hearts , the scorn of man , and everything God may lay upon us—sickness , poverty , disease and death . We have to do " the will of God " in all these things , He , never be it forgotten , working in us those things which are well-pleasing in His sight , and making us what He would have us to be ; we the clay , He the Potter , and all we spiritually are and have the work of His hands .

None but God ' s people can do " the will of God . " Others may do it legally , outwardly , in the letter , in the performance of the precept as it stands . But they are not doing " the will of God , " because they are not doing it from the heart . Their eye is not single to the glory of God , nor their whole body full of light . They do not act from spiritual motives , for spiritual ends , and under spiritual influences . They are " children in whom is

faith , " and " without faith it is impossible to please God " (Heb . xi . 6) ; therefore , they cannot do " the will of God . " But His obedient family , His trembling children , His little ones , whom He is leading into the footsteps of the flock—these are doing " the will of God . " " Oh , but , " say you , " this is my great trial , that I am not doing ' the will of God , ' so rebellious , so worldly , so proud , so inconsistent , so stumbling , halting , slipping , failing , falling , falling am I . I cannot see I do ' the will of God ' in any one thing ; I cannot see , when I take a review of my spiritual life , that I have done ' the will of God ' in any one point . " No , you cannot see it ; because your eye is single to the glory of God , and your body full of light ; the light in your body shews the sins of your path . Therefore , while proud , painted hypocrites are congratulating themselves in doing " the will of God , " and are making a mighty noise and bluster about doing " the will of God , " as though none but they did " the will of God " at all—though with all their loud profession it is all in the letter , from legal motives , and in a self-righteous spirit—the poor , needy tried , tempted , exercised , cast down and distressed children of the Most High are doing " the will of God " because they are lying where God would have them lie , at His feet , as passive as the moist clay in which the potter works , doing " the will of God " inwardly , from their hearts , because they are of the " true circumcision .

Now , these have " need of patience . " Others , who are not thus exercised , have no want of it . But the people of God , who have right views of God and of themselves , who know what " the will of God " is , and desire to do that will , are always coming

short . Yet their very mourning because they do come short is doing “ the will of God ”; their very lamenting over their infirmities is doing “ the will of God ”; their very hating and abhorring themselves in dust and ashes is doing “ the will of God ”; their very putting their mouth in the dust, feeling themselves to be the vilest of the vile, is doing “ the will of God ”; for God would have them humble , and He makes them what He would have them to be . God would bring down proud looks ; and He does bring them down by these exercises . God would have them filled with shame and confusion of face ; and He does thus fill them with shame and confusion of face . Thus these are all the time doing “ the will of God , ” by His secret power and influence upon their souls , when others , who think how much they are doing “ the will of God , ” are not doing “ the will of God ” at all . Look at the two brothers—the prodigal and the elder brother . Which did “ the will of God , ” the mourning , broken -hearted , confessing penitent , or the stubborn -hearted , self-fighteous brother ? Why , every heart that knows God and truth will reply , “ Surely , surely the returning prodigal . ” He was doing “ the will of God ”; and God blessed him by putting shoes upon his feet , a robe upon his back , and the ring of eternal love upon his hand . But , my friends , if you and I are doing “ the will of God , ” we have great “ need of patience . ” Heaven is not so easily gained ; the battlements of Zion are not to be taken by storm ; the harvest is not reaped in a day . Many trials , many exercises , many castings down , many afflictions we shall have to endure . But after we have endured them , after we have done

“ the will of God , ” we shall “ receive the promise . ” And every affliction through which the promise comes , and every patient endurance of suffering and sorrow , makes the promise more sweet when it does come . Christ in the heart , the love of God in the soul , the manifestations of His favour , “ all things working together for our good , ” and heaven and glory at the last—who would not wade through a sea of trouble to reach that happy shore ! Who would not be all his days up to his neck in afflictions , if glory and honour and immortality is to fire his ravished soul with bliss at last ? Yes , if we are to “ receive the promise ”—Christ here and Christ hereafter ; the love of God in our soul now , and the love of God to all eternity—we must do “ the will of God ”; and in doing “ the will of God , ” we must endure to the end , submit to God ’s will , fight the good fight of faith , and , with God ’s help , resist even unto blood , striving against sin , till in due time we “ receive the promise ” to our comfort and God ’s eternal glory !

J . C . Philpot

VOICES OF THE PAST

“ he being dead yet speaketh ”

“ These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God ; that ye may know that ye have eternal life , and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God . ” 1 John 5:13 .

Now with regard to this first Epistle of John ,—in this verse and in the immediate context , he is

summing up that which he has previously been inspired to set forth, and he gives to us the great aim which he has in writing this letter: "that ye may know;"—"that ye may know" There is in the writings of the Apostle John a directness, a simplicity, a wonderful freedom, and at the same time a profound depth. Why was this Epistle written? "That ye may know," and you will find that in the immediate context the word "know" is used six or seven times in the course of as many verses. "We know that we are of God;" "We know that we have the petitions that we desire of Him."

Is the writer of this Letter, the writer also of the Gospel that bears his name? What do you think when I read this to you from the Gospel of John? "Then came there out blood and water, and he that saw it"—O the simplicity and directness of it all!—"he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe," John 19:24, 35. What do you think of this, too? "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name." "That ye may know," not with a speculative knowledge, not with knowledge that is merely intellectual, but that ye may know it in an experimental and practical way. "That ye may know"—This is not simply faith, but faith realizing, proving, and sucking sweetness from the Son of God, from the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord. In other words, the Apostle was inspired to write this Epistle with a view to the assurance of the people of God that the Lord had done great things for them. Let us bless God for any degree of faith, for

the least spark of faith constitutes that power which is described as the hand by which we embrace Christ; as the finger with which we touch Him; as the desire of the soul that reaches forth towards Him. Faith is essential to salvation; assurance is essential to satisfaction. There are many of the Lord's people who possess faith, but who do not possess assurance; but the essential to salvation is a living and saving faith. Assurance is the ring which the Lord is pleased to put upon the finger of faith. Peter lost his assurance, and well he might, but he never lost his faith. Peter's faith was never lost. The Lord Himself said, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" (or "die not out"). But he lost his assurance. And how did he find it again? In the way that God's people always find assurance: through the condescending mercy of his Saviour in coming and communing with him. The Lord Jesus had a private interview with Peter after His resurrection, and what took place at that private interview assured Peter's faith. Then there was a third confirmation of his faith by the Sea of Galilee, when the Lord said to him three times, "Feed My lambs," "feed My sheep," and again, "Feed My sheep." So when we feel the power and sweetness of the Lord's presence, we cannot then doubt our interest in Him; we know, and go on our way rejoicing. Therefore, whilst I speak to you about assurance, I would not make it for a moment a word of condemnation to any of God's weak ones, but I pray that it may be a word of consolation to those who as yet tremble to say, "I know."

But how many there are, and some of whom we hope well, who just

settle down in a profession of religion ; from whom—am I speaking for myself ? am I speaking for you ?—from whom we hear in conversation so little that has the power and sweetness and unction of the Name of Christ , —dry , dull . Those in such a condition do not , as a rule , like to be disturbed ; they do not like to hear the searching word . What is my need ? The powerful witness of the Holy Spirit to my soul , creating within me that assurance which shall enable me to say , “ I know .” Faith is the gift of God , and it has a wide scope . Women here , who know the Lord , want kitchen faith ; men here want business faith , workshop faith . “ Lord , increase my faith .”

Now this is the great object which the Apostle , under the teaching of the Holy Spirit , has in connection with our text , and in what goes before and comes after .

Let us speak for a little while first , about the subject set forth in our text , ASSURANCE . Secondly and lastly , the means of assurance—the written Word . “ These things have I written ”—the written Word witnessed by the Holy Ghost : —assurance and the means to assurance .

Is it not an important matter to seek continually to be assured of our salvation ? The Apostle John desires that those to whom he wrote might know it in their own souls . “ Believe on the Name of the Son of God ” is repeated in our text . “ I have written to you that believe on the Name of the Son of God , that knowing that you have eternal life , you may believe on the Name of the Son of God .” What does the repetition signify ? That you may believe more abundantly , more deeply ; that you may believe in the

kitchen and in the workshop , as well as when you come to the place where God ’s people meet together . It is a parallel word to that : “ I am come that they might have life , and that they might have it more abundantly .” Oh , brethren and sisters , there is the “ more abundant ” on before . My faith is indeed weak ; it is a staggering faith often , but the Lord can make it strong and give assurance ; and He sets forth the blessed lines upon which , in His sovereign love and mercy , He is pleased to work . John desires by the Holy Spirit that all who read this Epistle , who have been brought to believe on the Name of the Son of God , may have a more personal application to their own souls of the truths of the everlasting gospel . We are , all of us , on our way —on our way somewhere . Every one of us here is a traveller , on our way , each one , either to heaven or to hell . Now if I am a believer , I am going to heaven , and how important it is to know it , to be well assured of it . You say , “ It is presumption .” It would be , if God had not set forth the blessed truth concerning it in His Word . But sometimes to say it is presumption is rather the utterance of unbelief . The Apostle sets forth a well established truth . The Apostle was going to heaven , and he knew it ; he loved the Lord , and he knew it ; and he said , “ My heart ’s desire for all of you is that you also , that believe on the Name of the Son of God , may know that you have eternal life .”

Now some of you weak one , (and who is not a weak , a little one ?) —it is evident from the tenor of this word that there were some even in John ’s day who believed on the Name of the Son of God , and yet did not

know that they had eternal life— “ I have written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God , that ye may know that ye have eternal life . ” Then it is possible to believe , and yet not know that we have eternal life ; and John was desirous that this blessed knowledge should be inwrought in their minds and hearts by the Spirit of the living God .

Dear friends , it is no light thing to be a Christian ; it is easy to talk about it ; it is easy to write about it . Is So—and—so a Christian ? So—and—so has become a Christian . The phrase is heard on the right hand and on the left . What is it , as Hart sings , to be a Christian ?

*“ Let us ask th’ important question
(Brethren , be not too secure) ,
What it is to be a Christian ,
How we may our hearts assure ? ”*

It is to be an anointed sinner , an anointed man or woman . Christ means the Anointed ; and a Christian means an anointed sinner , a set apart sinner , a called sinner . It is to take up the cross ; it is to bear it ; it is to mortify the old man with his deeds ; it is to put off the old man . It is to put on the new man ; it is to know the power of Jesus Christ and Him crucified , crucifying the world to you , and crucifying you unto the world . What is it to be a Christian ? It is to know under divine power and teaching the burden and the guilt of sin , and that under the condemning power of God’s holy law you can find no salvation . A Christian—a called-out man ! A Christian—a sensible sinner ! A Christian—a man or woman who endures a conflict within and without all along the way ! Everything outside us is against us ;

the world , and the things that are seen . Our old nature is against us ; the great Adversary of souls is against us . That being the case , to continue a Christian we need daily supplies of grace and strength and consolation . And the strong consolation which God has set forth in our text this morning , is to know that we have eternal life ; if I know that , by the grace of God I shall win through . By the grace of God I shall battle on . By the grace of God , though faith , cast down by the inward conflict , and tormented by the outside things , I can say ,

*“ Yes , I to the end shall endure .
As sure as the earnest is given ;
More happy , but not more secure ,
The glorified spirits in heaven . ”*

Here , then , is the importance of the knowledge of eternal life . Is there any encouragement to the child of God like this : to know that we have eternal life ? “ I have written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God . ”

Look for a moment , then . Here is one who believes on the Name of the Son of God , and yet does not know that he has eternal life . What does the believing involve ? There can be no believing without life , and where there is life it is eternal . God does not give one life to believe , and then confer eternal life subsequently . If I can say honestly , “ I believe on the Name of the Son of God , ” I have life in my soul , and God put it there , and that is eternal life .

Mr . Hazelton pastored the Strict Particular Baptist Church in London from 1909 to 1924 . The above sermon was submitted by Nancy and Roy Pullig , taken from a book of Sermons by Mr . Hazelton .

To be continued next month .

MEETINGS

EASTERN KEHUKEE ASSOCIATION

The next session of the Eastern Kehukee Association , the Lord willing , will be held with Flat Swamp Church located near Rober-sonville , N.C. First Sunday and Satur-day before October 1st and 2nd , 1988 . Those traveling east on high-way 64 to Bethel , N.C . should take Highway No. 11 South at the stop light intersection in Bethel and go about 1/2 mile to Flat Swamp road which turns off left in front of Hymans Con-venient Market . This will be at the F & D Ford Truck lot . The church is located about five miles on the left hand side of this road across from Keel's Store which has been closed . Traveling north on highway eleven , after entering Bethel and passing the F & D Ford Motor Company , turn right on Flat Swamp road in front of Hyman's Convenient Market and go 5 miles and church will be on the left side of the road . Traveling South on highway eleven go through stop light in Bethel for about 1/2 mile and turn left on Flat Swamp road in front of Hyman Convenient Market and go five miles and church will be on the left .

SMITH RIVER ASSOCIATION

Smith River Association to con-vene with County Line Church rch , Floyd County , Va . Located off Parkway where State Route 637 join State Route 635 . September 2 , 3 , 4 , 1988 .

From US 220 on Parkway South , pass mile post 156 , turn left on State Route 635 approximately 1.34 miles to church .

From Roanoke on US 221 at Pine Creek turn left on State Route 860 to Craft Shop , turn left on State Route 637 approximately 2 miles to church .

From Floyd and State Route 8 turn North on US 221 to State Route 860 turn right to craft shop and 637 turn left approximately 2 miles .

From Rocky Mt . , Va. West on US 40 approximately 23 miles to right on State Route 860 to Parkway , right on Parkway to State Route 637 and right on 637 to church .

From South on State Route 8 , turn North on Parkway , pass mile post 159 turn right on State Route 637 to meeting house .

N . F . Connor

CONTRIBUTIONS

We publish this list each month of those who have contributed to the signs . This money is used to help pay for the publishing of the " Signs " and enables us to send it free to those who are unable to pay . We want to take this opportunity to say to all of you , thank you very much .

Editors

FOR JUNE 1988

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OBITUARIES

JOHNNY DAVID GRIFFIN

Brother Johnny Griffin , Born December 19 , 1903 was called home on March 3 , 1988 . He was first married to Mary Weaver and to this union was born four children : J .D ., Jr . and Marvin who survive ; Estelle and Henry who preceeded him in death .

He later married Sister Mae Pittman Flood who also survives . Other survivors are : two brothers ; Joseph and Elwood ; two sisters , Sisters Ruth Edwards and Thelma Rose ; 13 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren .

Brother Griffin united with the

church at Upper Town Creek on Saturday before the third Sunday in July , 1930 and was baptized the same day . He later moved his membership to the Elm City Church where he remained until the church disbanded in 1981 . At that time , he and Sister Griffin asked for their membership to be placed at Pleasant Hill Church where she had held membership prior to their marriage . He served the Elm City Church as deacon and was received at Pleasant Hill in the same capacity .

He was a softspoken , meek mannered individual who was concerned about his brethren and their welfare .

His funeral was conducted on March 5th at Johnson Funeral Home , Rocky Mount , North Carolina by his pastor , Elder Henry C . Jones and Elder C.B. Davis after which his body was laid to rest in the Williams Family Cemetery in Edgecombe County , North Carolina .

The church at Pleasant Hill will miss him , though after his many years of poor health , we feel he is at rest with his maker and to wish him back would be against his own wishes .

Written at the request of Pleasant Hill Church in conference March 26 , 1988 by :

J . Carroll Williams , Clerk
Elder Henry Jones , Moderator

NOTES / ERROR

The last line on page 189 in August issue of the Signs of the Times should read — and clerk of the Smith River Association from September 1964 until .

FLORENCE EVANS KEESEE

Sister Florence Keesee departed this world April 24, 1988 in Memorial Hospital of Danville, Virginia.

She was born on June 16, 1896, in Pittsylvania County, the daughter of the late Elder Charlie Terry Evans and Emma Talbott Evans.

She was married to Walter Clark Keesee, who died November 9, 1953. Survivors include three daughters, Madeline K. Mays, Danville, Virginia, Lillian K. Bell, Bedford, Virginia, Naomi K. Simmons, Baltimore, Maryland and one son, Gillie E. Keesee, Rustburg, Virginia, 24 grandchildren, 51 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.

Sister Keesee lived in Danville most of her life and was employed by The Memorial Hospital of Danville until her retirement.

On the third Sunday in May 1941, Sister Keesee joined Banister Springs Primitive Baptist Church was a faithful member, attending regularly as long as her health permitted. She was a quiet, gentle person with a sweet smile, who walked softly among her brethren and sisters.

Twenty years ago, she broke her hip. Although she had surgery three times, she was never able to walk without the aid of a walker and endured a lot of pain for the remainder of her life. She accepted her affliction with patience that could only come from God, never complaining about her health. She had a hope for a better life to come where there will be no pain and sorrow and God will wipe all tears from their eyes.

For years Sister Keesee's health

hasn't permitted her to live alone, but she was blessed to have a daughter, who took her into her home and cared for her the remainder of her life. Even though she couldn't attend church, she enjoyed having her brothers, sisters and friends visit her and always made them feel welcome.

She was the last survivor of her generation and will be missed by all who knew and loved her, but their loss is her eternal gain.

The funeral was conducted from Barker Funeral Home by Elder M. C. Merricks. She was laid to rest in Highland Burial Park to await the morning of the resurrection when Christ shall come to claim his own.

Written by the order of the church.

Ruth M. Taylor - Clerk

SISTER JEWEL MOTLEY

Sister Jewel Motley was born in Pittsylvania, Va. Oct. 11, 1911, the daughter of the late James D. Towler and Hattie Motley Towler and departed this life April 5, 1988.

Sister Motley and her husband Brother Murry Motley joined Malmaison Primitive Baptist Church in August 1983. She was a devoted wife and patiently cared for Brother Motley in his lengthy illness. Her health began to decline shortly after his death and she was admitted to Riverside Health Care Center in Danville, Va.

Survivors include 2 step daughters, 2 step sons, 10 step grandchildren and 13 step great grandchildren.

Her funeral was conducted at Scott Funeral Home in Chatham, Va. by Mr. Frank Fuller. Interment was in Sheva Church of Christ cemetery.

Submitted by Peggy Wells

CELIA PENSION

When we mark the passing of a sister in the church the scriptures can be comforting then like at other times we read that , “ He hath made everything beautiful in his time : ... ” . Ecl. 3:11 . And such it is as we report death of sister Celia Pension son . She died April 13 , this year at the age of 75 . She was a faithful supporter of the church for many years before being led to ask for a home with the body known as Salem Primitive Baptist Church in Benton , Illinois in May 1974 .

Sister Pension was raised in a Primitive Baptist home in Alabama . She was the daughter of Bro . & Sister John and Ozzie Hyde . She was preceded in death by her husband , B. O. Pension in 1968 . She has three surviving sons , two daughters , one brother , 18 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren .

Although she was confined to the bed or a wheel chair for several months before death some of her children made it possible for her to attend services regularly . Her friendly personality , encouragement to the church and her ability to sign all reflected her faith in her Lord and saviour . We will all miss her .

Written at the request of church members .

Elder Wayman G . Chapell

SISTER ALTA DORIS (Tince) SHAVER

Our Heavenly Father by His divine wisdom called our beloved Sister Tince Shaver from our midst March 3 , 1988 ; Age 61 , at her home in Conroe , Texas ; after several months battle with cancer .

How we here at Shepherd Fold Church do surely miss our precious Sister . She truly was highly esteemed and dearly loved by all of us , as well as among the Churches she was blessed to visit . She had a sweet smile for every one and was of such kind , warm , gentle and gracious spirit . Always willing and ready to serve those around her , surely she was a faithful servant .

She asked for a home in Shepherd Fold Primitive Baptist Church February 2 , 1963 and was baptized by her pastor Elder C. M. Haygood March 3 , 1963 . In her experience she related how precious it was when God gave her a sweet hope in the doctrine of grace . One of her favorite scriptures was Isa. 43:1 “ But now thus saith the Lord that created thee , O Jacob , and he that formed thee , O Israel Fear not ; for I have redeemed thee , I have called thee by thy name ; thou art mine . ” The hymn “ There is a House Not Made With Hands ” , was so dear to her and became even more so toward the end of her life .

She leaves to mourn her passing her faithful husband Elwood Shaver ; one daughter , Sherri Calvit ; two sons , Steve and Johnny Shaver ; one sister , Thelma Shaver ; eight grandchildren and a host of other relatives and friends .

Services were conducted by Elders : C. M. Haygood , G. D. Shipman and Malcomb Burkhalter . She was laid to rest in the Whitehead Cemetery near Grapeland , Texas to await the second coming of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ . We certainly feel our great loss cannot be compared to her Eternal gain .

Written in love by request of her
 husband ,
 Bernice Haygood

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POEM

*Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God!*

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

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

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

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

Newton.

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 EDITORIAL

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you (1 Peter 4:12).



Elder W. D. Griffin

What a surprising, what an amazing thing that Peter should write in such a comforting manner to the elect family of God after the bitter experience that was taught him by the Saviour. Yet, in the outset I desire to praise the God of all grace for the precious dealing that He had with the apostle. That

is my joy and my comfort to read all that he wrote afterwards and to find that there is not a trace of bitterness about the strict manner in which the Saviour dealt with him.

If there ever was a man that followed Jesus that knew that his salvation was of the Lord, Peter was that man. Yet there has not been a follower of the Lord listed in the Bible that was any more determined to save himself than was Peter. None, whose names are recorded there ever made any more of a failure at it than did he. I desire to comfort and to strengthen and to encourage my dear brethren by referring to his apostleship. As he warns us repeatedly, it is a good thing to examine ourselves as to whether we do not get swept off from our feet by the evil suggestions of men that made the mistake that Peter made, and which we all have made, and will make again and again if not, as he says, we are kept by the power of God God.

The only salvation taught in the Bible is of the Lord. The only salvation that I have known, or that anybody else with whom I have been associated with, has been of the Lord, and it has been in what is referred to as this time state. Peter had been an apostle some little time before the fiery trial that was to try him appeared in his life as an apostle. We are not, at this time, desirous of any of the details about how he became a child of God, a witness of God's calling him out of darkness into His marvelous light. If there are believers in the ranks of the Old order of Baptists that believe that Peter instigated the work of becoming a child of God, they are not Old Baptists. It is with one and all that God begins the good work of calling dead

sinners into His kingdom , and that is called a part of the so called eternal salvation . Thus , we find Peter sometime after the beginning of this good work , which God did begin . I do not know of any reason why that anybody would object to our examining Peter at this time . If he saved himself in this instance , to be sure , I will immediately confess to my contention about salvation being of the Lord from beginning to the end . Will you treat me as well if our examination shows that he was a miserable failure ?

