

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

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PRAYER

*O that the Lord would guide my ways
To keep his statutes still!
O that my God would grant me grace
To know and do his will!*

*O send thy Spirit down to write
Thy law upon my heart!
Nor let my tongue indulge deceit,
Nor act the liar's part.*

*From vanity turn off my eyes;
Let no corrupt design,
Nor covetous desires arise
Within this soul of mine.*

*Order my footsteps by thy word,
And make my heart sincere;
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,
But keep my conscience clear.*

*My soul hath gone too far astray,
My feet too often slip;
Yet since I've not forgot thy way,
Restore thy wandering sheep.*

*Make me to walk in thy commands,
'Tis a delightful road;