And the Lord said , Simon , Simon , Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee , that thy faith fail not ; and when thou art converted , strengthen thy brethren . And he said unto him , Lord , I am ready to go with thee , both into prison , and unto death . And He said , I tell thee , Peter , the cock shall not crow this day , before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me . Notwithstanding this assertion of the Saviour , Peter continued his vow that he would follow Him all of the way . Where is that conditionalist at now ? Did he watch , did he stay awake ? Did he seize the opportunity to show his ability ? In this trying hour would this be a good soldier to go with us unto death 's door ? What did he say in His defense as they led the Saviour away : Come tell me what went with his avowed devotion . Come and show me how that the conditional hobby horse is going to get blessings for his faithfulness here ? I am not calling anyone names . I am not making fun of you in your plight . I desire to know where the sinner 's ability goes in this hour of need .

Certainly this is a fiery trial . Cer-

tainly this is worth talking and writing about , if it is the fiery trial which the Lord sends on folks like Job and Peter and you and I , providing of course , we are His children , for it must be remembered that this fiery trial is restricted to the Lord 's people . They are all subject to this trial , and those without it are bastards and not sons . Remember that this trial of our faith is just that ; it is not a trial to see if you have faith , but it is the trial of one with faith .

Peter was bold to begin with . He could go at any time . He could follow all the way to death . He could watch faithfully when other men had failed , had gone to sleep . If , while in this good condition , he had gone to see his brethren he would not have been able to strengthen them . Why do you say that ? I say that because He could not watch one hour for his Lord and Master . He bore false testimony to Him as to what he would do for Him . He belittled all other men , but he spoke well of his own efforts to walk a straight line . He would have preached to them the same weak despicable doctrine that he preached to his Lord . He would have said , Brethren , be like me , get up and get on the move and be blessed for it . That is what he would have preached . When left to himself , he preached that doctrine more than once . He informed the Lord that only clean things had been eaten , but that vain survey of his prowessness perished as did his ability to follow the Saviour . However , let us remember that the Saviour said to him , When thou art converted , strengthen thy brethren . What a different soldier that he was then . How different that he talked to them . He had found out that he could not do as

he said that he could—Go at any time in duties way .

Now was Peter qualified and able to stand by his Saviour? To say that he could have, if he would have, is taking the testimony of men instead of the testimony of the Saviour . Even that kind of testimony is the same kind that Peter used, thus showing that if it suits the preconceived minds of men to receive the testimony of men instead of the inspired testimony of Jesus Christ that they will do just that and act , after doing so , just as haughty as Peter did until he was put in his place by the Master .

Let us remember , beginning right here , that God's children are all born of the Spirit of God . That Spirit of the most high God is in us and accompanies us in power from the beginning of its work in us to the day of Jesus Christ . It is a consuming fire in us . The consumation of our own works is not left to us . However , suppose that they were? What would be the result? We would , do exactly like Peter did , and like Paul did , we would be doing many things that were prompted by the flesh . However , that does not occur , for our works are consumed . The Method ? By the method which every child of God is fully aware of daily . Every work that is not directly the work of God's Spirit in us is tried by something that not a one of us can avoid or hinder or make void its work . I am speaking about the fire of the Spirit . That Spirit tries every man and woman that is born of it . Not the first one has ever successfully avoided this trial . That is the word of Peter to us . Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you . You need not think , says he , that some strange thing is happening to

you . He is saying that this is what takes place with one and all .

This fiery trial was brought to bear upon Job , and equally upon Peter , though hundreds of years a part , and just like it has come to every one from righteous Abel until now , and will continue until the end of the Gentile church . It will do the same for each one of the children of God .

The sovereignty of God is most precious . God cannot be a sovereign over one thing unless He is a sovereign over all creation . Neither can He be a sovereign unless He created all things that are . There is not any reason in any other doctrine . One item , one thing , one man , one woman , one thing , be that thing whatever is suggested to your mind , God is a sovereign over one thing and all things or He is not the sovereign over anything . The wisdom of God dictates this on every page of Holy Writ . The powers vested in the Holy Spirit are each efficacious in salvation . The rain and the snow , the dew and the vapor , the fire and the water , the wind and the storm , are all qualities of the Spirit , and there isn't a human on the stage of action that can withstand one of these qualities or virtues . No man can raise nor calm the wind ; no man can bring nor keep away the rain ; no one can overcome or withstand the fire of the Spirit . It consumes , it tries , it reduces to ashes what we gloried in .

All of our works are to be tried by fire . This includes mine and yours . I am a poor sinner writing to you a poor sinner . It was a sad day when the raging fire of the Spirit spring up within us , setting on fire our full barn . We tried to extinguish that fire , but its consuming powers would have en-

gulfed us had we not fled from it , I humbly trust to lay hold on the hope set before us . It was then and there that we first felt and tasted of the bitter trial of seeing all that we had stored up for a rainy day as it was consumed before us . That trying of us has not ceased since then . It has , as we humbly hoped , brought us low , and it has kept us there . It has caused us , as we hope , to go back over the route that we have come and there is not anything there that we have ever done that would gain a blessing , and thus it is true on the right and the left , and when we survey our feeble frame and find all within us as vile , we have not one thing to lay before the Lord . Yet , if not mistaken , enough light has broke through the mornings to give us hope to believe , as Job believed thousands of years ago , that the same God that dealt with him is dealing with us and that when the trial is finished that we shall stand before him without spot or blemish , and having passed through that stage of our ordeal by fire , we will lift our feeble voice in praise that we have been saved as by fire . There will never be a phase of our salvation any more precious than this , even though it is by fire . We will lose our works by fire , but the loss of our works will be sweet for we will have been preserved and saved by that which destroyed our works . May God be glorified .

David 's house was not so with God . His sin was ever before him . Did he have any right to conditional blessings when his house was in such a condition . Have we the right now , or have we ever had the right to eternal blessings , to say not a word about conditional blessings , when our house is in disaray before God ? Poor

David , with his house in disaray ; poor David with his glaring sin ever before him . He knew that the Lord was good , and it made him contented with that salvation that is in Jesus Christ . He did not have a charge or a complaint against His God . He acclaimed Him as being just , as having given all that was in keeping with the justice of a just and holy God , even to the extent that He was as the light of the morning , even one without clouds , and that His covenant was , not one based on either his failfulness and faithfulness , but that it was everlasting . He desired no other salvation than that which the everlasting covenant of God gave to him . David , as Job , and as the people of God have ever found is in one mind .

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday , today , and forever . He is our sin bearer . There is atonement for every sin that his brethern ever commit . It has been said , that our sins before we were born of the Spirit were atoned for by Jesus Christ , but that after the New Birth that we are punished for them . Men has said that . Unbelievers have said that . God has not said that . Jesus Christ has not said that . God says , by way of an angel , that Jesus Christ would save His people from their sins , and I am sure that the angel told the truth .

The Spirit of the Lord God was upon the Lord Jesus Christ , because that He was from God and because that He was God , and God the Father had anointed Him to preach good tidings to the meek ; to bind up the broken hearted , to proclaim liberty to the captives , and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord , and the day of vengeance of our

God ; to comfort all that mourn ; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion , to give unto them beauty for ashes , the oil of joy for mourning , the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness Why did he do all of these things for them ? Did He do any of these marvelous things for them and then leave them to themselves ? Did God appoint and ordain and set up this Shepherd to thus secure a numerous seed , and then leave them to make it the best way that they could . What an unwholesome doctrine that is to the poor and needy child of grace . What a hard doctrine that is to needy worms of the dust . The answer is , No , no , not anything like that . Christ was appointed to make and keep the covenant of grace intact in time and in an eternal sense to this end , to wit , that they might be called trees of righteousness , the planting of the Lord , that He might be glorified .

Throughout all of this dealing in them and for them , the Spirit is a consuming fire . All the dross , all the works of the flesh shall be consumed by this consuming fire . Not only , dear readers , will our fleshly works be consumed , but we will not have the residue or ashes left to encumber us all of our days . No , not even that . He will remove the ashes and instead , give us beauty .

Thank God for His consuming fiery Spirit . It is the best trial gage mentioned in the lids of the Bible .

Elder W . D . Griffin

PROVERBS 25 : 11

“ A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver . ”

CORRESPONDENCE

“ O wretched man that I am : who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ” “ I thank God through Christ Jesus our Lord . So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God , but with the flesh the law of sin . ” (Rom . 7:24, 25) .

I will try briefly to describe the wretched condition of total depravity of the whole human race which began with the first transgression in the Garden of Eden , “ 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) “ Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? not one . ” (Job 14:4) “ How then can man be justified with God ? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman ? ” (Job 25:4) “ . . . There is none that doeth good , no , not one . ” (Psa . 14:3) “ Behold I was shapen in iniquity , and in sin did my mother conceive me . ” (Psa . 51:5) “ The wicked are estranged from the womb : they go astray as soon as they be born , speaking lies . ” (Psa . 58:3) “ There is a way that seemeth right unto man , but the end thereof are the ways of death . ” (Pro . 14:12) “ Can the Ethiopian change his skin , or the leopard his spots ? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil . ” (Jer . 13:23) The dead alien sinner does not know his condition but rather , “ All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes ; but the Lord weigheth the spirits . ” (Pro . 16:2) .

It seems to me the great object through the first eight chapters of

Romans is to show the whole work of justification and sanctification: that it is not by the law, but by the grace of God. In the first part of the seventh chapter of Romans (Verses 1-6) Paul shows that we are free from the law, as a covenant of works. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Rom. 6:14) "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (Rom 7:6) The law as a covenant of works we were once under but have died unto it through Christ. "Wherefore, my brethren, we also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7:4). We must experience the law by the spirit which brings conviction and condemnation, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Gal. 3:24). There is no life in the law because all have sinned, and come short of what the law requires, perfect obedience, as Berridge said:

"Run, Run, and work," the law commands,
Yet finds me neither feet nor hands;
But sweeter news the gospel brings;
It bids me fly and lends me wings.

The law thy feet will not enlarge,
Nor give thy conscience rest,
Til thou find a full discharge
Locked up within thy breast.

The law with unrelenting breath
Declares the wages of sin is death.
Stern justice, satisfied by thee (Christ)
Bids mercy bring the news to me.

Cowper:

To see the law by Christ fulfilled,
And hear his pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child,
And duty into choice.

Hart:

The law was never meant to give
New strength to man's lost race;
We cannot act before we live,
And life proceeds from grace.

Now in Romans 7:1-13, Paul speaks of his past and present experience as a living experience of the wretched and helpless condition which the grace of God brings by using the requirements of the law to produce conviction of sin: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom 3:20) By the grace of the spirit the law shows what sin is and how wretched and undone we are. As in verse 13 when sin "becomes exceedingly sinful," this unutterable malignancy is an unspeakable sinfulness of sin. As Ezra confessed "And said, O my God I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head and our trespass is grown up into the heavens." (Ezr 9:6) Did you feel this deep conviction of sin (the law of works) when the spirit began to deal with you? It made you cry out with this tormenting incurable disease of sin, "... Unclean, Unclean." (Lev 13:45) As Joseph Hart expressed, "To see sin smarts but slightly; To own, with lip confession, Is easier still; but O to feel [sin] Cuts deep beyond expression." Also with David, "... Thou art the man..." (2 Sam 12:7) again with David "My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness," (Psa 38:5) and "For my loins are filled

with a loathsome disease : and there is no soundness in my flesh .” (Psa 38:7) Have you felt this in your experience ? In Job 42:5 & 6 he says “ I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear : but now mine eye seeth thee . Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes .” Now we see the Publican , “ . . . standing afar off , would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven , but smote upon his breast , saying , God be merciful to me a sinner .” Luke 18:13 Has the word of conviction of sin (as recorded in Dan 5: 27) “ TE ’ KEL thou [Personal] are weighted in the balances , and art found wanting ? ” On the day of Pentacost , “ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly , that God hath made that same Jesus , whom ye have crucified , both Lord and Christ .” (Act 2:36) “ Now when they heard this , they were pricked in their heart ,” not to the heart as in Acts 5:33 , “ and said unto Peter and to the apostles , Men and brethren , what shall we do ? ” (Act 2:37) “ . . . Repent [or turn away from wickedness] and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ [Saviour anointed] for the remission of sins , and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost .” (Acts 2:38) . After Paul had received his experience of the grace of God , he was baptized , (Acts 9:1-18) . Baptism was so urgent and important in the apostle ’s day to those that had been pricked in the heart that soon after midnight (Acts 16:25-34) Paul took the “ Keeper of the prison ” and the “ Same hour of the night ,” all that were in his house “ were baptized , he and all his , straightway .”

In Romans 7:7-13 , Paul spoke of what happened in the past and now he

comes to the present . Surely there are some most vital teachings in Romans 7:14-25 , not only of Paul’s experience , but also for all of us . First , it teaches a most vital point of partial depravity in sanctification , a total dependance upon the spirit of God . “ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves ; but our sufficiency is of God .” (2 Cor . 3:5) . This total dependance is present ; we could just as well create a world as to have one pulse of spiritual life of ourselves .

I believe it is important to distinguish between the doctrine of justification and the doctrine of sanctification . As it has been expressed “ Justification is outside of us , sanctification within us , justification is perfect , sanctification is not perfect , (verses Rom . 7:14-25 plainly proves this) , justification counts us holy , sanctification makes us holy ; justification is our standing ; sanctification is our experience ; justification saves us from sin ’s guilt ; sanctification saves us from sin ’s power .

Paul plainly proves these points : that we have received sanctification in part and the spirit by measure . It is spoken of as the earnest of the spirit (II Cor . 1:22 and Eph . 1:13, 14) . Now an earnest means a part and not the whole . In Romans 8:23 , we find it is spoken of as “ The first fruit of the spirit ,” a pledge , a sample only of future abundance . Likewise in Romans 7:18 “ For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing for to will is present with me ; but how to perform that which is good , I find not . ” Are we better than Paul ? We are taught and must learn out our helplessness all the days of our lives that , from first to last , “ Salvation is of

the Lord . ” (Jonah 2:9)

Does this in any way exempt us from (the other side of the coin) the many exhortations laid down in the scriptures ? If there are no obligations , there can be no sin . We are blessed in obedience but not for it . Exhortations show what we ought to do but not how to do . This is very important . We are all prone to extremes . One error that is plainly denied here is what is commonly known as conditional time salvation , that his condition is in the hand of the child of grace to use as he sees fit . This surely is an error . As best I can gather from this reasoning , we agree on all the doctrines of free and sovereign grace except perseverance and predestination ; we agree that not one at last shall be lost , however , we do not agree with the reasoning that if we do not obey , we will lose many blessings that are stored up for us . We feel this certainly is the wrong conclusion and brings in the do and live system , instead of live and do by the continued deliverance of the spirit “ . . . Working in you both to will and to do . . . ” (Phi 2:13) It seems this belief or reasoning is that we have life , now use it ; that two options are set before us . Which ever we choose : obedience and blessings (as I said before , yes , blessed in obedience , as actuated by the spirit , but not for it) or disobedience and chastisements . We have life and the grace of God ; now we can use it or refuse it , which ever we choose to do ; it is optional on our part . If this were true , we could use this spiritual life or the grace of God and thereby grow better and better . There would be no need for correction and at last to prove ourself bastards and not sons . (Heb 12:8)

Also there are such expressions as , “ earn God ’s approval ,” and “ God wants us to work out this salvation ,” and if we DO NOT “ We lose some of the benefits of salvation ” putting great stress on “ what we can do FOR God ,” mixing the cans and can'ts together as optional to us . If we do , we earn God's approval ; if we DO NOT we 'll lose many blessings that are in store for us . It seems this reasoning is very long on exhortations and obligations but very short on the absolute dependance on the spirit of “ Working in us that is well pleasing in His sight .” (Heb . 13:21) . Here again let us be very careful to maintain the balance of truth , never giving up the things we ought to do , together with the to do or ability of the spirit . I feel this sets forth both sides of the coin and not the other side of the mouth and that they are not a contradiction of each other .

I feel God's children shall and will have this plague of sin as long as they are in the body . When this is brought home to us day by day , we must cry out : “ O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ” (Rom . 7:24) . Who can save me from the clutches of my own sinful self ? What is it that gives you the most trouble and conflict ? This self loathing condemnation , miserable condition , this dead carcass of sin we carry around with us .

If Paul had left it and us here at this point , we would be most miserable all the time , without hope in this life . In I . Tim . 4:8 , he tells us , “ . . . Godliness is profitable unto all things , having promise of the life that now is , and of that which is to come .” Deliverance and salvation , as Paul describes , “ Who delivered us from so great a

death (past), and doth deliver : (present) in whom we trust will yet deliver (future) us ." (II. Cor. 1:10). Did Paul take refuge and comfort in his own helplessness and sinfulness ? Beware brethren of the principle of the flesh that would take comfort from sin . Paul did not do this but put great emphasis on , " O wretched man that I am ." (present) . All the experience of a Christian is not Christian experience .

After Paul describes the terrible-ness of sin , (the conflict ; the negative) he did not leave us there , but connects the conflict of sin with the positive and deliverance . Verse 25 : " I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord ." As Job 10:16 says , " Thou huntest me (conflict) as a fierce lion : and again thou shewest (deliverance) thyself marvellous upon me ." Again in Psalms 34:19 , " Many are the afflictions of the righteous ; (conflict) but the Lord delivereth (deliverance) him out of them all ." And again in Ps. 116:6 , " The Lord preserveth the simple : I was brought low (conflict) and he helped (deliverance) me ." Paul expressed this again in II Cor. 4:16 , " For which cause we faint not ; (deliverance) but though our outward man perish (conflict), yet the inward man is renewed ." (deliverance) . day by day ." In Romans 5:20 " Moreover the law entered , [conflict], that the offense might abound . But where sin abounded [conflict] , grace did much more abound [deliverance super abounds]."

" I thank God through . . . our Lord ," by the grace of God , I surely want to hold fast to the words " OUR LORD ", not just Paul 's experience , but all who have been brought along this way . " Being confident of this

very thing , that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it [not that he wants to perform it if you will only cooperate with the grace of God , or let him] until the day of Jesus Christ Christ ." (Phi 1:6)

As long as we live here , we shall have the plague of sin : " I find then a law , that , when I would do good , evil is present with me ." (Rom 7:21) " . . . but how to perform that which is good I find not ." (Rom 7:18) Does this sound like it is optional on our part ?

This is a vast difference from living in sin : " What shall we say then ? Shall we continue in sin , that grace may abound ? God forbid . How shall we , that are dead to sin , live any longer therein ? " (Rom 6:1-2) Beware of that person who says he loves sin as much as he ever did . Watch him and he will prove it by his life and will continue his old course of life with perhaps a little outward reform and profession . The Lord 's children have a true experimental religion , as Satan 's always have a counterfeit . This person loves to bring forth the sovereignty of God and the helplessness of man , NOT because he has had a great conviction of sin , but because he proves it by his attitude toward sin . However , he knows nothing of the true attitude toward sin , only the pretense . Paul here is Romans 7:24 brings forth true humility . Also in Psa 51:17 , " The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart , O God , thou wilt not despise ," having no true conviction of sin or " Fear and trembling ," he will return to his wicked way as a dog to his vomit and the sow that is washed to it 's wallowing in the mire ." We are told by our Master , " . . . for the tree is known by his

fruit ." (Mat 12:33) Read carefully , Romans chapter six , which is aimed at such person . God 's quickened children hate sin and would never sin again if possible . Our feelings are " divorce my soul from every sin , let me thy servant be , O make and keep my consciences clean to show that I am free ."

Now Paul concludes this chapter by telling us as long as we live here we shall have the deliverance , the " Law of God ," or higher nature and also that the victory is not obtained in the old man in nature but by the grace of God .

We shall never be completely content or satisfied here but made to hope , reaching forward , onward and upward to the final deliverance , one and for all time in heaven .

In gospel bonds ,
Elder C . M . Haygood

Dear Brother Burnell :

Tonight as I sit here in my home , this 25th day of July , 1988 , I am thinking of you and your family , Sister Mary Frances and the girls . I have told you in times past , about my desire to write to you concerning some of my experiences . I don't know whether God will bless me to do this or not , but if it would be His will , I shall try .

I would desire to write to you concerning my experience in the Lord Jesus Christ . This experience I am talking about has been given by the Lord . I believe this from the depths of my heart and soul . Because of the many conversations we have had in

days and nights past , I believe you can witness with me in what I am saying .

Do you remember the night I was so burdened and weighted down with a weight I felt I could not remove? This weight I could not take away , because I had not placed it there . We had been to services at Creeches Meeting House that night , and when the meeting was over , you and myself were standing in front of the building talking . I began to talk to you about my feelings and the way I felt concerning the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ . I knew I did not know how and could not do it of myself . I knew you , nor any other man , could help me do it . For it must come from Jesus Christ or it 's not preaching . I have not learned this out of any book or learned it from any man . If I know anything about this , it has been by the revelations of Jesus Christ .

Every since I was about eight years old , I have had many down settings , disappointments and heartaches . I remember being in the yard one day doing some work for my Mother . I felt something come over me , but I did not know where it came from . I have never forgotten it . I now feel it was the Lord Jesus Christ dealing with me , but at that time He did not show me where it was coming from or who was giving it . I was not brought up in the church nor told about the Lord by my parents . It was the Lord Jesus Christ who dealt with me in the past .

I have had many experiences since the night you and I talked in front of Creeches Meeting House . I dreamed one night I stood before the people and preached the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as it was given to me .

Not me or any other man, but the Lord Jesus Christ was the one over all of it. He was the one that gave me the words to say to feed the flock. Yes, I believe from the depths of my heart and soul that time after time I would have these experiences even before I offered and was received into the church. Long before I was ordained to preach the gospel, I dreamed I was standing in the pulpit behind the book board. The meeting was over and I came down out of the pulpit. The people came and hugged me and embraced me and told me how much they enjoyed what the Lord had blessed me to say. Well, it cut me down very much, but it also lifted me up in one way, to feel the Lord had used me as His mouthpiece. Today, as well as times past He uses men (and I hope myself) as His mouthpiece to stand before the flock of God and preach to them. I don't believe one can preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to an unbeliever. One must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and the only way they can believe in Jesus Christ is to be born of the spirit of God. They must be born and brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Him. They must be given grace, and grace alone, because it takes grace to have the love and it takes the love to have the grace.

I believe both of us have experienced that love and that grace and not only us, but all of the children of God wherever they are met at. How much I love you and Sister Mary Frances, as well as, both of the girls, through and by the grace of God. We have seen the girls grow up from little girls to grown women, and I hope I love them for Christ sake. I love God's people wherever they are. It

matters not where we meet, but if we can only be blessed to talk about the Lord Jesus Christ and what he has done for us. If we can tell the experiences of grace that He has blessed us with from on high. The many times our souls have been fed with the bread that flows from the throne of grace. Not anything have we ever done to inherit any of it, for it is a free unmerited favor that is given by Christ Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. He came to save the sinners, not the righteous. I know I am a sinner. I have been all of my life and will be the balance of my life that I live here in this world. But thanks to my God, He has given me a promise of a better place than on this earth. I don't know that I will be carried there, I only have a hope that I will wake up in that final home where the whole family will be there all together lovely and be singing the hymns of praise forever. A place that never ceases to be and where there is no darkness, only light. It will be lit up with the glory of Almighty God, so we can see and feel the joy of Thy salvation that we have a hope in now.

I believe both you and I, as well as our companions, all have a hope. I believe the Lord has taught us something that is beyond the teachings of man. People go off to seminaries to learn to preach the gospel, but the one I went to I trust I was carried by the Lord Jesus Christ and did not go on my own. If I know anything He is the one that has taught me. I did not learn it from any man nor did I learn it from any book. If I know anything about it, it is through and by the revelations of Jesus Christ. I have had many down settings in my life, but how wonderful it is to be down in the valley and then

lifted up on the mountain top that we can rejoice in a Saviour's love and in the Holy Spirit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ . One that has looked down upon us and has called us with a holy calling . One who has brought us out of nature's darkness into the marvelous light of the Son of God . Oh , what a light this is . It is so bright , yet it will not blind you . The brightness of the natural sun will bring tears to your eyes . The light of Jesus Christ shining in you will make you cry , but it will be tears of joy and not for sorrow . Oh , how many times have I ever cried for the joy of the Lord Jesus Christ has given me . Dealt with me in that way , in that manner , that I could praise Him . The only true and living God that I have to look to tonight for living grace , that grace that will never die . That grace that will live now and for evermore and that great and holy love that is given us by Him , the only one that shall stand . This natural love that we have for one another here is going to cease to be someday , but that love that God has loved us with , and the love that we are bidden to love one another with , shall never die . It will live in this world with us and in that yonder world if we are only blessed to be carried there .

This is a true and lively hope that I believe God has given me . A hope that no one can take away . A hope that no man had anything to do with me receiving it . In due time , God showed me what I am by nature and what I must be by the grace of God . It didn't come none too early and none too late , because there is a time and season to all things . It comes times that He gives to me these things that I believe , these things I'm telling you tonight . I believe each one us has

heard preaching from time to time on the mountain tops , on the sea shores , and in the valleys . Oh , how beautiful it is to be lifted up and to be carried to a place that looks and is beautiful . We want more of it , but we can't have anymore than what God would give us to have . What we will have in this life and in world to come is all stored up in His storehouse of mercy . How we would desire to praise our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for the many blessings that He has bestowed upon us all the days of our lives , even when we knew it not .

My mind is carried back from time to time to my Mother . She had no girls , only boys . When I was about eight years old , I was doing some work for her . I did not know then , but I trust I know now , where the mind came from to help my Mother . The Lord Jesus Christ gave me that mind to do the things that I did for her . I would sweep the yard and do things like that and rejoice in it . The reason I rejoiced in it was because the Lord was in the matter . The Lord was showing me , but yet it did not please Him to show me where it was coming from . It did not please Him to show me where all of the goodness and mercy that was in my soul as a little lad was coming from . Years later it pleased Him to reveal to me where these things come from . He came into my heart and soul and condemned me of this world and the worldly things that I was dwelling in . He turned me from one place into another that was far better than the place I was going into . Oh , yes I'm still in this world , but I'm not of the world . I can truthfully say that I'm not of this world . This world has no charms for me anymore . The only charm I have , the only joy I get in

this world , is when I can feel the presence of my God into my heart and soul . He lifts me up from the vain and perishable things of this world where I can feel the joy of His salvation right into my heart and soul making me to praise Him from whom all my blessings have come from .

I need the blessings of my God to bless me to keep pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus . I don't know of any other way that I desire to go but in the way that leads to life everlasting . Straight is the way and narrow the gate and but a few will enter therein . I hope with all my heart and soul that I I'm one of those that has been called in that way , that has been called to go in that straight and narrow way that leads to life everlasting . In other words , that highway of holiness that leads to heaven and immortal glory where there is only one way you can get on that highway . That is straight in and through Jesus Christ . He is the only way one will ever walk on that highway of holiness . It is through and by the leading power of the Almighty God that we believe in . The Almighty God has kept us out of that broad way and that broad gate . He has narrowed the way down so narrow that we are not able to walk by ourselves , but He is able to lead us in it and enable us to walk in that way through and by the power of Him . It is not by the power of our doing not the power of any man .

It must come from the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ . Oh , what a wonderful grace that is . It is sufficient for every child of God that is on the face of this earth . That grace will sustain them through every trial and every trouble and every affliction they ever meet up with in this world . It

will be right there with them and it will bring them through all of these things .

I know He has been with me through all my trials and troubles . Just like the experience I had in a dream . I dreamed I was driven up to the Red Sea , just as the Israelites were . The enemy was behind them . They couldn't turn back , nor turn to the right or left and they didn't see anyway straight ahead because the Red Sea was in front of them . I want you to know in my experiences I've been carried to that same place . Brother Burnell , I want to tell you the waters were rolled back for me and I was carried across on dry ground just like the Israelites were . And that water , I can see it now , how the Lord Jesus Christ rolled it back for me to go across . I didn't go on my own , He is the one that carried me . He is the one that rolled the waters back . He is the one that made the straight and narrow way for me to go . He can do the very same thing now as He did then . He does these things day by day and night by night and no one has ever told me anything to make me believe these things . It is through and by the Lord Jesus Christ that has made me to believe it . It is a true and living God that has watched over me every moment of my life , not just a part of it , but every day I live , every breath I breathe in this world here .

I want to tell you about your association of 1988 . How much I really enjoyed that meeting . I had been away for three years . I had been sick and in the hospital part of the time it was going on , but my mind was with you all . What a feast you were having there and what a feast I was having in the hospital also . The same God that was with me was with you at the

association . This year , 1988 , I was blessed to go after missing three associations in a row . Oh , how much those brethren who were called on were blessed to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ . One that was crucified , one that laid His life down , one who took His life and came from the tomb and ascended into the heavens to be with His Father making intercessions for His children while they live here in this world . I believe every one of them will feel the joy of His salvation while they live here in this world , while they are walking or riding up and down on the face of this earth . They will be ready to give a reason of their hope . We are told to be ready to give a reason of our hope , and Brother Burnell , I don 't know whether you 've ever been asked that question or not , but I have . One day I was asked to give a reason for why I was among the Old Baptists to start with . I told the man if he had a few minutes to listen I would tell him why I am among the Old Baptists . I talked to the man , who was my employer , for about fifteen minutes . He then told me anytime I wanted to go to my meetings to go ahead . He didn 't want me to work when I actually wanted to be at my meetings . The Lord blessed me in that way to never be hindered from being able to go to Church when I was well , but I have been sick and couldn 't go . I couldn 't go this past meeting , the fourth weekend in July . I had to stay in bed , both Saturday and Sunday , because I was sick . My heart was beating too slow and I could not go , but thanks to my God , He has blessed me to have a mind to look to Him and write these things down on paper . To put them down and send them to you for you to read for your-

self . May God bless you , your companion , and the girls . May the Lord be praised for this writing . May God be praised for everything . I would desire to be a little brother in hope , if one at all .

Elder Henry C . Jones

Dear Elder Key :

The Hopewell Primitive Baptist Association will convene , God willing , with Zion Church , Pickens County , Alabama , on Friday October 14 , 1988 and continue through Sunday noon . The meeting house is a short distance from Alabama highway 159 , approximately eight miles north of Gordo and twenty-one miles south of Fayette . Turn off 159 near mileage marker 8 at Hall of Zion Volunteer Fire Department and proceed about two-tenths of a mile westward along County Road to the meeting house .

All lovers of the truth are welcome . For further information , please write or call Levert Howell , 82 Arcadia Drive , Tuscaloosa , AL 35404 ; Phone (205) 556-5157 .

ARTICLES

ADMONITION TO DO GOOD

New Vernon , N.Y. , April 16 , 1834 .

" But to do good , and to communicate , forget not ."—Heb . xiii . 16 .

Thus wrote the inspired apostle Paul , from Italy , to the saints at Jerusalem ; and as the middle-wall of partition is effectually thrown down , which consisted in meats and

drinks , and divers washings , carnal ordinances , and a worldly sanctuary , &c , there is henceforth no distinction to be observed in the church of God ; all are made one , in Christ Jesus our Lord . Hence we infer that the above admonition applies to the saints among the Gentiles with the same force as to those among the Jews .

But as in relation to all other scriptures , so with this , it has its appropriate meaning , and may not be wrested from that meaning with impunity .

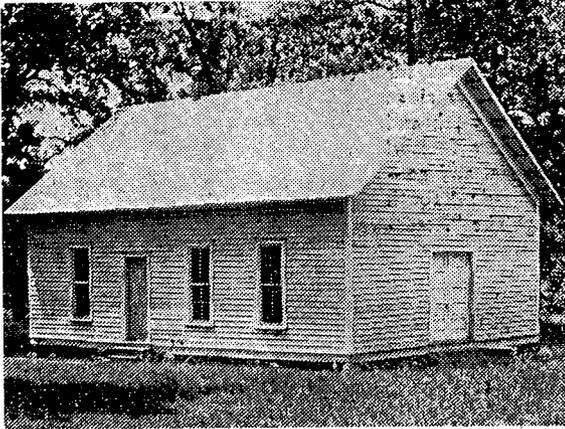
We have been led to an examination of this text , by the frequent use to which it has been applied by the advocates of the New Divinity schemes of the day . In the absence of scriptural authority for the popular faith and practices of the great majority of professors , they have endeavored to cover their motives by a reference to this text ; let the object to be effected , or the manner of accomplishing it , be what it may , this text is brought forward as a divine warrant . Thus , for instance : The Roman Catholic would say that saying mass , worshiping the Virgin , and advocating their doctrine , is in the meaning of this text to do good ; and the paying tithes to the church , and money for the absolution of their sins to the Catholic priesthood , or for the deliverance of the departed spirits of their relatives from purgatory , is to communicate , in the sense of this scripture .

Another tells us that it should be understood differently ; and so we find that men professing to be teachers in Israel do not agree . But , is there no rule given by which we are to know the mind of the Lord , as to what is in his estimation , and what is not , good ? Are we indeed left to grope

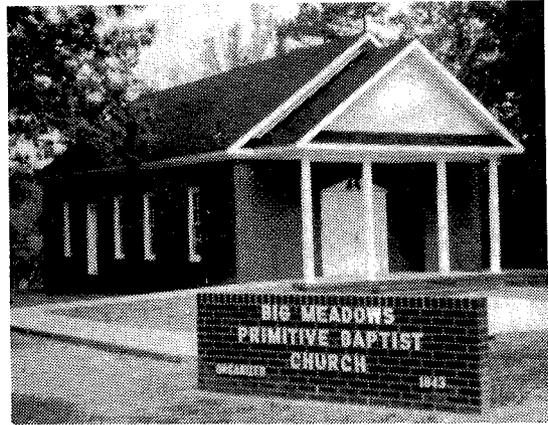
about in the dark , and for the want of a better , to employ human wisdom and providence as our rule , and to conclude that the answering of our own feelings and judgment in our decision will be satisfactory to the sovereign Judge of quick and dead ? Let the apostles answer . Peter says , “ We have a more sure word of prophecy , whereunto we do well to take heed , ” (how long ?) “ until the day dawns , and the day-star arise in our hearts . ”—2 Peter i . 19 . And Paul says , “ All scripture is given by inspiration of God , and is profitable for doctrine , for reproof , for correction , for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect , thoroughly furnished unto all good works . ”—2 Tim . ii . 16 , 17 . Here then we find a rule for our proceeding , as the children of the kingdom , and as the men of God , we are thoroughly furnished to all good works . This rule will answer all necessary purposes unto the men of God ; they are amply provided for . And while the nominal professor will attempt to justify his conduct in joining with and contending for the unscriptural institutions of the day , upon the general principle of doing good , without considering that “ There is a way that seemeth right to a man , but the end thereof are the way of death , ” the man of God , who feareth the Lord and trembleth at his word , will in all his religious pursuits regard the word of God as his only rule of faith and practice , and disclaim all religious works as evil , however fair they may seem , that are without example or precept in the good book .

Elder G . Beebe

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



Before remodeling in 1960 .



BIG MEADOWS PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Big Meadows Primitive Baptist Church is one of the oldest churches in Chatham County . It is located on Siler City Route 1 about seven miles from Silk Hope . It was organized in 1843 . The church records reveal that the charter members included such names as Buckner , Lewis , Stephens , Johnson , Dowdy , Baliff , Norwood , Hargrove , Jones , Richardson , and Bailey , names that are still in the community and members who are descendents of the charter members .

The first services were held in a log structure which was near the present church . The log church was torn down in 1890 and the building that replaced it was remodeled in 1949 , again in 1960 and has just been remodeled as you see it above .

Services at Big Meadows are held

second Sunday of each month starting at 10:30 a . m . Communion services second Sunday in June each year . Directions to the church is going south on highway # 87 from Graham , N.C . , go approximately 18 miles and turn right on first road after crossing Cane Creek bridge . Go four miles to a cross road and turn left and go one mile to the church .

We invite those who love the truth to visit with us in this quiet little valley with those we feel have been drawn close together by the chords of God's love .

The present pastor is Elder Kenneth R . Key who has served this church since 1964 .

Elder Kenneth R . Key , Pastor
Brother Casey Johnson , Clerk

NOTICE

Reidsville, NC
Rt 3, Box 618

Western Country Line Union meeting is to be at Pleasantville Primitive Baptist Church the 5th Sunday in October is its the Lord will.

We invite our Ministers, Brethren and Sisters of our faith and order.

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

MOVED OR MOVING ?

To assure you of getting your "Signs" and without missing any copies, be sure to inform us of any change of address.

Editors

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

(Continued from last month.)

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God." 1 John 5:13.

But what does the believing involve? A title to heaven, because the righteousness of Christ is there. It is a righteousness which is "unto all and upon all them that believe." If I am at this moment

believing in the Name of the Son of God, I have Christ's Name, work, and Person as my title to the inheritance that is "incorruptible undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Hence, we started by saying that faith is essential to salvation; I can have no belief in the Name of the Son of God without that faith which is connected with the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"That ye may know that ye have eternal life." Believing put us in touch with our title. Eternal life is the capacity for receiving from the Lord our God. A dead sinner—that is, a sinner "dead in trespasses and sins"—has no title, experimentally so, and no capacity for the things of God, none whatever. I think I have related to you what I read once in the "Life of William Wilberforce," a grand man, the great instrument in the emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies. On one occasion he took his friend, William Pitt, then Prime Minister of England (one of the greatest), to hear one of the best of the evangelical ministers of his day. The minister laid the sinner low, and exalted a precious Christ high, to Wilberforce's great delight. After the service he asked Pitt what he thought of the sermon, and he replied, "I could not make out what the man was driving at." Apart from the conferment of a divine capacity—the new nature, eternal life, there can be no reception of things of God. "These things have I written unto you that believe, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." What is it? How does it commence? A sinner is laid low before Jesus Christ and Him crucified. What does the Apostle Paul say concerning his own experience of the ups and downs of the way, and of

that which God had done for his soul? In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 4, we have this as a transcript of the Apostle's experience: "We faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day; for a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Oh, the mercy to have that faith which looks at the unseen! that faith which looks towards an unseen Saviour, which looks towards unseen things, and which, working in the heart, brings to us the knowledge that we have eternal life, so that our afflictions are esteemed to be but light afflictions which endure but for a moment. This assurance, then, of salvation is an unspeakable comfort; it is a divine encouragement, and it fills the soul with a holy and gracious confidence.

Again, to revert to the experience of the Apostle Paul, he says, "I am willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Why? He had the grace of assurance, and it is a sanctifying principle. When we are favoured with the assurance of faith, knowing that we have eternal life, all the terrors of the grave are gone; we are delivered from that bondage which comes through the fear of death; we have a blessed anticipation of glory; we gird up our loins and go forward in the way which the Lord is pleased to appoint.

But does not all this mean conflict? Joseph Hart sings concerning the temptations of our Lord,

"That impious 'if' he thus

*At God incarnate threw,
No wonder if he cast at us,
And make us feel it too."*

"If Thou be the Son of God? — the 'impious if' that the devil cast at God Incarnate; and Joseph Hart says, "If he cast that 'if' at Incarnate God, do you suppose he will let you escape?" The devil seeks in every possible way to hinder and destroy the assurance which the Apostle John, by the Holy Ghost, has in view when he says, "I desire ye may know." But when we are thus brought low, we do know, again and again, something of the experience of Christian in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, when his sword was knocked out of his hand, and he laid low before the Destroyer. Then said Apollyon, "I am sure of thee now," and Christian replied, stretching forth his hand — faith brought into exercise — "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I set in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me" (Micah 7:8). And with that he gave a deadly thrust at Apollyon, who spread his black wings and flew away.

Let us speak of the means which the Lord is pleased to use to give this assurance or knowledge that we have eternal life. The Apostle John very simply, clearly, and directly expresses the means that are used, "These things have I written." O, let us bless and praise God for the written Word, not one leaf of which Luther would part with for all the world. "These things have I written." You, dear friends, who are trembling, doubting, fearing, read this letter again and again; pray over it, "Lord, open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." This I

know , that no living soul here this morning , trembling , doubting and fearing , will ever be satisfied , and can ever be satisfied , until sweetly assured in the sense of the Apostle here . Safe you are as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ ; comfortable , happy , satisfied , strong , that you will be through the assurance which is spoken here .

I know of no other part of God 's Word which is so full of evidence as to the position and work of Christ in the soul as is this Epistle . One of the greatest proofs of eternal life is given when a sinner feels the plague of his own heart ; when a sinner— (pursuing a figure used by Solomon in his dedicatory prayer at the opening of the Temple) —when a sinner stretches forth his hand toward this holy place . Solomon said , “ O Lord , whether that man be a stranger or a Jew , as he feels the plague of his own heart , and stretches forth his hand toward this holy place , then , Lord , hear , answer and forgive .” And if you want God , if you know the plague of your own heart , and are stretching forth your hand toward the Lord Jesus Christ , you have an indubitable evidence that you are a possessor of eternal life .

“ But I am so unworthy ; I have not sufficient depth of conviction ; my repentance is not what I would have it it .”

*“ If you tarry till you 're better ,
You will never come at all .”*

You say you are so unworthy . Why ! that just makes you suitable for Jesus Christ the Lord . That sense of unworthiness is , as it were , the digging into your heart of God the Holy Ghost that into that hole He may let

down His grace , love and mercy . In the Temple and the Tabernacle , mortice and tenon exactly fitted into one another , and God has made a mortice in your heart when you say you are unworthy and sinful , which exactly fits the tenon of Christ 's all-sufficiency .

“ But ,” you say , “ I am so unworthy , will Jesus receive me ? ” I answer that question , as I did I think , last Monday evening , Is His Name Jesus ? His very Name of Jesus is the sign-manual that He will receive you . “ Thou shalt call His Name Jesus , for He shall save His people from their sins .” Concerning conviction of sin , —my experience is , I doubt not that many of you will confirm this , —my experience is that my conviction of sin has been deeper at the cross foot than before I reached that place . Repentance ! My repentance is so shallow ! Oh , but when we see the crucified Saviour , when He condescends to commune with us ; when our Joseph says , “ Draw near to Me ,” and falls upon our neck , and kisses us , then repentance deepens . Oh , brethren and sisters , it is all at Calvary ; deepening conviction , deepening repentance , blessed assurance ! O Thou risen Saviour , draw us to Thyself , and the praise and the glory shall be Thine ! Here is another evidence in the first verse of this chapter : “ Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God .”

*“ What more can He say , than to you He
hath said ,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have
fled ? ”*

Whosoever ! That is wide enough , is it

not? "Whosoever thirsts, let him come unto Me and drink." Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, that He who is called Jesus is the Christ, God's anointed Saviour? That is what "Christ" means; anointed by God the Father to be the Saviour of His people. Believing that, you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, because only He could be a Saviour for such an one as you. Then you are born of God and have received the anointing. So we have an anointed Saviour, and anointed sinners coming to Him as their Prophet, Priest, and King. "The same anointing teacheth you of all things."

Here, then, stand the infallible Scriptures; here stands the inherent Word of the living God. "These things have I written unto you." Take them not simply as John's words, but as the words of God the Holy Ghost. "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write"; and the Spirit replied, "Yea" (Revelation 16:13)—the Spirit's "Yea" to the writing. Now to have this blessed Book with these truths expressed in black and white is better than a vision that fades and dies. It is better than angels. Here you have the truth of the living God, not in visionary form, not by angelic messengers, but written by men under the Spirit's power. This same blessed Spirit attends this Word with divine power in your heart and conscience, and so through the things that are written, the Word of God attended with divine power, we have this blessed testimony.

Once more. "Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (1 John 5:1). What is love? What is desire? it is an effect. If you love the brethren, that is

an effect, and an effect cannot exist without a previous cause. And what is the previous cause of love to the brethren? God's love to you. Unless God loved you, and had shed abroad His love in your heart, according to the measure of His grace, you would not love. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous." Obedience is the test of love. Now I ask you in this respect, "Is your presence in this house of prayer—in other house of prayer where God's people are wont to assemble—is it cheerful? is it willing? do you feel it to be a very hard matter to give up sinful worldly amusements?" "His commandments are not grievous," and "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." Where your heart is, there will be your pleasure.

But I must stop. There are three witnesses—you can follow all this out as you read them, to the strengthening of your faith and the bringing of that assurance which you desire. "There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one" (1 John 5:8). Has the Spirit quickened, changed, illuminated you? Do you know aught—I know not a few of you do—do you know aught of His secret power? "The water and the blood"—water, Christ my sanctification, delivering me from the power of sin; "the blood"—Christ my justification, cleansing me from the guilt of sin. All this is of God's sovereign grace and mercy. The Lord give us then that sweet assurance of faith which is expressed by Susannah Harrison:

"My God! for I can call Thee mine,

*My Father and my Friend !
Am I not Thine , for ever Thine ?
To Thee my groans ascend . ”*

I read the other day of a blind child who was in the arms of his father . The father put him into the arms of someone else , and said to the child , “ You do not know who has hold of you ; Don ’t you feel frightened ? ” And the child replied , “ I don ’t know , but you do , and I am not a bit frightened . ” Oh to have the sweet assurance that God is my Father , that Jesus Christ is my blessed Redeemer ; that the Spirit of the living God is my Comforter and my Guide . “ He brings the blind by a way that they knew not . ” Often we know not in the providence of God the next place on which we shall set our foot , but our Father knoweth all , and “ these things I have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God , that ye may know that ye have eternal life , and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God ’ —that ye may believe more fully , more powerfully , more sweetly on the Name of the Son of God . The Lord bless His Word for His Name ’s sake . Amen .

John E . Hazelton

Mr . Hazelton pastored the Strict Particular Baptist Church in London from 1909 to 1924 . The above sermon was submitted by Nancy and Roy Pullig , taken from a book of Sermons by Mr . Hazelton .

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION ?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 10 / 88
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE .

MEETINGS

CONTENTNEA ASSOCIATION

The Contentnea Primitive Baptist Association will hold it ’s Annual Meeting with Hancocks Church near Ayden , N . C . on October 8 , 9 , 1988 , the Lord willing .

We plan to begin services at 10:30 a . m . both days . To locate the church , take highway # 11 between Kinston and Greenville to the intersection of highway # 102 near Ayden , N . C . Take highway # 102 east for 3 miles , turn left at the crossroads and go 1 mile to the church on the left . You will have passed through the town of Ayden while on highway # 102 .

All of our faith and fellowship are invited to come and be with us .

Milton Fountain , Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JULY 1988

Mrs . Arlene Hole , NC	..... 2.00
Mrs . M . Quesenberry , VA	.... 2.00
Mrs . H . C . Houchins , VA	.... 2.00
Mrs . Lelah R . Hill , CA	..... 5.00
Mrs . Jeanne Vaughan , FL	.... 2.00
Eld . David N . Bailey , WV	.... 2.00
Mrs . Frances Jarvis , MD	..... 2.00
Oscar Pickral , VA	..... 7.00
Eld . Larry Hollandsworth , VA	.... 2.00
L . C . Hornsby , GA	..... 2.00

Mrs . Shirley DeBow , NC	2.00
Mrs . Joe Kee , TX.....	2.00
Mr. & Mrs. C. N. Barron , LA.....	2.00
Mrs . W . N . Tilley , NC	5.00
Miss Nettie Rice , VA	7.00
Miss Janie Fanning , AL	2.00
Mrs . Sylvia Conner , VA.....	2.00
Mrs. B.T. Hollandsworth , VA....	3.00
Julian Ray , NC	2.00
Mrs . Eva L . Hollar , NC	2.00
Marvin J . Clay , OH	7.00
Mrs . Nancy B . Allen , NC	5.00
Raymond Haygood , TX	2.00
Mrs . W . C . Edwards , VA	2.00
Eld. & Mrs. W. Chapell , TN	20.00

OBITUARIES

PAUL DUPREE

We , the Church at Tarboro , trust it was God 's will to call home our dear Brother , Paul Dupree . He was called in his sleep on May 14 , 1988 , making his stay on earth 83 years .

Brother Paul was blessed to come before our church and ask for a home with us on July 4 , 1964 . He was a firm believer of Salvation by Grace and was always giving God the praise for all of his blessings . Brother Paul would often speak about his salvation and how he felt it was all in God 's hands , no matter what happened . He loved his church and was always agreeable to the upkeep of the church . He was a man you could depend on for advice and was highly respected among the brethren .

Brother Dupree farmed all of his life . He enjoyed tilling the soil until a few months before his death . Brother

Paul was blessed to have had a good wife , who together raised three children for whom looked after their Daddy following the death of Sister Dupree .

All of us at Tarboro Church , send our sympathy to Brother Paul 's family and trust they will follow the pathway their Daddy has set before them . We feel our loss is Brother Paul 's eternal gain , and trust he is resting in peace and love with our Saviour , waiting for the day of Resurrection .

We resolve that three copies of this resolution be made : one for the church records , one for the family , and one for publication in the " Signs of the Times ."

This done by order in our June conference .

Elder Henry C . Jones ,
 Moderator
 John H . Coker ,
 Clerk

MARY E . POFF

Home . Home at last . These words ring in my heart and soul as I try to prepare this memorial for a dear Mother in Israel .

Sister Mary Epperly Poff was born in Floyd County , Va . on May 8 , 1895 and passed away May 1 , 1988 in a Salem , Va . hospital , making her stay here on earth almost 93 years . She was the widow of Brother Eutaw V . Poff , who passed away in September 1967 . She and Brother Poff united with the Roanoke Primitive Baptist Church the first Saturday in June 1935 and was baptized the next day by the late Elder J . F . Stegall .

She is survived by one daughter ,

Mrs. Velma P. Gravett, Roanoke, Va. Five grandchildren , seven great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild . Also one sister survives . She was predeceased by one son , Vernon Poff in 1965 and a daughter Mr Mrs . Retha P . McKenney in 1982 .

Sister Poff was indeed a Mother in Israel to many of the Brethren and Sisters . She and Brother Poff loved to entertain and their home was always open to the comfort of their Brethren , Sisters and Friends . She was in the nursing home for about seven years and suffered much but always she wanted to hear about the meetings and what text the ministers spoke of at these meetings . I was blessed to visit her often and we rejoiced together many times . When I would read a portion of scripture to her , oftimes she would quote it ahead of my reading . Her mind was keen and she had a good memory up until a short time before her death .

In the last weeks of her life she suffered much , and she begged to go Home . The prayer , “ O Lord , help me ” was continually in her heart and on her lips . A short time before she passed away she said she was so happy because she was on her way Home . Her funeral was conducted at 3:00 p . m . at Lotz Funeral Chapel on Tuesday , May 3 , 1988 by her Pastor , Elder Leonard J. Brammer who spoke so comforting to all that mourn . After which she was laid to rest in Evergreen Cemetery beside her beloved husband , to sleep until the resurrection morn when she will come forth in all Glory that her Lord has prepared for her .

I miss her so much and feel so unworthy of her love and kindness for these past forty years but as I think

of how she suffered and her desire to go Home , I can only say , “ Thank You , Dear Lord , for holding her hand and taking her to forever be at peace with Thee . ”

She requested that I write this memorial for her and send to The Signs of the Times . By the grace of God I did the best that I could , but the half has not been told .

Yes Home — Home at last .

An unworthy sister ,
Rlee B. Houchins
Roanoke , Va .

MOTHER ADA SEARS

Writing in memory of our dear beloved mother , who was born March 21 , 1901 , and departed this life July 28 , 1988 . Mother was a member of West Fork Primitive Baptist Church , in Clay Co . , W . Va . She joined this Church in 1944 . Her husband Elder Lloyd Sears passed away in 1967 . They lay at rest at the Sears Cemetery in Clay Co . , W . Va . We feel that this is our loss and their gain . Mother has left her children and grandchildren , and great grandchildren here in her memory . Her children , Dessie Tanner , Alpha Sears , Roscoe Sears , Evelyn Santy , Glendora Primo Primo , Lorain Keen . Mother has been in a nursing home for five years in Akron . Mother told me a dream that she had , it has left me in great hope and peace . We hope that mother is resting in peace with her God . There is no one left to write this but me .

Deacon Alpha Sears ,
Grace Hill Primitive Baptist Church
Randolph , Ohio 44265

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 1, Box 420

Keeling, Virginia 24566

POEM

I'M AN EARTHEN VESSEL

*The master stood in his garden
Among the lillies fair,
Which His own right hand had planted
And trained with tender care.*

*He looked at their snowy blossoms,
And marked with observant eye,
That the flowers were sadly drooping
For their leaves were parched and dry.*

*" My lilies need to be watered ."
The heavenly Master said :
" Wherein shall I draw it for them ,
And raise each drooping head ?*

*Close to his feet on the pathway ,
Empty , and frail and small
An earthen vessel was lying
Which seemed of no use at all .*

*But the master saw , and raised it
From the dust in which it lay ,
And smiled as he gently whispered ,
" This shall do for my work today ."*

*" It is but and Earthen Vessel
But it lay so close to me ;
It is small and it is empty ,
That is all it needs to be ."*

*So to the fountain he took it ,
And filled it full to the brim ;
How glad was the Earthen Vessel
To be of some use to Him !*

*He poured forth the living water
Over his lillies fair
Until the Earthen Vessel was empty
And again he filled it there .*

*He watered his drooping lilies
Until they revived again ;
And the Master saw with pleasure
That his labor had not been in vain .*

*His own hand had drawn the water
Which refreshed the thirsty flowers ;
But he used the Earthen Vessel
To convey the living showers .*

*And to itself the Earthen Vessel
whispered ,
As he laid it aside once more ,
“ Still will I lie in His pathway ,
Just where I did before .”*

*“ Close would I keep to the Master ,
Empty Vessel would I remain ,
And perhaps some day he may use me ,
To water his flowers again .”*

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EDITORIAL

For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.



Elder R .H . Campbell

These few lines of scripture and the verses immediately following, which support this same basic truth are probably more hated and despised by the modern day religionist than any others to be found in the bible. They are hated because they state as simply and directly as can be said that it is not the natural man in the flesh that is the object of God's love. It says, "the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God," and yet, the doctrine of the world contends that God loves all of the unregenerate creatures of the world alike, and is just waiting for them to exercise their free will, accept him into their heart and then he can bring them into his kingdom. They cry long and loud, that to be otherwise, God would be unjust and this is not in harmony with the loving and benevolent image which they have of his character.

The divines of this day and age use, natural philosophy and psychology, as though God was a man, as they are, subject to the same laws, naturally and spiritually. As they are, and try to rationalize, in human terms

a plan of salvation that is pleasing to the flesh and socially acceptable . In his epistle to the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul states , “ and I brethren when I came to you , came not with excellency of speech , or of wisdom , declaring unto you the testimony of God .” And again , “ and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of mans wisdom , but in demonstration of the spirit and of power : that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men , but in the power of God .” The difference in these two ways of approaching the subject is that , one is the natural man preaching to the natural man , and giving an intellectual appraisal of God and spiritual matters and the other is spiritual revelation coming through the servant of God and showing to the heirs of promise the way of salvation , demonstrating the wisdom and power behind it .

To the heirs of promise , the chosen generation , this is good news for it is the only plan that will fill their need . They have been made to know and see their undone condition and the desperate plight they are in and their own inability , in nature , to remedy their situation . As the Apostle Paul wrote on one occasion , seemingly when in a condition such as this , “ I was alive without the law once : but when the commandment came , sin revived and I died .” This was their condition at one time , they saw the utter helplessness of the flesh to do anything , the strength of sin is the law and the sting of death is sin , and this all pertains to the flesh and has dominion over it . They realize and acknowledge the corruption , pride and vain conceit of the flesh and rejoice to read the scripture , “ They which are the children of the flesh ,

these are not the children of God : but the children of the promise are counted for the seed .” They acknowledge the weakness of the flesh and what they have always been in nature and knew , in this condition , these scriptures give them hope that there is a way that might reach even unto them , and they begin looking and searching for additional evidence that they too are included in the promises of God . The scripture , ‘For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh , God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh , and for sin , condemned sin in the flesh ,’ now takes on new meaning to them , and together with the above quoted scriptures causes them to take courage . They explain this new dual entity that dwells within , one serving the law of god and desiring that which is good and the other serving the law of sin and bringing forth fruit unto death . Surely the Apostle Paul was here in his experience when he wrote , “ O wretched man that I am ! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?

‘For they are not all Isreal , which are of Israel : Neither because they are the seed of Abraham , are they all children : but in Isaac shall thy seed be called .’ This scripture once and for all time sets aside the popular theory of universal salvation and establishes beyond any doubt the doctrine of the election of a specific people , called of God unto salvation to all that profess to use the bible as the authority of their faith and doctrine . Ishmael was the eldest , as was Esau but although they were the legitimate heirs , according to the law , they were not the children of promise , as revealed in the scriptures , and did not receive

the blessings of their fathers . Isaac was determined that Esau would receive the blessing , arranged the time and manner in which it would occur but God had announced to Rebecca before either of the children were born that the elder should serve the younger , and so it was . Furthermore , the Apostle Paul wrote that it was thus , that the purpose of God might stand , not of works but of him that calleth .

It is indeed a great comfort for the newborn child , in the spirit , to read where God works contrary to the laws of nature to preserve his kingdom and to bring his purposes to pass according to his own will . Each sees themselves as unworthy of these blessings in the traditional manner , according to the law , and yet they find this hope within that they are blessed of God . They now trust that theirs is another instance where God has chosen the foolish things of the world , the weak things and verily the things that are not to set aside tradition and purchase unto himself a peculiar people , that no flesh should glory in his presence . They have been made to see the flesh for what it actually is and know that their only hope of salvation is in the finished work of God because that is not bound by tradition , limited by time or dependent on the cooperation of anything apart from the sovereign will and purpose of God himself . They are made to believe that he did deliver his children in generations past , raised up the most unlikely ones , according to nature , and made them kings prophets etc . And that he is doing the same things in this present day . The Apostle Paul , writing to the church at Rome about the prophet Elias , said that God had told the prophet that he

had reserved unto himself seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal , and then he added , “ Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace . And if by grace then it is no more works : otherwise grace is no more grace . But if it be of works , then it is no more grace : otherwise work is no more work . ” Oh the joy and comfort that scriptures as these brings to the heart of those who have been made to see themselves as they are , made to try work righteousness and fail , desire goodness and be unable to attain unto it . They realize that this is the only thing that will satisfy their need and are given to see by revelation that this is exactly what has happened to them in their being made to love things they once hated and hate the things that in former years had been the center of their life .

All scripture is given by inspiration of God , and is profitable for doctrine , for reproof , for correction , for instruction in righteousness : That the man of God may be perfect , thoroughly furnished unto all good works . This verse was written by the Apostle Paul and it is , as all of his writings are , the results of his own conversions , on the road to Damascus , he believed that he was of Israel because he was born a Jew , professed the Jewish faith lived according to the law blameless and was exceedingly jealous of the traditions of his fathers . When the truth was revealed to him he saw that his truly being of Israel was by the grace of God and not his efforts of the flesh or his natural heritage . He now saw that his salvation was not in his keeping of the law but rather the election of God of a certain people

according to the promise of God from the beginning of time . This promise has been made manifest in the lives of this chosen generation down through the ages in ways that were contrary to the laws of nature but the end result was that the children of promise received the blessing . Surely he could see , now , that his own way of being made to see and understand the truth was miraculous and mysterious as was Abel , Isaac , Jacob , David and all of the others who were raised from obscurity and placed in the household of faith as it was pleasing to God and solely because it was his own sovereign will and purpose . It was the fulfilling of the promise made to Abraham many generations before and it will be to all nations who will ever populate the world .

On the day of Pentecost when the spirit fell upon the disciples and they declared the wonderful works of God , there were some who were pricked in the heart and wanted to know , “ what shall we do .” Peter told them to repent , and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins , and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost . For the promise is unto you , and to your children , and to all that are afar off , even as many as the Lord our God shall call . You can talk to people about this scripture and get many different responses . Some will stress their question , “ what shall we do ,” others will stress the arising and being baptized and still others the receiving of the Holy Ghost for their obedience to the command of Peter . It seems , to me , that the fact that these who were pricked in the heart , told to repent and be baptized were the ones to whom the promise was made . Without this one aspect of the situation , all of the others would have

been meaningless . This applies to all of the scriptures , they are all directed to the children of promise and to apply them to anyone else is false teaching . Abraham was justified by faith not by the deeds of the law and it was reckoned to him for righteousness before he received the ordinance of circumcision . Paul then wrote of these things and said , “ Therefore it is of faith , that it might be by grace : to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed: not only to that which is of the law , but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham : who is the father of us all .” This one promise extended to all of God ’s children whether they lived under law or in grace , and is sure and certain because it is from God . As it was given to a specific person , then , it is to a specific seed who will live in all ages of time , in all nations and it will make itself manifest in their life in many ways and circumstances . To some they were pricked in the heart and begin to question things ; others began to speak in tongues as the spirit gave them utterance , or to find themselves clothed and in their right mind for the first time . Regardless of the way and manner in which it occurs in the life of each individual , in all cases it is because of the promise made unto Abraham the father of us all .

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy , “ For bodily exercise profiteth little : but godliness is profitable unto all things , having promise of the life that now is , and of that which is to come . Godliness is the effect of this promise in the heart of the children of God and it will insure them of the care and blessings of him during this life and of their eternal dwelling in his presence in the life to come . This is

the blessed hope that dwells in the heart of all the elect and when they are enabled to realize that it is because of God's promise and not their own performance that they are saved they can for a season rest in the sweetness of his love and grace. They can rejoice in the scripture as declared by Moses. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee: and shall say destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety above: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine: also his heavens shall drop down dew. 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! And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." Oh, the blessed heritage of the saints throughout the ages is the gift of God and sure to all the children of promise because it given to them in a covenant arrangement of which God is the guarantor.

In bonds of love,
Elder R. H. Campbell

ARTICLES

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God."

This scripture has been running through my mind for several days, and it seems that I must write something concerning it in order to get any relief. I pray that whatever I may write is from God and not of

myself: if of myself I know that it will be of no value to the saints of God.

First, I would like to call your attention to the "we" and "us" in this passage. The "we" and "us" are the same, and are the sons of God. I do not know that I am included in this blessed people, but yet I have a little hope if not deceived in my sinful and depraved heart. The rest of the world will tell you that you can know that you are a son of God if only you will accept him as your personal Saviour; but not one of them has ever told me how to accomplish this.

The children of God are called sheep in the scriptures and the others are called goats; and there shall be a time when he shall divide the sheep from the goats. "And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And, "Then shall he say to them on his left, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Here we see that the sheep are blessed and the goats are cursed. Jesus said, "My sheep here my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." But unto the goats, or the cursed, "But ye believe me not because ye are not my sheep," and these shall be cast into the everlasting fire.

God chose his children - his - sheep in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. I do not say that these children existed in some form before the world was formed, but in

the mind and purpose of our Eternal God. " My substance was not hid from thee , when I was made in secret , and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth . Thine eyes did see my substance , being yet unperfect ; and in thy book all my members were written when as yet there was none of them ." All the members of Christ were written in his book before there were any of them in existence : and not all of them have existed or are in existence even now , but before the end of time they shall be manifest .

In the same sense that we were in Christ before the foundation of the world , we were in Adam the first man when he was made of God from the dust of the ground , but our natural life of flesh and blood was not made manifest until we were born of our parents . Neither is our eternal life in Jesus Christ made manifest before we are born again . Birth does not give life to anything , but it only brings forth the life that is already there . We had nothing to do concerning our natural birth and we can do nothing to bring about a second birth . Our Lord said to Nicodemus , " Verily , verily I say unto thee , Except a man be born again , he cannot see the kingdom of God ." And , " Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit , he cannot enter into the kingdom of God . That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit ." Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven ; therefore if we are to ever see God in peace we must be born of his Holy Spirit .

Natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him . Neither can he know them for they are spiritually discerned : and the carnal mind is enmity

against God . Therefore if we are in the flesh only we cannot please God , and we would not even seek him , because we would not know him . To know his is eternal life . But we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit , if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us , and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ , he is none of his . Only those who have been born again , Which were born , not of blood , nor of the will of the flesh , nor of the will of man , but of God have this Spirit within . It is unto these that received him that he gave the power to become the sons of God , even to them that believe on his name . They did not reject nor accept an offer from him , but they received him when he was made manifest in them , the hope of glory . Paul tells us this is a great mystery which has been hid from ages and generations , but is now made manifest to his saints .

Brethren , I believe I have shown enough scriptural proof to show who the sons of God are and how they became such , and now I would like to pass on to the ' manner of love ' the Father has bestowed upon his sons . There can be no doubt that God loves his people , and this is an everlasting love with which he draws us unto himself . The Father so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to die for them and redeem them from the curse of the law under which they fell when they transgressed his holy law . Christ suffered in the garden of Gethsemane and upon the cross of Calvary more than it is possible for man to even imagine , and he did it in our room and stead . His visage (body) was marred more than any man , and his form more than the sons of men . We beat him , plucked the hair from his face , spit upon him , put a crown of

thorns upon his head and nailed him to the cross . All of this was done to the holy , innocent , pure Son of God , who knew no sin , neither was guile found in his mouth . “ Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief : when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin , he shall see his seed , he shall prolong his days , and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand .” Christ was made an offering for our sins and by his offering - unto God , not to us - he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified . For the joy set before him , he endured the cross , despising the shame , and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God .

Christ has suffered for us : shall we not also suffer with him ? Surely we will , for God hath chosen us in the furnace of afflictions . And Paul tells us that all who will live godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecutions . Yet we should rejoice in these , for if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him . What a glorious hope this is ! Can we not see that “ All things work together for good to them that love God , to them who are the called according to his purpose ? ” Can we not see this as a portion of the manner fo his love to us ?

Our trials , tribulations and temptations are also a portion of his manner of love , for , “ Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried , he shall receive the crown of life , which the Lord hath promised to them that love him .” And , “ the trial of your faith , being more precious than gold that perisheth , though it be tried by fire , might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ .” We should also glory in our tribulations for we know

that tribulations worketh patience ; and patience , experience ; and experience , hope : and hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is spread abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us .

Brethren , our everloving God has ordained these things for us . He has set the race before us ; let us run it with patience , ever looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith ; for he has said , “ In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; for I have overcome the world .” It is by faith in Jesus Christ that we must overcome all that we must bear in this sin filled world ; and our faith is the gift of God : “ For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God .” Again let us behold the manner of God ’s love .

There is much more that could be said upon this text , but I will mention only one more point before this becomes too long and you become weary .

If we be the sons of God we shall be chastened . Let us listen to the exhortation which speaketh unto us as unto children : “ My son , despise not thou the chastening of the Lord , nor faint when thou art rebuked of him : for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth , and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth . If ye endure chastening , God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ? But if ye be without chastisement , whereof all are partakers , then are ye bastards and not sons . ” Our fleshly fathers chasteneth us according to their own pleasure , but God does it for our profit , that we might be partakers of his holiness . No chastening for the pre-

sent seemeth joyous , but grievous : nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby . Again , dear brethren , behold the manner of God 's love to us that we should be called the sons of God . What glorious and wonderous feelings I enjoy when blessed from time to time to hope that I also am a son of God . These times are short and far between , but without them I feel sure that I would perish .

Brethren , charge all errors to me and praise God for any comfort or edification you may receive . I beg an interest in your prayers of faith .

An unworthy brother saved by grace ,
if one at all .

Clifford Wilbanks

IT IS NOT ALL OF LIFE TO LIVE JUST
AS IT IS NOT ALL OF DEATH TO DIE
by Doyle Oren Murphy (12-12-87)

My soul stands full and my cup runneth over . When this good feeling comes to me it causes me to have great desire to shout it from the house top , yea , and even from the mountain top of Zion itself . How comforting and pleasing it is for me to be blessed with a hope in the great beyond and a Savior who does all things well ; realizing that I am unfit and unworthy of any of His great mercies on my own merits , thats why I am so happy that Jesus'es righteousness is imputed to His dear children .

Death called home a young minister from our midst some years ago . We loved and cherished him very highly . His funeral was conducted by a very gifted and able minister who said of him that the young minister

declared that he-was-not-afraid-to-die . We sing his favorite hymn at our church gatherings now as his choice of this hymn reiterates his belief that Christ's presence makes death easy :

Why should we start and fear to die ? What timorous worms we mortals are ! Death is the gate of endless joy , and yet we dread to enter there .

Jesus can make a dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are while on his breast I lean my head and breathe my life out sweetly there there .

All my life the thought of death has been so horrifying that I would discard it from my mind but of late . I believe I have changed from this feeling because it is not bad to die in the Lord . I have been taught that it is not all of life to live just as it is not all of death to die die .

Yesterday , December the twelveth , 1987 was church-day at our home church (Rehobeth) ; a grand and good day for us all . Two ministers , their lovely wives and other members of the church came to our little home after church . My belief is that Primitive Baptist Ministers have fine wives as deacons are also given good wives . I believe the wives are chosen , set apart and qualified just as their husbands are .

I love and respect the doctrine set fourth by our preachers and when one is enabled to look back over their past life and see just one occasion-in-time when the Lord laid his hand on you ; you are in good shape . He has promised that when he has started a good work with-in you He will perform it to THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST .

(See Brother Murphy 's Obituary in this issue .)

EDITORIAL ASSOCIATIONS OF CHURCHES

Two hundred years ago seven churches formed themselves into what is known as the KEHUKKEE ASSOCIATION at a meeting house called "Kehukee" near Kehukee Creek, in Halifax County, North Carolina. This was in the year 1765 according to Hasasell's Church History. Since this year, 1965, is the bicentennial year of this ASSOCIATION; we are impressed to write a short editorial upon the subject of ASSOCIATIONS OF CHURCHES. We shall endeavor to treat upon the aims of our forefathers in forming these churches into associations and to point out the necessity of conducting such associational meetings in such manner that the churches will retain their Scriptural position as the highest ecclesiastical organizations. We shall consider associations as creatures of the churches and shall warn against these creatures attempting to discipline and to set themselves above their creators. Seven Churches of Asia were written to by John. Seven churches originally adopted what is now known as the London Confession of Faith in abridged form in 1643. (Hassell Church History, see Page 663) There were seven elders in the twelve churches constituting the Sulphur Fork Association of Texas in 1845 at Providence Church, Mount Vernon, Texas. Let us now leave the historical phase and immediately examine the purposes of these associations.

One of the aims in forming associations of churches is that personal acquaintance and contact might be enlarged to include a larger circle of brethren than would be probable with

a single church in a neighborhood. It is as a good result of associations that thousands often meet together from different states to worship God in unison, and to become acquainted with many new brethren embracing sovereign grace principles. Our aim is to embrace more in our fellowship instead of trying to reduce the number. Our aim is to further unite rather than to divide; add to instead of cutting off; and, to be for one another rather than being against.

Paul said, "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits". (Romans 12:16) "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be so perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1:10) "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same LOVE, being of one accord, of one mind." (Phil. 2:2) David said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." (Psalms 133:1) The number TWO has been considered by some as being accursed as it is the first departure from unity. Only God who makes men's hearts can unite them. Whoever God joins together in this divine love can never be separated by the cunning craftiness of men without causing unhappiness and misery because of such separation. United we stand; divided we fall. All who possess the spirit of God's love are as harmless as doves. Doves desire unity; and it was the dove that would not leave Noah's ark. (Gen. 8:9) We must warn against these wolves who

have come in among us, as well as the foxes who have crept into our numbers, who care not for the flock. They connive with their plots, schemes, tricks, and "Legal justifications" to handle churches as if they were the judges, lawgivers, and kings. They will band themselves together to annihilate churches and ministers. A whole psalm was written against this sin. Read the entire 83rd Psalm. The 12th verse is the expression of their central desire. "Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession." Those who plot together to cut off churches from the union of churches "take crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, COME, AND LET US CUT THEM OFF FROM BEING A NATION."

It is comforting to know that the Lord is the one to take vengeance on them. The Psalmist asked the Lord to "Fill their faces with shame." The Lord created the wicked for the day of evil, and created the waster to destroy. He will fight our battles for us against our enemies in His way with that which He hath designed for the work of vengeance. True brethren do not need to waste time in warring with false brethren for if God be for us none can successfully come against us. He will deliver us from their clutches. We do not need to defend ourselves but use the time and talents in pressing on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Jesus Christ. We shall press for the unity of TRUE brethren. We realize that when these false brethren have done their dirty work they will separate themselves from us and go out from us, as the CHIEF Shepherd does His mighty work in protecting the sheep from the wolves and foxes.

Another aim is to encourage

intercommunion of churches. Churches formed in such associations write letters to the other churches giving such information as each church may think prudent for the good and welfare of the union. This intercommunication so links the churches together that brethren composing one church feel free to commune with the churches so linked together. We know that all members of the church universal are all the saved, and that Christ is the only Head, and the Church is His Body. (See Eph. 1:22-23 & Colossians 1:18-24) The church militant is composed of all the saints now on earth. The invisible church is all the Elect not yet called. A particular church is a society of believers called out of the world who have bonded themselves together, to be guided and governed by discipline agreeable to the laws of Christ as given in the New Testament.

Another purpose of associational meetings is to bring together the different gifts in the ministry in order that they may preach together and hear one another feeding the children of God with a variety of spiritual food. Many say they enjoy associational meetings because they are privileged to hear different ministers from the different sections of the country in different manners proclaiming the same gospel truth. It is indeed a blessing to be convinced that all these ministers have been brought up in the same School and have had as their teacher; — God, the Father; God, the Son, and, God, the Holy Ghost.

Associational meetings are heavenly when so many voices can be blended together in singing the songs of Zion in the spirit and God-given

understanding , having their voices mellowed by the love of God bringing them into the joys of Zion . It is wonderful to make new acquaintances and to visit so many who embrace the same sovereign grace principles which is our food and drink . It is wonderful to talk on the Scriptures together in smaller companies in the homes of the neighborhood in which the associational meeting is held . It is enjoyable to feel the warm welcome extended to us in these homes and to partake of the kind hospitalities so lovingly given us by the occupants of these homes .

When we see so many people together to worship God it inspires and encourages those who have been made to feel that there will be none of us left . I have heard people say at such meetings : “ Old Baptists are not all dead as some would have us believe . ” It is encouraging when you are made to know that the Lord has reserved unto himself many more than you thought existed .

Interlinking of God 's people by the method of associational correspondence is a blessing when we are blessed to extend the chain rather than break any of these links . I will here quote the body of a corresponding letter which I wrote several years ago - which is yet my conscientious convictions and yearning desires relative to associational correspondence : - “ Dearly Beloved Brethren : - We are bound to give thanks unto God for you , brethren , because our drooping spirits have been revived by the presence of so many of you who compose the membership of the several associations with whom we correspond . We have been greatly refreshed by the coming of your lovely and friendly correspondence . We appreciate your elders

whom God hath endowed with His Holy Spirit to preach unto us salvation by grace through faith in the complete work of God the Father , Son , and Holy Spirit , in saving His elect Family . Our aching hearts have been renewed while we are blessed to drink together from the fountain that springs up into everlasting life . ”

“ We are bound to thank God for this medium of fellowship granted us through associational correspondence . This chain of correspondence has united in one body many of our people from different states covering hundreds of miles . May God enable us to appreciate this grand blessing to the extent that we be given to watch and pray and so conduct ourselves that this chain will not be broken - but rather extended . May God keep us together and at one another 's feet . May this letter bear to you love and fellowship . We covet a continuation of your correspondence and visitations . ”

All of these objectives heretofore mentioned , together with the practice of the apostles and apostolic churches writing to the churches and brethren , would certainly commend general meetings when we consider their visitations among the churches . Brethren and churches then desired to learn of the welfare of others as well as to inform others of their own welfare . Letters were written then and sent by messengers to each other . This would not be a departure from apostolic practice to have associational meeting regularly scheduled provided that messengers would not attempt any disciplinary action in dealing with any church or member . Associations have no Bible authority to deal in any manner disciplining

churches or members . Since the church is the only organized body sanctioned by the Bible , and any other society or combination of men would be without Scriptural authority ; then associations constituted to be continuous existing bodies must be un-scriptural . Since we are all forgetful creatures , Old Baptists should be often reminded that there is no Bible authority for any formally organized association of God 's people other than the church itself ; and because of this , no organized association of churches can be properly considered as a standing organization which is to be held sacred . Churches are continuous bodies ; associations are not . When we refer to " Our Moderator " between sessions of associations when speaking of the one who presided over the last associational meeting , we are sanctioning the idea that we do believe there is some other permanent Christian organization other than the church . When the associational meeting ends the duty of the moderator ends . When the churches meet again in an associated capacity , they are obligated to re-organize for that session . We enjoy visiting these associations , not for the sake of these humanly organized bodies , but for the wonderful heavenly privilege they provide , for the general assembling of the Saints of God , for the sole purpose of worshipping God , and associating with one another .

Have we departed from the steps of our forefathers in the use of associations ? This is a vital question . We should ascertain the answer by examination . The church cannot confer authority to any one or ones to act in its behalf . Christ is its only representative . Question 1 , Do you have a copy of the Articles of Faith

Constitution , Rules of Decorum , Church Covenant , and copies of minutes of preceedings of the church of your membership ? Question 2 , Do you have copies of the Constitution , Articles of Faith , Rules of Decorum , and proceedings of the Association in which your church is catalogued as a member ? If your answer be NO to question 1 and yes to 2 it will show that a greater regard is shown toward the association than to the church of your membership . Question 3 , Has the church of your membership by an act of the church barred any church or minister from your affiliation in the past several years ? Question 4 , Has the association barred any church or minister within the past several years which has affected the affiliation of the church of your membership ? If your answer be NO to Question 3 and YES to question 4 it will show that your messengers have acted beyond their authority and that you respect your association more than the church of your membership . Question 5 , Has the church of your membership desired to invite certain ministers to preach to you but because of some action of the association unauthorized by the church of your membership , you are afraid to invite ? If your answer to this question be YES ; then , you are allowing the association to infringe on your internal rights and to bring you into its bondage . Question 6 , Have you ever had a church to seek affiliation with your church and a host of your membership would say to them , " We all have fellowship for you but you must present the matter to the association when it convenes " ; and , you do not take any action upon the matter and make no recommendation

to the association in your letter in order that messengers from other churches may present this matter to their churches? If this be the way you handle the matters, you are supporting the idea that messengers making up the association are to be the executive board to govern, discipline, and regulate church affiliation and fellowship. I cannot believe that our forefathers who first organized such meetings meant that they should be used in this manner. They were aware of the fact that it could easily lead to this. Therefore, safeguards were well written in their first organizations of associations with the hopes of preventing such unscriptural use. We have before us the Constitution of the Sulphur Fork Primitive Baptist Association of churches. We shall quote these safeguards as written by our forefathers in forming this association: —

“**CONSTITUTION ...3.** The members thus chosen and convened shall not have power to lord it over God’s heritage, nor shall have any ecclesiastical power over any of the churches, nor shall they infringe on any of the churches of the union...11. We believe that all societies or combinations of men, professing for their object the promotion of God’s kingdom, for the spiritual good of men, except the Church of Christ are unauthorized by the Word of God, and are a fruitful source of contention and strife. Such as Foreign and Domestic Societies, Bible Tracts, Sabbath Schools, and State Conventions, all of which we believe are unscriptural and un-Christian in the origin operation, and tendency; and as such we will not fellowship ...”

It is worse to esteem associations higher than the church than to approve of auxiliaries within the

church. Question 7, When you travel abroad and you are questioned by Old School or Primitive Baptists relative to your religious affiliation, What is your answer??? If your answer be that you are a member of a certain association, you either esteem your association higher than your church, or, there has been more effort and expense used to make the actions of your association prominent rather than your church. When you give such answer you are aiding the idea that there is some other Christian organization that is perpetual and continuous in its operations other than the church. Question 8, Do you think it necessary that your church belong to an association?? If your answer be YES you aid the idea that the church of your membership is somewhat dependent upon someone other than Jesus Christ as its Head.

I am convinced that associational meetings are a blessing to God as long as churches are blessed to use them as tools for the promotion of bringing more and more of the Lord’s little ones into affiliation of one-another. I am convinced that associations become a curse when they begin investigating, dropping, disciplining, not receiving, and barring from fellowship, churches who have had membership with them. I am convinced that as wealth is a blessing as long as it serves you and becomes a curse when you become its servant: so is an association a blessing as long as churches use it, but becomes a curse when it uses the churches as its servants.

Associations are without scriptural authority to settle difficulties. If difficulties arise in a particular church let us look to the Scriptures which

contains the " ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE." If after much fasting ing , prayer , mediation , and study of the Scriptures ; a satisfactory solution cannot be reached , let us , then , call upon a sister church or churches to come and sit with us to aid us in counsel and advice . If the solution is not reached after all this , WHERE ELSE CAN WE GO BUT TO THE LORD ? We must patiently wait for His deliverance . Do not disturb the peace of an associational meeting with problems which you together with the combined efforts of sister churches cannot settle . Do not turn your back upon a sister church who is in trouble . True churches of Christ mourn when they are in trouble . Do not tell them that they are in " disorder " , and because of this , you cannot affiliate with them . This is the proper time for you to mourn with those who mourn . Do not leave them to themselves because of this disturbance . They need your helping hand . They need the caresses of your love and the manifestation of your fellowship more than than before . When the peace of a particular church is disturbed , it is sick . It is in need of your loving care . If a member of that body is afflicted do not tell the body that we will have nothing more to do with you until you cut this member off . This would be like telling a loved one who has an afflicted arm that you will not come to visit him until he has his arm removed . Associations sometimes quickly cut off affiliation and correspondence even without a due course of labor in order to save in fellowship , just over rumors and mis-understandings . These things ought not to be and are unauthorized in the testimony of the Word of God .

Dear Readers : I make this

personal appeal to you : My soul has been on its knees for a long time . I go groaning , moaning , and sighing , as a lone pilgrim in a weary land . I am waiting , praying , and watching . I crave to get a letter from each and everyone of you whose hearts have been melted and softened in the furnace of afflictions . I deeply desire the sweet comradeship of true friends . I want to dwell with friends who do not render harsh judgment against each other . I want the comradeship of a people who will not hold my sins against me . I confess that my sins are many and that my mistakes are great . I admit that I am weak and do not know how to walk perfectly and have erred many times . I am seeking the friendship of citizens of Zion who really forgive . I want to walk with a people who - " Serve in the newness of the Spirit , and not in the oldness of the letter." (Romans 7:6) I want the correspondence of those whose theme is : The Sovereign Power of God 's Everlasting Love Through Jesus Christ Our Lord and Redeemer . I have prayed for deeper convictions , richer experience , stronger faith , brighter hope , and more fervent charity ; but I was perplexed when I found I must go through greater tribulations and persecutions in answer to my prayer . May we rejoice together in many more associational meetings here and finally climax it in that Eternal Session of Heaven 's ASSOCIATION . Cast a mantle of charity to cover my many mistakes I may have made in this Article . Before you lay this aside , please , get an envelope and address it to :

E.J. Lambert
306 Richardson
Winnsboro , Texas

“ And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.” — Isaiah liv. 12.

Upon Zion in her time-state “ the Sun of righteousness ” does not shine in all his brightness ; the “ windows of agate,” whilst she is in the flesh, temper his rays. Her prospects, too, are not fully bright and clear ; as the Apostle speaks, “ We see through ” (or in) “ a glass darkly ;” we have not those clear views which the saints have in glory, where they see Jesus face to face. We have prospects sometimes, I hope, in our souls, of God, and Christ, and heavenly glory ; but still these views are but semi-transparent, streaked and clouded like a window of agate, not bright and clear as a pane of plate glass. But as Daniel opened his windows toward Jerusalem, that he might see by faith what he could not see by sight, so should we aim to look towards the heavenly Jerusalem, that by faith we may there “ see him who is invisible.”

But the Lord speaks of Zion’s “ gates.” “ And thy gates of carbuncles.” The carbuncle is of a blood-red colour ; and why should the Lord have chosen that Zion’s gates should be of this peculiar hue ? May we not, without wresting the figure too closely, believe that there is some mystic allusion here to the blood of the Lamb ? As scarlet wool was taken by Moses, when he sprinkled the people, and as Rahab’s house was marked by a scarlet thread, may there not be something here significant in the colour of the gates ? But “ gates,” or doors, not only give exit, but admission. How does God hear prayer, and answer it too ? Only through the “ gate of carbuncle.” Prayer ascends through Jesus, and

answers descend through Jesus ; groans through Jesus enter the ears of the God of Sabaoth, and through the same bleeding gate of mercy do answers drop into the soul. Our poor self-righteous hearts can hardly comprehend this ; we think we must have a good frame, or bring a good deed, or something good in ourselves, to make our prayers acceptable to God. Perish the thought ! It is nothing but the spawn of self-righteousness. The “ gates of carbuncle,” the open wounds of the Lamb, through these every prayer ascends, through these every answer comes down ; and if we set up anything else, or make a gate of human merit, we do despite to the Spirit of God, and pour contempt upon the grace and blood of the Lamb.

“ And all thy borders of pleasant stones.” God’s providential dealings, which often form the outer setting of his inward mercies, are of pleasant stones. North, south, east, west, and Zion’s borders are of precious materials. The daily events of life, the circumstances of family, station, employment, success, or the contrary, the ties of domestic affection, with all those varied circumstances which seem rather the borders and outer courts than the inner sanctuary of gracious experience — yet all these are of divine material and workmanship. Viewed by faith, every event and circumstance of life, however apparently grievous, is a pleasant stone ; for Zion is a king’s daughter, and the meanest of all her courts is made of pleasant stones. For of wisdom, that is, vital godliness, we read, “ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

J. C. Philpot

VOICES OF THE PAST

“he being dead yet speaketh”

ROMANS XV. 1 .

“ We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”

In coming before our brethren and friends , readers of the SIGNS OF THE TIMES , we are pressed down with a realization of our unfitness for such things as writing for your comfort and edification, so much so, that were it not expected of us and did we not have a deep and, we hope, sincere love to the people of God, we could not possibly attempt to write . We are confident in this experience that we are not alone , for we know that this is the exercise of our fellow-associates, each one of them . “ Who is sufficient for these things ? ” We believe that it is out of our felt need that the Lord at times favors us to speak a word in season to those who are weary , and it is out of weakness we are made strong , we are not therefore ashamed to confess ourselves as weak , especially when , by the good Spirit of God, we are favored with the company of God ’s dear saints . We remember our brother Paul , according to the grace given unto him , declared , “ Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities , that the power of Christ may rest upon me . Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities , in reproaches , in necessities , in persecutions , in distresses for Christ ’s sake : for when I am weak , then am I strong . ” Now let us get to our subject . Paul speaks of

those that are strong , not strong in themselves , for such are not a help to the weak , but rather a distress , but strong in the Lord and the power of his might . Paul links himself up with those of like precious faith and says “ WE . ” What a strength there is in the fellowship of God . You may be alone , separated by thousands of miles from the Lord ’s people who are contending earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints , yet such is the exercise of spiritual in your soul , teaching you your weakness and poverty , and the Spirit witnessing to your spirit of the strength and riches there is in Christ Jesus , that even you , alone as you seem to be , are not alone but one of this wonderful fellowship . This “ we ” is the same people with whom his very coming among them would result in their being comforted together . It seemed to be Paul ’s happiness to link himself with this people by the personal pronoun “ we . ” It is the same “ we ” that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain TOGETHER until now , who know that all things work together for good to them that love God , to them who are the called according to his purpose . Thus in our text this same “ we ” are addressed by Paul . We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves . Pleasing ourselves and ignoring the needs of our brethren is very unbecoming , such an attitude certainly is not prompted by love , the love of God . “ Bear ye one another ’s burdens , and so fulfill the law of Christ . ” None liveth unto himself . “ And the eye cannot say unto the hand , I have no need of thee : nor again , the head to the feet , I have no need of you . Nay much more , those members of the body , which

seem to be MORE FEEBLE , ARE NECESSARY: * * * and whether one member suffer , all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honored , all the members rejoice with it .” There were then as now those who were weak in the faith , “ one believeth that he may eat all things ; another , who is weak , eateth herbs .”

Let us for a moment consider conditions as they prevailed at the time Paul wrote . The Jewish believers , many of them , had been brought up under the law that forbade them to eat certain meats . Some of them had a clear understanding and felt that they could eat all things , while there were some who were weak and were still bound by legal traditions . Among the Gentiles there were those who could buy meat that had been offered to idols and knew “ that an idol is nothing in the world , and that there is none other God but one .” — 1 Cor. viii. 4. “ Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge ,” saith Paul , “ for some , with conscience of the idol unto this hour , eat it as a thing offered unto an idol ; and their conscience being weak is defiled .” In ancient Rome there was so much of such meat sold in the public shambles that some fearful ones , lest they eat such meat , refused to eat meat at all and so ate herbs . There must have been quite a feeling over this . Some determining to eat such meat , and those others , weak , refusing , and eating herbs . Undoubtedly some were for cutting off the weak ones , making this and other things , such as holy days , a bar of fellowship . Paul discourages such an attitude , advising them to receive him that is weak in the faith , but not to doubtful disputations . The weak ones were brethren , partakers of the holy calling , like unto

the strong , they had faith , but were weak in the faith , they were ignorant , yet perhaps thought they were wise ; poor , yet thought they were rich . Perhaps they were in their walk just like the Laodiceans , saying , I am rich and increased with goods , and have need of nothing ; and knew not that they were wretched , and miserable and poor , and blind , and naked . Such persons were perhaps hard to endure , and the easiest way would have been to avoid them and have little or nothing to do with them . But that would not do , for , saith the apostle , “ We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak .” Not treat them as wicked men , dropping them from our company , but as weak brethren , bearing with them , praying for them . Yes , prayer is one way to bear the infirmities of the weak , not only praying for them , but more often it will become us to pray for ourselves , that the Lord would guide our way to keep his statutes still . Those who may profess themselves strong in the faith , have not a right faith , if it be not a faith that worketh by love . Paul says we ought to bear the infirmities of the weak . Are they given to lightness , and jesting , which is not becoming , it is their infirmity ; are there truths which are our comfort yet they cannot receive them , through lack of knowledge . There are some things which those who are strong cannot renounce or deny , but they ought to bear the infirmities of the weak , although not approving their errors and mistakes . There is much in that word “ bear” , it takes us to the heart of the whole matter . Charity which “ beareth all things , believeth all things , hopeth all things , and endureth all things .” Thus

charity, the love of God, the first love, which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, this love which seeketh not her own, in the words of our text, pleaseth not herself. John wrote to the young men because they had overcome the wicked one, and to the little children because their sins were forgiven them for His name's sake. For Christ's sake then we ought to bear and forbear, for Christ's sake we ought to love one another, for Christ's sake ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. True faith does consider oneself, not with a self-satisfaction, but with self-loathing, which makes each to esteem other better than themselves. Faith sees each one complete in Jesus,

*" Faith says to the mountains, Depart,
That stand betwixt God and the soul;
It binds up the broken in heart,
And makes their sore consciences whole.*

*Bids sins of a crimson-like dye
Be spotless as snow, and as white,
And proves such a sinner as I
As pure as an angel of light."*

When we consider such faith, given to such vile sinners, we ought to bear with one another, encourage and not discourage. "Let each one please his neighbor." Who is my neighbor? The one who has fallen among thieves! In all this there is encouragement for brethren to walk together in the fear of God, helping one another. How few there are among men with whom we can walk or have anything in common in these days. One only has to listen a short time to know that he would be a misfit in this present world. People of worldly institutions are too good for God's poor and afflicted people, who are encompassed with infirmities, groaning and travailing together in

pain until now, and how good to have brethren who can bear with our infirmities; yes, ever in our being unable to see with them in this or that, yet knowing we may differ from them and they can bear with us. Most of us can think of the patience and love of an earthly mother who bore with us, often not noticing things that others, who could not show us a mother's love, would condemn. How we bless her for her love and forbearance. When we think of our lovely brotherhood, who have borne with us and put up with our ignorance, errors and hard speeches, shall we be like the man who was forgiven by his king ten thousand talents and who went out and found one of his fellow-servants who owed him an hundred pence, and he laid hands on him, "Pay me that thou owest"? God forbid. Christ pleased not himself, though he was equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation. He bore our sins in his own body, and it is written, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen on me." Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Much of the coldness and barrenness in Zion to-day is a result of not esteeming others better than self, and a strong inclination of many to please themselves. To-day, as of old, some say, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Whenever differences come among brethren, and there have always been differences, there is enough flesh about us all to make the ways of Zion mourn. Brethren, at variance, always exaggerate the seriousness of their differences. The subject matter of our text is that breth-

ren shall drop doubtful disputations , and have a sympathy one towards another . When love runs through all our actions , then that which is lame is not turned out of the way , but rather is healed . God give us all to realize that he is strong who having no confidence in the flesh bears the infirmities of the weak . Realizing how apt he is to speak wrong and to do wrong , he can and does have a fellow-feeling for others . To keep pace with the weak , one must be touched by the angel in the same place as Jacob was . To condescend to men of low estate , can only truly be done when one is made to glory in his infirmities . Jonah could preach to Nineveh when he had felt the WEEDS were wrapped about his head and he had known something of what it meant for the earth with her bars to be about him forever . Peter also had a false strength , a strength that would have laughed at the infirmities of the weak . He would go to prison and to death and not deny Jesus , but Peter was brought down , he was converted , then he could feed the sheep and the lambs and bear the infirmities of the weak . To consider others for their good to edification will often result in the prayer of David being our prayer , when he cried “ Lord , make me to know mine end , and the measure of my days , what it is ; that I may know how frail I am . ” Out of such frailty , compassion flows to the ignorant and those who are out of the way . Then thy light breaks forth as the morning and thy bread is dealt out to the hungry and the poor that are cast out thou bringest to thine house . It is in such strength that one visits those who are sick and in prison and is enabled to clothe those who are naked , and one is blessed to draw out his soul to the hungry and satisfy (by

preaching Christ) the afflicted soul .

In conclusion , the strong have no strength in themselves , but in the Lord , and the infirmities of the weak are easily borne under the influence of the love of Christ which constraineth us .

Elder G . R . Ruston

MEETINGS

DAN RIVER PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

There will be a special meeting at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church on Thanksgiving day night November 24th , 1988 . The meeting will start with song service at 6:30 and preaching at 7:00 . Elder J . T . Prescott of Swansboro , N . C . will be the guest speaker . Everyone is welcome who has a mind to meet with us .

Elder Kenneth R . Key , Moderator
Brother Boyd Minter , Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR AUGUST 1988

Homie C . Dalton , VA	7.00
Mrs . J . T . Flippen , VA	2.00
S . L . Walker , VA	2.00
Charles E . Hatchett , OK	2.00
Harold T . Clayton , NC	5.00
Mr . & Mrs . B . W . Wade , WV	2.00
William Vick , TN	5.00
Mrs . Ernest W . Gibson , GA	7.00
Mrs . Emma Hardy , VA	2.00

James M. Burgin , TX	2.00
Mrs . James M. Hawley , VA ...	2.00
Mrs. Minnie G. Roberts , NC	2.00
Grover Semones , VA	5.00
Charles Kirkpatrick , TX	2.00
Paul Chilton , KY	2.00
Irvin Holley , VA	2.00
Eld. G.D. Shipman , TX	2.00
Mrs . Ollie C. Gauldin , NC	7.00
Mrs . H.H. Blanton , MS	1.00
Mrs . Catherine Vass , NC	5.00
Mrs . Frank Scearce , VA	2.00
Ruben French , NC	5.00
Milton D. Houston , NC	2.00
Hassell A. Hale , VA	2.00
Mrs . Virgie L. Griffith , AL	5.00
Mrs . Bertie F. Brown , NC	2.00
C.W. Wood , VA	7.00
Eld. C.B. Davis , NC	2.00
Mrs . Charlotte Bullard , VA	2.00
W.W. Abshire , VA	7.00
Frank Hunt , VA	22.00
C.H. Oakley , NC	22.00
Mrs. Albert H. Davidson , LA.....	7.00

OBITUARIES

DELMAS SMITH ADAMS

This is in memory of Delmas Smith Adams , who was born on March 3 , 1907 , in Pittsylvania County , Virginia , to Stephen Edward and Martha Jane Dalton Adams . He married Ora Short on January 2 , 1926 . They had five children , three of which preceded Delmas in death , and twelve grandchildren . He spent his early years in Pittsylvania County and Altavista , Virginia and later moved to Roanoke , Virginia , where he lived the rest of his life . He and his wife joined Weatherford Church in August , 1953 . He loved the brethren and was a firm believer in salvation by grace . He was

a kind and gentle man and will be greatly missed by those of us who loved and knew him best . He passed away on April 26 , 1988 in Camelot Hall in Salem , Virginia . His funeral was held on April 28 , 1988 in Weatherford Church and was laid to rest in the church cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers .

Written in love by his daughter ,
Martha A . Dalton

WILLIAM MOTEN COX

Brother Moten Cox , age 82 years , passed away June 1 , 1988 . He was hospitalized only two days after suffering a stroke until the Lord called him home .

He was born September 2 , 1905 to Bert C. Cox and Nancy F. Cox . He was a retired farmer and a substitute mail carrier . He was a member of the Primitive Baptist Church since 1940 . Brother Moten kept the faith until the end . He attended church on the 4th Saturday in May and was buried on the 1st Saturday in June . I would watch him listen attentive and nod his head when he was enjoying these precious truths being preached . Brother Moten greeted his Brothers and Sisters with a firm hand shake and hug .

Preceded in death one son Roger " Micky " Cox . Survivors are his wife Virgie Reed Cox , one son and daughter-in-law Paul A. and Bernice Cox from Nashville , Tennessee . Two daughters and sons-in-law , Evelyn S. and Danny Baker for Midlothian , VA ; Pauline S. and Swanson Pendleton from Roanoke , VA . Two brothers , Hassell Cox and Ray Cox Illinois .

Three sisters, Ruby C. Mahr, Kate C. King from Illinois; and Zola A. Layman from Canada. One sister-in-law Beverly Cox, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Funeral Services were held at Mayberry Chapel on June 4, 1988 at 11:00 a.m. by his Pastor Elder Hale Terry. Pretty singing by the Brothers, Sisters, and friends. Some of his favorites such as: How Tedious and Tastless the Hour, Amazing Grace, and others.

He was laid to rest beneath a beautiful mound of flowers in the family cemetery on the homeplace to await the Second Coming of Christ. We at Union Church miss him but, we feel our loss is his eternal gain.

Written by request of Union Church at last business meeting by: Dorcie Semones, Elder Hale Terry Moderator, Sister Lessie Cox Clerk.

DOYLE OREN MURPHY

The appointed time for our beloved Brother and Deacon, Doyle Oren Murphy, to pass from this life came June 22, 1988. He was born in Union County, near Eldorado, Arkansas, Feb. 20, 1909, making his stay here 79 years. Brother Doyle was the youngest of seven children.

He is survived by his wife, Helen Gathright Murphy; one son, David Lane Murphy and one daughter, Mrs. Robbie Holloway, both of Houston, Texas; three stepsons and one stepdaughter; one brother, Fred Murphy, and two sisters, Faye Hogg and Clemmie Bishop, of Eldorado, Arkansas.

Brother Doyle joined the Primitive Baptist Church in 1962, and was

ordained a deacon of Rehobeth Church in March, 1980. He loved going to church and attended as long as he was physically able. Brother Doyle made several trips to churches in Virginia, North Carolina, Alabama and Texas, and made many friends along the way. He loved to sing the old songs and was very gifted in prayer.

He will be sadly missed by all who knew and loved him. May we who are left be reconciled to God's will in his death. His funeral was conducted by Elders Lloyd Wall and G.R. Smith at Young's Funeral Home, Eldorado, Arkansas.

The attached writing by Brother Doyle was found by his wife after his death.

Elder G.R. Smith

SISTER LILLIE PENNELLE

On Feb. 8, 1988 the Lord called Sister Lillie Pennelle home at the age of 99 years, 3 weeks, and 2 days. Had been in Riverside Health Care Center 4 1/2 years.

Born Jan. 17, 1889 in Pittsylvania County, she was the daughter of the late Thomas H. and Bettie Marshal Davis. She lived her entire life in the county. She was first married to the late Lindsay Hanks, who died leaving her with three small boys, Edgar, Curtis and Lester Hanks, all deceased. She later married the late Tom Pennelle.

Sister Lillie joined Mt. Ararat or (Old Mt. Church) May 27, 1916. A faithful devoted member as long as her health permitted.

To visit her was a joy , her mind clear and centered on spiritual things. Telling of Gods great love and mercy to her all the days of her life . Of visions and dreams since a small girl. Will relate one she saw a few years ago , she looked out the window from her bed , saw some one dressed in the most beautiful white robe that she had ever seen , (did not see the face) as she looked in admiration at such beauty . She thought oh how I would love to have a robe like that , she looked down and low and behold she was wearing one just like it. She read her bible often and was blessed with deep understanding , loved to talk of Him who has all power , and changes not , Who predestinated all things .

She leaves to mourn , two daughters in law Mildred Hanks , and Lizzie Hanks . 9 grandchildren 24 great grandchildren , 6 great great grandchildren . Her funeral was held from Wrenn-Yeats Funeral home chapel , by her pastor , Elder H.W. Wray , Feb. 10 , 1988 . She was layed to rest in Danville Memorial Garden beneath a beautiful mound of flowers , where her body will rest until that Great day , when Christ , the righteous Judge , shall come to take his ransomed people home .

Written by one who loved her , at the request of the church .

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

ELDER REEVES OWEN SMITH

|| pray God will direct as I attempt to write this memorial of our dear brother in Christ I hope ? Elder Smith was born Jan . 11 ,

1919 , a son of John W . and Bessie Potter Smith . He departed from this life June 11 , 1988 . He leaves to mourn his passing , his dear wife Sister Rachel Allgood Smith whom he married Oct . 19 , 1941 . Two sons , Reeves O . Smith , Jr . of Belleville , MI. , Chester W . Smith of Belhaven , N.C . Two daughters , Pat Taylor of Albany , Ga . , and Sylvia Kirk of Washington , N.C . Eight grandchildren , two brothers Clemon and Justice Smith of Belhaven , N.C . Three sisters , Sana Paul of Belhaven , N.C. , Vera Waters of Pinetown , N.C . and Nelva Recceardelli of Jacksonville , Fla .

Elder Smith joined North Creek Primitive Baptist Church , Belhaven , N N.C. in 1969 and was soon ordained a deacon . Later the call to the ministry was recognized by the church . On the second Saturday night in March 1979 he was ordained to the full work of the ministry . Elder Smith was blessed to fill both offices as well as anyone I've ever known . I 'm sure that all who knew him would say the same . Elder Smith was sound in the doctrine of God our savior and was blessed with good advice at times which he shared with me and others . He was a good neighbor and friend to the community in which he lived . He was called to pastor Flat Swamp Church near Robersonville , N.C. and Bethlehem Church near Columbia , N.C . which he served well as long as he could go .

He was in declining health for about a year and suffered much but never was a complainer but was always ready to join with the great Apostle Paul and say , I recon the sufferings of this time world are not worthy to be compared with the glory

which shall be revealed in us . His loving family was always there , doing everything they could to make him more comfortable .

May we all , by God 's grace , say thank God for such a lovely brother and say to him , sleep on , take thy rest waiting for that blessed day when all God 's children will be taken home to glory where there will be no more sad farewells but will join together in everlasting praise to God the father .

His funeral was conducted at Paul funeral home in Belhaven , N.C . and his body laid to rest in the Smithton family cemetery , , Elders Joseph Sawyer , Jessie Forman and the writer officiating .

Resolved— one copy to the family one copy for the church record and one copy to the Signs of the Times .
By order of conference

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

VIRGINIA C . WOOD

Virginia C . Wood , wife of the late Elder John D . Wood , Sr . passed from this life on July 14 , 1988 at the age of 94 and was laid to rest in Black Rock Cemetery , Butler , Maryland . Elder Junior Conner of Salem , Virginia conducted the funeral .

Sister Wood lived a long , fulfilling life as she and her husband entertained many Old Baptists at their home in Manassas , Virginia . They traveled extensively to fulfill Elder Wood 's pastorate until his failing health caused him to give up his churches . Her last four years were spent in a nursing home in Westminster , Maryland .

She was the daughter of the late Jerman and Martha Franklin Carter and is survived by one daughter , Virginia Gladding of Westminster ; one son , John D . Wood , Jr . of South Carolina ; four sisters , Mary Sisler and Viola Carter , both of Roanoke , Virginia , Iva Burgess of Boonesmill , Va . , Martha Deveraux of Afton , Missouri ; five grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren .

Although her memory of natural things declined considerably in her waning years , Sister Wood 's spiritual mind remained clear and during our visits with her she was able to quote from the Bible and sing the songs of Zion with us from memory .

Peggy and Gene Osborne

MOVED OR MOVING ?

To assure you of getting your " Signs " and without missing any copies , be sure to inform us of any change of address .

Editors

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 420

Keeling, Virginia 24566

POEM

I LOVE THY KINGDOM, LORD

*I love thy kingdom, Lord
The house of thine abode;
The church our blest Redeemer
saved*

*With his own precious blood
I love thy church, O God,
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand.*

*For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my cares and toils be given
Till cares and toils shall end.
Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways;
Her sweet communion, solemn
vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.*

*Jesus, thou friend divine,
Our Saviour and our King
Thy hand, from every snare and foe,
Shall great deliverance bring.
Sure as thy truth shall last,
To Zion shall be given
The brightest glories earth can
yield,
And brighter bliss of heaven.*

Dwight

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 EDITORIAL

THE WIND

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, whither it goeth: so is every one born of the Spirit." (John 3:8)



Elder W. D. Griffin

These two things are produced by the Lord. Not the first created thing had the least part of these two productions being carried or developed to full fruition. Furthermore each and everyone from the first one in the pristine morning of time, have, if

they have, come into the kingdom of heaven under just such trying circumstances as are described here by our Saviour. That is not the construction that I put on what He said, but it is the experience that I hoped to have passed through at the time.

That early experience was something terrible to endure, and it is still that way. I know that what the Bible says does not mean anything to anyone unless they have (and are) experiencing the things described. Therefore, I do not appeal (I do not preach nor write to those that have a vain philosophy) to those that have not, nor do not experience the power set forth by the Saviour's description of the New Birth.

Although the learned Saul had never bowed the knee to anyone, nor to anybody, yet, I have never, in all of my reading, come across a man as helpless and ignorant as he shown himself to be on the Damascus road. While we are at this particular place in the travel of one who has come under the experience and power of this wind, let me go a step further and say that anyone that leaves the spot where this wind has blown, that comes away knowing where it came from and what it is about, and what they are to do, one and all of them are mistaken about the Lord having demonstrated His power in their life.

Now I did not say that there wasn't a voice or a thunder or some other demonstration of great affairs. Many such occurrences happen which get a lot of attention, but when the dust has settled the Lord was not in any of them. Moreover, some of the time there is not a voice from outside the hearer. Only his or her imagination is using them. In what I desire to call your

attention to , each and everyone is brought into the presence of this devastating storm , and each one is brought into the scene when everything is yielding to this gigantic wind they feel the tremors that involuntarily pass through them ; they bow down to great buildings that they have built to house their goods , and these are all laid waste about them ; they feel the surge of the mighty power within and around them , Yes , they are aware that their house has been wrecked for all time to come . But they fail to learn one thing that multiplied tens of thousands are learning everytime that a breeze rises , to wit , they know where it comes from , and , as they arise , and pick up the fragments , they soon have still greater blueprints for better barns and storehouses in which to store their goods .

Not so with the true Israelite , the true child of God . He or she leaves that stromy ground in a lot worse state than when the wind arose . They know something happened to them that had never occurred before , but they spend the balance of their days in amazement and in wonder . What did happen to me ? Where did it come from ? Where did it go ? Did it come from God or did it come from my depraved mind ?

This was indeed the greatest wind to ever blow . It does not leave you with a lot of goods intact . It spoils all of that which you laid up . It does not take this great spoil away . You have to live with the spoiling goods (they get worse as time goes on) , and you need not think you are going to find out where the wind came from , neither are you going to find out where it goes . There is not a shred of conditionalism that you can perform and get some relief . You will never get

any while you live . For you see a Stronger Man than you has come on the scene and has from the start routed you . He spoils your goods and then binds you . People talk about that they are free to perform this and that and get blessings , or to leave off this and that and miss them . That is not true . When this wind arises and blows itself out it leaves everyone a poor helpless sinner not knowing anything as he or she ought . They do not know where the storm come from much less do they know whether it is of God or not .

Once again I would urge that where this wind (Spirit) has blown there is not one that knows whether it is God that has dealt with them or not . Instead of all of those born of the Spirit being godly , they do not any of them know whether that they are godly or not . Thus , as I leave this phase of the subject , I would kindly ask , have you evercome this wind , or has it overcome you ?

Now let us follow the wind and the storm . Let us see if we ever do get to where we can master this Spirit . In order for us to have power to save ourselves , we must have power over the Spirit . Do we have this ? Have we the ability to retain the Spirit ? If so , we must also have the will to do so . Have we got that power ? The question is : Are we able to stay in the Spirit or to retain that Spirit ? If there is a passage of Scripture that declares that wonderful fact , certainly , I desire to find it . I find to the contrary . There cannot be any mistake about two things . Even though there is right much in writing and more still of loud talking that any child of God can walk in the Spirit at will , yet the wise man

declared that no man could retain the Spirit anymore than he could retain life in the day of death . It is passing strange that those professing to be saved by the grace of God , yet boldly and blindly declared that if we just would do it that we can walk in the Spirit at all times . Or have I misunderstood you — do you mean to suggest that you can save yourself whether in or out of the Spirit ?

All of the great blessings in nature are also spiritual gifts . Ever so many times , in divers manners the written word is teeming with references about the wind in the travels and experiences of those who are of the members of the kingdom of heaven . As far as the references to the wind it always finds the poor sinner at its mercy . At this period in our dealing with the subject , let us remember that God is the direct and immediate cause of there being any natural wind . Of course , if you have some kind of a book that gives a source of wind in a nature other than our wise and gracious Creator , you get all out of it that you can , but for those who learned in the outset of their experience that it blows where it listeth , and that is in keeping with what our heavenly Father does , we that hope in Him will continue to believe that He holds it in His fists , and thus that every cooling breeze from the south , as well as every frigid blast out of icy lands , together with every tornadic wind that ever hit Kansas came as a result of Him opening His fists . If those that can master the winds will be so kind as to tell us where they find that fact in the Bible , we will appreciate it so much . But I think that they have an insurmountable problem to begin with for we are all reminded that the wind blows where it listeth , which is to say that it blows where it pleases and

in relation to it blowing where it pleases , we are likewise reminded that God holds it in His fists , and that not only does that wind blow where God pleases for it to blow , both the wind of the Spirit and that in nature , but likewise that bound the waters in a garment that He has established all the ends of the earth , therefore , not only is every item of nature bounded , but that each time any of these natural gifts are spiritualized that in each case the Spirit is settled , fixed , arranged so definitely that happen so or maybe so or conditionality just cannot be found in the Bible concerning them by the children of God .

The people of God went down to sea to do business in great waters and on good ships . The wind arose , a storm was sent . The wind became quite rough . They could not master their vessels . They were tossed to and fro . About the time that they thought the storm was abating , lo and behold , the wind tossed them fro . Every last one of them lost their wits . A man and a woman that has lost their wits is not able to rescue themselves , to save themselves . It is useless for you to write me that you are able to maintain your wits at all times . If you have ever been to sea , you have , and you didn't know what to do , and like these that I am describing , you would have been lost had not He that sent the storm caused it to abate . Salvation is of the Lord .

Jonah determined not to go to Nineveh . God determined that he go . He used what he had to keep from going , but he did not have the power to keep from going when the storm broke in its fury on him . At that time he said , even declared , that salvation

was of the Lord . Both the wind of the Spirit , and the natural wind were effective in making Jonah renounce all subterfuges and all dodgeings of the flesh and to say without reservation , that salvation comes from the Lord .

In the 148th Psalm we have a long list of things that fulfil the word of the Lord . If the Lord spares my unprofitable life, I may at a future date touch upon all of these things , but right now I am delighted to call your attention to stormy winds fulfilling His word , and His word in every way that it is used in the Bible is used for the mutual benefit of His children these stormy winds are kept harnessed in the strong hands of the Lord and will never blow in a way to destroy their hope , their heritage , their home beyond this travail .

If I am not mistaken , I have seen and felt the tossing of the wind of the Spirit . I have felt , as I hope , the bending down of every plant that I have planted . I have known that a power greater than I was laying waste what I had thought to have done . I did not know then , as I would have liked to have known where the wind was from . I have sought time after time that He in whom I sometimes am given a faint hope that it was He at the helm , but that this been nearly sixty years ago , and my testimony today is the same that it was that day of yore . I do not know as I would like to know that it was the Spirit of the Lord . If I got brave and said that I did know I would then be subjected to the same rebuke that is due all these that have withstood the Spirit and the wind in salvation .

But I write in hope . I do hope that I have been to sea , and that the storm has been furious , and that I , together with all of those whose hope of salvation now and hereafter is in the

hands of the Mariner that rests in His own love (Zeph . 3:17) , but is ever kind and merciful to the cry of His sea and wind tossed trophies of His covenant , and that HE rebukes the wind and the waves and out of His fulness gives them to rest also in His redeeming love .

Elder W . D . Griffin

NOTICE

To all who write for the " Signs . " It is our policy , not to publish anything in the " Signs of the Times " that reflects in any way on something someone else has written and has been published . All articles sent to us for publication will be edited accordingly .

Editors

CORRESPONDENCE

Dearly Beloved Brethen ,

I have had many thoughts recently that I desire to share with you , if God be willing ; and I pray that He will direct my every effort of His praise , honor and glory , and to the edification and comfort of His saints . I hope that my thoughts have been inspired by the Almighty , and that what I believe concerning the holy gospel has been taught of Him and not by man .

First I will tell you that I believe , if not deceived , that all things were predetermined by God : in other words the predestination of all things .

He has ever been and shall ever be in complete control of all things and events ; or he is in control of nothing . He is the One who has " declared the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done , saying , My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure . " And , " The Lord of hosts hath sworn , saying Surely as I have thought , so shall it come to pass ; and as I have purposed , so shall it stand . " There are many such scriptures in the Bible that declare the wisdom and power of our Sovereign God ; and if this is not the God you and I believe in , then is all our hope in vain and we are still dead in trespasses and sin . This is the God that created the heavens and the earth and all things therein by the word of His power and in His eternal wisdom . Everything he created , or formed , or made was and is perfect for the purpose for which He made it . " For by Him were all things created , that are in heaven , and that are in the earth , visible and invisible , whether they be thrones , or dominions , or principalities , or powers : all things were created by Him and for Him : and He is before all things , and by Him all things consists . " " He spake and it was done ; He commanded and it stood fast . "

Now I would like to tell you some of my recent thoughts . I desire that you read this carefully and prayerfully for I know that I am very prone to error , and I ask you to accept it only as far as you find it in accord with the holy scriptures .

It should be obvious to all that the entrance of sin into the world did not bring to light the glorious plan of redemption : this plan was only revealed much later . If it had been God ' s will for Adam to keep His commandment

then surely Adam would have kept it : for God works all things after the counsel of His own will : He works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure . The " will of God " is that His purpose for all things shall be accomplished when , where and how He has decreed . If anyone should disagree with me on this , then we may find that we disagree on many things ; but herein lies what I believe to be the difference between God ' s will and His commandments . It may be hard for us to understand why God gave commandments that He knew would not be kept , but as the heavens are higher than the earth , so are His thoughts higher than our thoughts and His ways higher than our ways .

God ' s commandment to Adam to not partake of the forbidden fruit is as holy , just and good as is God Himself . He has never given a commandment that was not thus . However , let us consider the purpose of this particular commandment , and the one to whom it was given . There should be no doubt in the mind of anyone who has been translated out of nature ' s darkness into the marvelous , holy light of God that God hates sin with a holy hatred . but that He has a purpose for it being in the world that is worthy of His holy name . Thanks be unto our most holy God , however , that the plan of redemption and salvation was already formed by the great Three - in - one , for Jesus stood as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world . And sin entered the world by the transgression of one man Adam .

Now let us consider this man who accomplished the will or purpose of God , though he knew it not . When God made man from the dust of the ground , breathed the breath of life

into his nostrils and he became a living soul, did He not make him according to His own will and purpose? Was anyone there to direct or advise Him? Of course not! God in His perfect wisdom and knowledge made man exactly as it pleased Him. Are we to question this? Certainly not. Paul said, "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that made it, Why hast thou made me thus?" God is a Sovereign Being and is never to be questioned. God made this man Adam perfect and upright. All things were made or created perfect for the purpose which they were made or created, even Satan and the wicked. Satan, the father of lies, deceived Eve, and she ate of the forbidden fruit. She gave the fruit to Adam and he did eat of it. Adam knew neither evil or good before he ate the forbidden fruit, but because of his love for the woman that God had given him he willingly followed her into the death that God had said he would die. "For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." It was love, not lust, that made Adam willing to die for his bride; for how can one lust after something he knows nothing about: they were naked, but knew it not. It was only after eating of the fruit that Adam knew good and evil. And the Lord said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil," when Adam had eaten the fruit and his eyes had been opened. Adam fulfilled the purpose of God because of his love, but Joseph's brothers fulfilled it by selling Joseph with evil intent.

When Adam partook of the forbidden fruit, sin entered the world; for sin is the transgression of the law, and judgment came upon all men to

condemnation, for all were in his loins from the creation, because he is our federal head: we are only Adam multiplied. The entire human race became totally depraved with that first transgression. "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." There are many scriptures that declare the fallen, wicked state of man, but the one quoted above should be abundantly sufficient. "Therefore by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one (Jesus) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." Adam's transgression fulfilled the will of God though he knew it not: and so it is today. Each and every one of us will accomplish the purpose of God, whether it be when He works in us to do that which is well pleasing in His sight, or we do it with evil intent in our heart and break every commandment. Even our wrath shall praise him. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain."

It was the will of God that our Lord and Saviour should be crucified, for it had been foretold by God's prophets of old. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." And in the garden, the night when Jesus was taken, he said to his disciples, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He

shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels ? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled , that thus it must be ? And Peter said , “ But these things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ would suffer , he hath so fulfilled . ” The Jews sought to slay Jesus many times , but could not , because his time had not yet come ; but at the appointed time they fulfilled the will of God , with evil intent , though they knew it not . And it was not only the Jews which took part in it : “ The kings of the earth stood up , and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord , and against his Christ . For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus , whom thou has anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate , with the Gentiles , were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done . ” Brethren , it was no secret that Christ should be crucified and slain , and yet they did not know they were fulfilling the will of God when they hung the Saviour on the cross of Calvary . Had they known it , they would not have slain the Prince of Glory .

God commanded Abraham to take his only son , Isaac , upon a certain mountain and offer him there for a burnt offering , and by faith Abraham did as God commanded . When Isaac asked , “ Where is the lamb for the burnt offering , ” Abraham by faith said , “ My son , God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering . ” He took him where God said , placed him on the altar with the wood and would have slain his only beloved son had not God stayed his hand . Since it was God who stayed him , can we believe that it was God’s will that Isaac should be slain for a

offering ? I don’t believe that we can . This is one of the fiery trials which is to try each and every child of God : not that we will be commanded to offer a son for sacrifice , but we have been chosen in the furnace of affliction and we must face every trial in the path that has been laid out for us ; but when we have been tried we shall come forth as gold with all the dross burned out . I believe that the trial of Abraham ’ s faith was put on record for our learning and consolation . It teaches us that we should attempt to follow all the commandments of God and trust in Him to lead us in the right way by the faith given unto us . And it brings forth in a beautiful figure the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our redemption and salvation . By faith Abraham believed that God was able to keep all that He had promised , and it was imputed unto him for righteousness . It was not written for his sake alone , that it was imputed unto him ; but for us also , to whom it shall be imputed , if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead . There is no doubt in my mind that Abraham would have slain his son had not God stayed him , for he had faith to believe that God was able to raise him up , even from the dead ; from whence also he received him in a figure . God provided the ram caught in the thicket by his horns , and Abraham offered up the ram in the stead of his son . This ram was typical of the Holy Lamb that would be offered upon the cross of Calvary for the sins of his people . And by this one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified .

Abraham ’ s faith was strong , enabling him to obey all that was commanded of him by God . Was his faith a work of the creature ? Did Abraham have something that he pro-

duced himself ? Did he have something that you do not have ? No , for faith is the gift of God : “ For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of ourselves ; it is the gift of God . ” It may be that one saint has more faith than another , but we have exactly enough faith to overcome all our trials and tribulations ; for God shall provide all our needs . Much of the time our faith seems so small that we feel we have none , but we always have what we need . “ There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man : but God is faithful , who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape , that ye may be able to bear it . ”

God is in one mind , and who can turn Him ? There is but one will , and that cannot be divided . We must do the will of God , whether by faith in believing or out of an evil heart .

Without faith it is impossible to please God . “ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for , the evidence of things not seen . ” Without faith we would have no evidence to support our hope of ever living and reigning with Christ in glory and we would have no peace with God in this world . “ Therefore being justified by faith , we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand , and rejoice in hope of the glory of God . ” How do we overcome the cares , trials and tribulations of the world ? By faith “ For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world : and this is the victory that overcometh the world , even our faith . Who is he that overcometh the world , but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? ” We must be given faith before we can

believe in Jesus Christ . Brethren , there is much , much more that could be said concerning the faith that is so essential to us , but this should be sufficient . However , let me make one more point . “ For the promise , that he should be the heir of the world , was not to Abraham , or to his seed , through the law , but through the righteousness of faith . For if they which are of the law be heirs , faith is made void , and the promise made of none effect : because the law worketh wrath : for where no law is , there is no transgression . Therefore it is of faith , that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure TO ALL THE SEED . ” I thank God for such a wonderful doctrine , even if I be not included in the seed . However , I have a hope in this , if not completely deceived .

Beloved brethren , I have much more that I would like to say to you , but I forbear ; for I fear this has already become too lengthy . If God be willing , I would like at a later date to write some more to you . Remember this poor sinner when at the throne of grace .

Clifford Wilbanks

716 Hill Avenue
Salem , VA . 24153

Dear Elder Key :

The other day I encountered a person that told me if I would accept Christ as my Saviour , that God would give me eternal life . The person was sincere in believing that he had eternal life because of what hr

had performed by his decision to make Christ his Saviour and believed that Christ had already given him eternal life .

No where in the Bible can I find that eternal life , only a hope of , is given to us while in this mortal life . " The gift of Eternal Life is through Jesus Christ our Lord " , says the scripture . Any other way , is not acceptable , " For There is One God and One Mediator between God and men , the man Jesus Christ . "

Through Christ , the children of God can do anything , without Him , " we can do nothing , " says the Apostle . Through Christ we gain the Victory ! " Thanks be to God which giveth us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ . " It is only through the " Captain of our Salvation " That we can boast of Victory over sin and death . "

Our knowledge of God comes through Christ . " Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son , and He to whosoever the Son will reveal Him . But if I be one of that number whom He told the Father ; " Thine they were and Thou gavest them me , " Then my " life is hid with Christ in God . . . " " As Thou Father Art in Me and I in Thee . . . I in them and Thou in Me . . . "

There is so much for me to be thankful for . I am thankful for the love and esteem of my family , my friends and neighbors . I am thankful for the Liberty and Freedom to attend the churches and there be blessed with the sweet fellowship one toward each other . To listen to the message and praise be to the Giver of life and things to sustain us , is indeed a blessing .

We should be thankful for the Bible and read it more often and meditate over what is written there for our learning . Through Christ we see God , " Who at Sundry Times and in

divers manners spake in Times past unto the fathers by the prophets , hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son . . . " " Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and up holding 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 . "

" For Christ is not entered into the Holy place made with hands , which are the figures of the true , but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us . " What a comforting scripture this is to me !

Often times , I'm made to wonder , to doubt if the hope of faith will be turned to sight . If I look at myself so vile , I see nothing to and of myself to cling to , but when I'm enabled to look away from self to Him , my cup runneth over !

May the Lord bless His people and give unto them His peace .

Horace E . Walker

ARTICLES

The following is a sermon preached by Elder Raymond Goad at Little Creek Church near Delmar . Del . . April 10 . 1988 .

Perhaps if there is one chapter in the Bible that identifies Old Baptist belief , it would be the eighth chapter of Romans . I am sure there are those who had rather this scripture not even be printed , but thats beside the point . I believe that all scriptures are profitable for the doctrine , and in order to understand these scriptures , we must under-

stand in the spirit and in truth . As we read and all we ever see in these beautiful truths is the natural things of this life , it is evidence that we have not the spirit of God . Yet I believe that much of our time we are left to ourselves , that as we read we do not understand what we are reading , in the spirit . There are many times when I have opened the scriptures , my mind would wander away on earthly things . I trust that what few moments we stand before you that our minds may be removed from the vain and perishable things of this life , and be set on things that are eternal .

I will begin , the Lord willing with the sixteenth verse of the eighth chapter of Romans . “ The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God . ” Paul writes to the brethren here , to the church ; He is speaking something that is present with children of God . He says the spirit itself bears witness with our spirit and as we read these beautiful truths we beg for understanding and enlightening in what they mean . Certainly we could not rejoice in the writing that Paul has written , unless that our spirits are along the same lines as Paul ’s experience was . In order to rejoice in the truth as it is written we must know something about the spirit in which it was written . Paul says the spirit itself , that is the spirit of God , the new heart , the understanding that God gives his people , bears witness that we are the children of God .

I believe that God ’s people from time to time rejoice in the spirit . Not only when they are at church , not only when their hearts are turned to the hymns of Zion , but when it pleases God . Maybe , when about our work , when it seems everything else is removed , only the things that be of God I have a few times took the wrong

road as I drove along the highway when meditating upon the things that be of God . I trust that my spirit , if indeed I have one this morning witnesses with the spirit in which Paul records these beautiful truths . The truth bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God .

I have told those who talk about things that they believe , if they could find some other teachings that I enjoy more in the things that you believe , then I would go that way . For more than twenty years , I trust by the Grace of God , that I haven ’t found anything that I love better than the teachings that the Primitive Baptists stands for , that is salvation by Grace . Then he says the children are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ . If so be if we have suffered with him that we may also be glorified together . Sometimes it melts me as I read these beautiful truths . We have read the experience of Paul , we have read many of your experiences from time to time as you have been blessed to write them . We have rejoiced in hearing those who have come to the church tell their experience .

We think sometimes , perhaps that we suffer more than anyone else . We do in one sense of the word and Christ in the seventeenth chapter of John tells us why that we suffer . I am not talking about physically , but I am talking about spiritually . He tells us we are in the world but we are not of the world . Thats why you are here today , thats why there is nothing out there in the world that is more important than to go to church . For me this is the most important thing in life , that we are blessed to meet together , to mingle our voices in hymns of praise , to talk about the

goodness and mercies of God . Certainly it was the most important thing in Paul 's life after he was converted . It wasn 't important before , neither was it in your life , neither was it in mine . There was a time in our lives when this was not important with us . I can remember going to church when it was boring to set even the short period of time while the minister preached . Yet I can remember even back then when I saw those dear saints set back there and shed tears of joy under the sound of the gospel . Paul said that I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us . We know that we have aches and pains , sometimes we feel ours is greater than anyone else , but you know as we read these beautiful truths we find that God 's people suffer at the hand of the enemy , many of them were beheaded , many of them were put to death . Paul was beaten and was in prison and even left for dead . He said he counted it all joy that he was blessed to suffer for the name of Christ , for Christ sake . For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time is not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us . Isn't this beautiful , " the glory that shall be revealed in us . " The word us as it is used has reference to the church of God , every heir of promise . For the earnest expectations of the creature waits for the manifestation of the Son of God . For the creature was made subject to vanity , not willingly but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope . Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God . He said they shall be delivered . For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in

pain together until now . I know the Bible says we know nothing as we ought . It says the eye has not seen , the ear has not heard , neither has entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for them that love him . And we yearn for those little Bethel spots along life 's journey . When our minds have been completely removed from earthly things , and yet they are not even to be compared with that which you shall receive . For we know that the whole creature groan and travaileth in pain together until now . And not only they , but ourselves also , which have the first fruits of the Spirit , even we ourselves groan within ourself , waiting for the adoption , to wit , the redemption of our body . For we are saved by hope ; but hope that is seen is not hope ; for what a man seeth , why does he yet hope for it ? There are those who criticize us for this . I will confess to you that this is all I have in this life is a hope . Sometimes it seems so small , but I don't believe it is ever completely removed . I have a hope that the Lord shall keep me from doing the things I see taking place in the world , from the things I have done and I have a hope that someday beyond this life , beyond these sufferings and trials that are mine and yours that we shall see him for ourselves and not another . We are saved by hope , but if we hope for that we see not , then do we with patience wait for it . I believe God 's children wait for it with patience . I believe that they are completely satisfied with the promises of God . God is not slack concerning his promises as some men count slackness . If we hope for that we see not then do we with patience wait for it .

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth

our infirmities ; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered . And then he says these beautiful words . He that searches the heart . I think that so much of the time we are too anxious to judge . The Bible teaches us that we should not judge . It tells us in the book of Matthew to judge not that ye be not judged . He that searches the heart knows what is the mind of the Spirit , because he maketh intercessions for the saints according to the will of God . Satan would have you to believe its according to your will , but its according to the will of God . He taught his disciples to pray in this manner “ That Thy Will Be Done , ” not what we will . Its not always in our best interest for what we pray for , its not that he don't hear our prayers , its not that he doesn't answer them . Paul sought the Lord that he might remove the thorn in the flesh . He told him its there lest you get exalted above measure , my Grace is sufficient for you . Then he says this , and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God , to them who are called according to his purpose . Not according to your purpose , not according to something that we have done , or something that we give , but according to the purpose of God . We spend much time in life wondering about those things and then we are reminded of this scripture . We find comfort in our hearts to know that these things are not out of control . If they were , then God ceases to be God . He is the supreme being of this universe and it tells us in this scripture there is no power except the power of the things of God . Then they are not out of control , they are working for your

good . I know we can't always see that but we find comfort .

He says my peace I give unto you . I find peace when I think of this . I find peace knowing that He is in control . That these things are not going to over run anything unless it is according to the will of God . We are not always blessed to see that , but when we are we find peace . I am at peace with what God has promised . I have no doubt whatsoever that he is able to raise those stones up . I have no doubt whatsoever that he shall raise the dead . I am at complete peace at the promises of God . I am not at peace with myself , but I have complete peace and confidence in the promises and will of God . For whom he did foreknow , he also did predestinate to to be conformed to the image of His Son , that he might be the firstborn among many brethren .

Moreover whom he did predestinate , them he also called : He did not leave anything to chance . In the 110th Psalm it reads , “ Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power . ” In His prayer He says , all the Father has given me I have lost none and shall raise them up in the last day . We had a dear brother come among us who had been in many different churches . And not long ago he joined the church , my home church and he told me this , “ Brother Goad , what I like about your preaching is you all preach eternal security . ” He said thats what I want , eternal security . If we preach Jesus , we must preach eternal security for all the heirs of God . Moreover whom he did predestinate , them he also called When we are blessed in the Spirit to see these things they are very clear , we see the calling of Paul , we see the calling of all the Patriarchs of old and we don't find where they made any

great to do's about their calling. They were about their business following after the things of Satan as you and I and would still be, had it not been for the love of God in our hearts, we would still be following after those things. Paul says it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me. Moreover them he did predestinate, them he also called, we see the calling of many of the others. We see the calling of many of you. We have seen those who had said they would not be old Baptists, they would not come among them, would criticise them and make fun of them and later on made to love them. They were called out of natures darkness and brought in to the marvelous light. There are those of you who have told me of a calling. You were predestinated, and called here in time. Them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified. Paul said what shall we then say to these things if God be for us, who can be against us There is no powers, nor principalities nor things present, nor things to come that shall separate us from the love of God, which is our Christ Jesus

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. All, has reference to all whose name is in the Book of Life. That is who this scripture is written to. Thats who he is talking to. Thats why He came to this low ground of sin and sorrow and took upon himself a body of flesh, thats what he did it for. He said for this cause was I born. What shall we then say to these things, if God be for us, who can be against us. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things. Something that you work for is not free.

Something you inherit is not something you work for. Thats what the scriptures teach us, that we inherit these things. They are free. By Grace are you saved. Grace is a free and unmerited favor. You might go out and talk till you are blue in the face and you couldn't make one believe this. But God with even the Gaderene who lived among the tombs, when he cast the devils out and into a herd of swine and they ran down into the sea. He speaks and it is done, he commands and it stands fast.

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? I have heard those who believe differently say, oh yes, that was of election. You cast one vote, Christ cast a vote and Satan cast one and you have to cast for the deciding vote. I wasn't around here before the foundation of the world. The Bible teaches this took place before the foundation of the world. How could I have had anything to say in it. This is hid from the wise and the prudent. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect. It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long! We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other

creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God; which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am glad Paul was talking about us. I am glad he didn't just say me, he said us, shall not separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.

My dear hearers if this is not eternal security, I don't know what it is. If that is not the love of the things that you believe, the basis of the things that you love, the things that you hope for. I can tell you this morning I have no doubt whatsoever but that none of God's children will be left out. I don't believe God is slack concerning his promises as some men count slackness, but is long suffering toward us. He came, he suffered as no other man has ever suffered, bled and died and hung between Heaven and Earth and shed his precious blood on the tree of the cross for you and I trust for me, that someday beyond the trials of this life that we shall see him, be made like him and be satisfied. I don't know what kind of body it will be, one of the writers said, it does not yet appear what we shall be, but I am satisfied with this promise, we shall be like him and and be satisfied. I believe with all my heart that he is able to perform that which he has promised to the children of God.

I hope to live my days out among you people, I hope I never bring trouble among you and I apologise for my mistakes, but for the things I love I stand firm upon salvation by grace and grace alone.

Elder Raymond Goad

THE STORY OF RUTH

Not long since, I attended services of the Baptists in the city and heard the preacher tell "the story of Ruth," and also showed on the screen what were purported to be the leading events of her life, and as there have always been two ways of telling a story, it made me want to tell it in my own little way; hence the attempt.

Back in the depths of antiquity God called Abraham out from among the Chaldeans, and told him to get out of the country, and from among the people, and from his father's house, to a land that he would show him, and it is said that he went out, not knowing whither he went. Therefore we conclude that Abraham in all his journey toward the promised land walked by faith and not by sight. So Abraham came to the land of Canaan, and Lot, his nephew, came with him. Abraham was rich in cattle, gold and silver, and Lot also had great flocks and herds. Abraham, Lot and their servants were strangers in the land of Canaan, and in that "their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together," and their herdsmen got to fighting, and they had to separate. Evidently this was a sore trial for faithful Abraham, but he bore it patiently, giving Lot his choice: You go to the right and I will go to the left, or vice versa, so Lot "pitched his tent toward Sodom." Later we find him living in Sodom, we find also the men of Sodom were sinners exceedingly before the Lord, so much so that the Lord sent his angels to Sodom to inspect the city, and overthrow it if the report were true, but they stopped with Abraham and told him about their

errand, and faithful Abraham sued for the city, for the sake of Lot. He probably did not have faith to pray for Lot's family individually, but he put him in with a number, first fifty, then forty and on down to ten, and the angel granted his every request. But lo, and behold, there were not ten righteous people there, but the Lord is ever mindful of his own, and he led Lot and his two daughters out of the city, hastening them, for, said he, I cannot do anything until you get out. "But his wife looked back from behind him, and became a pillar of salt." This all looks sad, but remember they were the dark hours before day. Lot and his two daughters went and dwelt in a cave and saw the smoke ascend as of a furnace when the four cities were destroyed, and they naturally concluded they were the only ones of the human race that were left, so these daughters formed a plan to propagate the human race, and both of the daughters became with child by their father. The firstborn brought forth a son, and called his name Moab; the same is the father of the Moabites. The younger brought forth a son, and she called his name Benammi. He is the father of the Ammonites.

Now let us recapitulate a little, and see if it is not a fact that all the good things and all the bad things are absolutely necessary to the carrying out of God's great, grand and noble purposes. If the servants of Abraham and Lot had not "stroved together" they probably could have lived together, and Lot would not have moved to Sodom. If the men of Sodom had not been "sinners exceedingly before the Lord" the Lord would not have destroyed Sodom. If Lot's wife had not looked behind she would not have become a pillar of salt. Could she have gone on with her husband and dwelt in the cave with him she would no doubt have protected him from his

daughters' incestuous crime, and if his two daughters had not lain with him there would have been no Moabites or Ammonites, consequently no Ruth, for she was a Moabitish damsel. Had there been no Ruth there could have been no Obed, for no other woman in the world could have been his mother. Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David, and Christ came of the seed of David. Look over this line of events as we may, and there is not a single one that could have been taken out or changed without breaking the chain of events that led down to the coming of the Savior. God could, I doubt not, have brought him through some other line, but inasmuch as he did not do it, but chose that line and method, why not just believe that in his omniscience and omnipotence he has ruled and managed all these things according to the good pleasure of his will and the salvation of his chosen? Then why not say as one of old: "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 whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Notice he does not say, How shall he give us all things? but how can he fail to do it,

having given such an enormous price as his only begotten Son ?

One more point , in Psalms lx . 8, and in Psalms cviii . 9, we find this Scripture : “ Moab is my washpot . ” Every family needs a washpot , and had any one of the foregoing events failed to take place God 's family would have been minus a washpot , and his dear little children could not have been purified , and made white , and tried . (Dan . xii . 10 .) When the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt , and through forty years in the wilderness , their last camping - place was in the border of Maob (near the washpot) , and Balak , king of Moab , was frightened nearly to death at an army of 603,550, and he sent for Balaam to come and curse Israel , and the Lord suffered him to come , with orders that he was to speak nothing but such words as God was to put in his mouth . So he came and sought enchantment , but God put a blessing in his mouth every time . One of the blessings God put in his mouth was this : “ Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob , neither is there any divination against Israel : according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and Israel , What hath God wrought ! ” As much as to say , Look at Israel (the church) and see the work of the great God . But Balaam gave Balak this instruction : Send out the daughters of Moab to dance before Israel , and get them to sacrifice to your gods , and so transgress God 's law , and you will be able to overcome them . He followed the instruction and all the unworthy and unfit of the land of Canaan yielded to the temptation and were destroyed as filth from the washpot . Israel now being washed in the pot (Moab) , they were ready to cross over Jordan into the promised land (church) .

Just a few more words . As I have shown before , Christ came through the genealogy of Ruth , the Moabitish

damsel . In the spirit of the case . Jesus Christ is the great spiritual washpot , whose blood cleanses all his little children from all their filthiness and uncleanness and prepares them for that heavenly Canaan . that rest at God 's right hand .

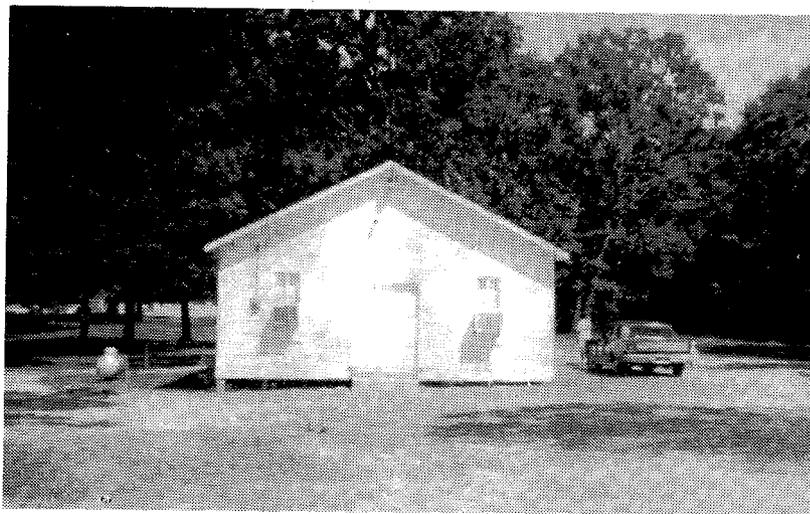
So the story of Ruth , the little Moabitish damsel , is a much more interesting story than the one I saw at the picture show .

G . W . Berry

“ But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you , and ye need not that any man teach you : but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things , and is truth , and is no lie , and even as it hath taught you , ye shall abide in him . ” — I John 2:27

Have you ever had a solitary drop of this holy anointing oil fall upon your heart ? One drop , if it be but a drop , will sanctify you for ever to the service of God . There was not much of the holy anointing oil used for the service of the tabernacle , when we consider the size and quantity of what had to be consecrated , for Moses had to anoint therewith the whole of the tabernacle of the congregaton , as well as all the vessels , with all their various appurtenances . When he went through the sacred work , he touched one vessel after another with a drop of oil ; for one drop sanctified the vessel to the service of the tabernacle . There was no repetition of the consecration wanted ; it abode . So if you ever had a drop of God 's love shed abroad in your heart , — a drop of the anointing to teach you the truth as it is Jesus ; a drop to penetrate , to soften , to heal . to feed and give light , life , and power to your soul , — you have the unction from the Holy one ; you know oil you have been sanctified and made meet for an eternal inheritance .

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



PARAN PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Last November 3rd marked the one hundredth anniversary of the constitution of Paran Primitive Baptist Church. The first meeting was held at Cox 's School House with Elders R .T .Webb and John Carter preaching the gospel of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ . Elder Webb was moderator of this meeting , and P.M. Faulk was clerk . Among the family names constituting the church at that first meeting were Faulk , Cox , Jones , Stapp , Snow , Wilson and McCarroll . The first members to be added to the church came forward at the very next meeting from the Burgin family .

Only an all gracious God could watch over , care for , and bless the various members of this church during 100 years of trials and afflictions and sweet deliverence . Truly only His grace is sufficient . Paran Church now meets every first Sunday and is located near FM Rd 2659 , 4 . 5 miles northeast of Hawkins , Texas . We would warmly welcome any visitors . Elder Jimmy Hamrick is present pastor , and Sister Flo Stutts is clerk .

The following notation by the church clerk , Sister Inez Gearner , is taken from the church minutes dated February 5th , 1978 ; and as it mentions the last two beloved pastors of this church , it was thought appropriate to include here .

“ Sunday morning the church met at 10:30 for worship service . We had visitors from Hopewell and Good Hope Churches . It was such a joy to have them meet with us . After singing Elder Hamrick led in prayer . Elder E. J. Lambert went forward using as his text Ecclesiastes ; 12th chapter , 13th and 14th verses . Elder Joe Hamrick followed using the last two verses of this same chapter . The feast was so great . Time seemed to fly . May God grant us many more of these pleasant times . ”

In this corrupt and wicked age in which we now live , we feel a greater need than ever for our gracious Lord to bless His churches with pleasant times as they meet together in His blessed name . May He see fit to do so , to the praise of the glory of His Grace .

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

The wise and foolish virgins all slumbered and slept while the bridegroom lingered . (Matt . 25) During all that time no difference could be seen between them . No mark appeared by which it could be told who were wise and who were foolish . No one could tell whose vessels had oil in them and whose had not . So it was with the nation of Israel during the legal dispensation . The Lord 's people could not be distinguished from the others ; The legal works could be done as well by who had no grace in his heart as by one who had ; all appeared alike , as do those who sleep . This was the sleeping time, the night dispensation, and no fault is found with them for sleeping . But when, at the end of that legal day , at midnight , the announcement was made , " Behold , the bridegroom cometh , " then the difference between the wise and the foolish was made to appear . Those who had oil in their vessels were ready to go in with the bridegroom ; those who were without oil could not go in . The difference between the two characters , those who had grace in the heart and those who had not , was as great before the bridegroom came as after , but that difference could not be manifest until he came . The wise were not made wise because they took oil , but they took oil because they were wise .

So also with the foolish ; they were not foolish because they took no oil , but they took no oil because they were foolish . The wisdom of the wise was and always is , a gift to them from

the Lord , and so is the oil , or grace , by which they have the light of life , which shineth in the darkness of our nature , but is not perceived by the darkness . The wise went in with the Bridegroom and the door was shut . That door between the legal and the gospel dispensation was never opened but once , and then Jesus entered into his gospel kingdom with all his redeemed . " By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified . " When the legal character represented by the foolish virgins , comes , he must necessarily come knocking , for the door was shut as soon as Jesus entered in . One who knocks implies that there is some good reason why the door at which he knocks should be opened to him . Those to whom Jesus says , " Knock , and it shall be opened unto you , " are gospel characters who desire gospel blessings , and they knock in the name of Jesus . But these are asking in their own names , because of good things they have done . The oil they have has been purchased by them , for which they have paid in their own good works , and it will not be received ; it does not make gospel light . The true oil , the Spirit and grace of God , cannot be bought . So the Bridegroom says to them who come with that oil which they have bought I know you not

All of the Lord 's people , from the beginning to the end of time , went in through that gospel door with Jesus , and none who ever have entered there experimentally, or ever shall, will ever make mention of any other name but Jesus as the way by which he entered in, and because of this there will be on the part of living souls , but no others ,

a strong and deep exercise of the soul from time to time, by the power of this sweet command of Jesus : " Watch therefore for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh ." Every experience of the coming and power of Jesus , and every temptation to doubt and question concerning our knowledge of him will lead us more carefully to consider how all our experience of an entrance into divine favor , from the very first , has been an entrance with Jesus , and in his blessed name and will lead us to watch that we do not ask for or seek for any entrance into his favor be cause of any fancied merit of our own. How careful and watchful we are , and need to be , lest the light that is in us be darkness , lest the oil we have has been purchased with our own fancied goodness ." For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart ."

Silas H. Durand

MEETINGS

WEATHERFORD PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

As per precepts and examples as set forth in the written Word of God, Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church looked out among themselves and recognized a certain gift. They ; therefore , called for a Presbytery to be formed on September 25 , 1988 at 3:00 P . M . at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church , Gretna , Virginia for the purpose of examination of this gift Brother Marvin Brumfield , and if found qualified, be ordained to the full work of the Gospel Ministry .

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 Denver Simpson . Elder O . K . Tench was elected as Moderator and Deacon Burnell Williams to serve as Clerk . Brother Stafford Houston , acting as Spokesman for the Church delivered Brother Marvin Brumfield to the Presbytery .

The qualifications for Bishop were read as set forth in scriptures , 1st . Timothy , 3rd Chapter by Elder J . T . Prescott . Examination followed by Elders Amos Hash and J . T . Prescott . The Presbytery being satisfied as to the qualifications of the candidate , proceeded with the laying on of hands and prayer was offered by Elders H . W Wray and Kenneth Key . The charge was delivered to Brother Marvin Brumfield by Elder O . K . Tench . He was then delivered back to the church as an ordained Elder .

The minutes of the work of the Presbytery were read and adopted . A copy to be placed in the church records , a copy to be sent the the Signs of the Times for publication and a copy to be given to Elder Brumfield along with a Certificate of Ordination .

Presbytery was dismissed by prayer by Elder Willard Cox .

Elder O . K . Tench , Moderator
Deacon Burnell Williams , Clerk

The following Elders were present and included in the Presbytery :

Elders C . B . Davis , Jr .
Raymond Goad
J . T . Prescott

Lane Carter
 Amos Hash
 Denver Simpson
 Carl Terry
 Leonard Brammer
 Thomas Solomon
 Junior Conner
 Willard Cox
 Noel Conner
 Kenneth Key
 Julian R. Williams
 H.W. Wray
 O.K. Tench

Roy S. Oxley , WV.....2.00
 A.S. Blalock , NC.....4.00
 Mrs. Rachel Hudson , VA.....2.00
 Mrs. Lessie S. Sladky , NC...32.00
 A.R. Potter , VA2.00
 James L. Howell , AL.....15.00
 Alonza Davis , VA.....2.00
 Robbie Holloway , TX10.00
 Mr. & Mrs. J.M. Marshall , VA5.00
 Mrs. Marie D. Cannaday , VA2.00
 John Coker , NC.....2.00

Licentiate

W.T. Conner
 Clarence Stone

OBITUARIES

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR SEPTEMBER 1988

Eld. J.T. Prescott , NC.....7.00
 Mrs. Ruth Sparkman , TX5.00
 Harry Troutt , NC2.00
 David E. Kitchen , GA.....7.00
 Alfred L. Ratliff , VA.....2.00
 Claude Johnson , VA2.00
 Eld. Carl Terry , VA.....2.00
 Mrs. Eula McGlocklin , VA.....2.00
 Mrs. Mae B. Hudson , Va.....7.00
 Moon's Creek Ch. , NC50.00
 Mrs. Lucille Young , TN5.00
 Mrs. Annabeth Arne , SD40.00
 Mrs. J.W. Stratton , VA2.00
 Mrs. Nannie Moran , VA.....2.00
 Mrs. W.W. Stutts , TX2.00
 T.L. Batts , NC5.00
 Mrs. Mamie D. Ferguson , VA....4.00
 Eld. Raymond Goad , VA.....2.00
 Mrs. Ruth Dotson , TX.....2.00
 Mrs. S.G. Harralson , KY.....5.00
 Mrs. Alice Johnson , TX.....2.00
 G.B. Loyd , OK.....1.00
 Mrs. Rolla E. Mellott , PA.....7.00

EUNICE MATKINS BROOKS

It is with a sad heart that I attempt to write the obituary of my dear sister, Eunice Matkins Brooks.

Eunice was born May 15 , 1909 , the daughter of Robert Lee and Eva Gilliam Matkins, of Alamance County, N.C. She passed from this life August 4 , 1987 , at Adams-Kenton Nursing Home , Lillington , N.C.

Surviving is her husband , Ernest Floyd of the Mayflower Motel, Raleigh, N.C., and a son, Dennis Darrell Brooks of Greenville , S.C., and two grand-children , Tamela and Scott Brooks .

She was received into the fellowship of Mebane Primitive Baptist Church , Mebane , N.C. , June 12 , 1938, and was baptized by her pastor, Elder T. Floyd Adams , of Willow Springs , N.C. Eunice was a firm believer in the faith and was dedicated to her church as long as her health permitted .

She was a professional seam-

stress in Burlington , N . C . , before moving to Raleigh , where she and her husband operated the Mayflower-Motel .

Her funeral was conducted by her pastor , Elder Burch Wray , at Rich and Thompson Funeral Chapel . Her body was laid to rest in Pine Hill Cemetery , Burlington , N . C . , awaiting the call of her blessed Saviour saying , “ Come ye blessed of my Father , inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . ” (Matthew 25 : 34)

We have precious memories of having Eunice in our home and caring for her two weeks before she grew worse .

Written by her sister and brother-in-law .

Bessie and Leon Gilliam

SISTER RUTH COLLIER CHAPELL

Sister Ruth Collier Chapell , very precious and lovely sister in Christ for many years finished her earthly pilgrimage on June 3 , 1988 , after a short illness , and went to receive her crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give to all that love his appearing .

Sister Chapell was the daughter of Deacon J . B . “ Bud ” Collier of near Rives , Tennessee . Both parents and grandparents were members of Primitive Baptist Churches .

She was married to Flois Chapell , December 23 , 1923 and to this union was born two children . Elder Wayman Chapell of the Memphis Tennessee Church and Sister Ramona Moon of the Bowes Chapel Church near Ful-

ton , Kentucky . Both Sister Chapell and her husband were baptized into the Cane Creek Church the third Sunday in April in 1972 .

Sister Chapell is survived by her husband , two children , 9 grandchildren and twenty-two great-grandchildren .

She was blessed with a good and full life and was active in her church until two weeks before her death . She was an humble and gentle person who deeply loved her brothers and sisters in Christ and was in turn loved by all who knew her for her quiet manner and loving smile . She will be sadly missed and long remembered for her devotion to her church , her family and her heavenly calling .

Her funeral was conducted by the writer at the Murphy Funeral Home in Martin Tennessee , June 5 , 1988 and was lovingly laid to rest in the Collier Cemetery . There she peacefully awaits that blessed call of her heavenly master , “ Rise up , my love , my fair one and come away ” . When she will enter into the eternal joy of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ .

Written at the request of the Cane Creek Church .

Richard H . Campbell

BROTHER WILSON FOUNTAIN

Brother Wilson Fountain , faithful member and Deacon of the Wilmington Primitive Baptist Church passed away April 21 , 1988 . He was born August 29 , 1906 . He was baptized in the summer of 1973 .

He leaves to mourn him his wife of many years and a sister , Sister Debbie Simpson of Chinquapin , N.C.

Brother Fountain will be greatly missed at his home church and the sister churches he was so faithful to visit . He was much loved and respected by all who had the privilege of knowing him . His manner manifested much love for the church . We feel that our loss is his gain .

He was laid to rest beneath a mound of beautiful flowers in Greenlawn Cemetery , Wilmington , N.C . , there to await the coming again of Jesus , and the Resurrection of His saints .

Evelyn R . Pratt , Clerk

SISTER BELVA HARDY GIBSON

With a heart pained with sorrow and filled with grief , I humbly attempt to write an Obituary for my beloved Sister Belva . She battled with cancer for almost eleven years , never complaining .

Belva was faithful to her church and attend until she got disabled . She told of her experience with the Lord and loved to be with and talk with the Brethren , even after she was bedridden . She enjoyed her company and would always ask the Ministers to have prayer . She told us she was ready to go , but knew she couldn't until her time came . Belva was a firm believer in Salvation by Grace , believing God has fixed all things .

She was received by experience in Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church on August 23 , 1964 and was

baptized that afternoon by her beloved Pastor , Elder O .K . Tench .

Belva was born July 25 , 1918 at Sycamore , Virginia , the daughter of Tommy and Cora Dalton Hardy . The dear Lord saw fit to call her home on May 17 , 1988 . She leaves to mourn , two daughters , Inez Cook and Elizabeth Garrick ; one son , Jerry Gibson ; five grandchildren and four great grandchildren . Also one brother , Harold Hardy and three sisters , Sister Lera Vasser , Sister Alice Gibson , and the writer , Larrie Bowler .

Her funeral was conducted at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church by Elders O .K . Tench , Denver Simpson , and Raymond Goad . Her body was laid to rest beside her husband , Herbert A . Gibson in the Church Cemetery to await the second coming of our Lord and Saviour . Belva will be greatly missed by her family , friends , and her Brethren . May we be thankful for the time God gave her here on earth and may we all be blest to say not my will but Thine be done .

Written by one who loved her .
Larrie H . Bowler

WALTER ELMO LUPTON

I feel , " the Lord rejoiced at the death of one of His Saints , " when Brother Walter Elmo Lupton passed away on April 30 , 1988 . He was sick for many years , but bore his afflictions in a very humble way . I believe everyone who knew him loved him , but God loved him more and called him to that home prepared for him and all His believing children .

Brother Elmo was born November 8, 1906 in Scranton, N.C., being blessed to enjoy life for eighty-one years. He was married to Beatrice Watson on June 30, 1928; and this union was blessed with five children, Louetta Suter of Chesapeake, Va.; Milton Lupton of Suffolk, Va.; Windell Lupton of Portsmouth, Va.; Velma Twiddy of Coinjock, N.C.; and Peggy Whitlow of Chesapeake, Va. All the children, living near their mother to comfort her, is another great blessing.

He was blessed to unite with Beulah Primitive Baptist Church on the third Sunday in April, 1954 being baptized by his pastor, Elder A.L. McKinney, and Elder J.L. Ross. He was later ordained Deacon and served his church in a very humble and helpful manner. Being a member here until the church became inactive, he moved his membership to North Creek Church. A very strong believer in Salvation by grace and grace alone, he was slow to speak but always ready to stand for what he felt was right. He always wanted to hear all the facts before voicing his opinion on any subject which may come up before the church. He will be missed very much in his church, union, and association. His companion, a very faithful and loving sister is very strong, but she needs our prayers and comforting words.

His funeral was conducted in Gay & Oman Funeral Home by his pastor, Elder J.T. Prescott, and Elder Reeves Smith. He was laid to rest in Greenlawn Memorial Cemetery here the beautiful flowers and many friends showed how much he was loved. He will rest here until that day when Jesus shall come again to gather His bride. Then I feel he will hear that welcome voice of Jesus

saying, "Child come your father calls."

We all extend to the family our deepest sympathy and trust God's richest blessings may be upon you. May His presence fill the vacancy in your lives, giving you the strength to say, God doeth all things well.

Done by the order of conference Saturday before the second Sunday in June, 1988.

Elder J.T. Prescott, Moderator
Hassel Allen, Committee

MOVED OR MOVING ?

To assure you of getting your "Signs" and without missing any copies, be sure to inform us of any change of address.

Editors

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION ?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 12 / 88
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.

PSALM 29 : 1-3

*Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty,
give unto the Lord glory and strength.
Give unto the Lord the glory due
unto his name; worship the Lord in the
beauty of holiness.*

*The voice of the Lord is upon the
waters: the God of glory thundereth:
the Lord is upon many waters.*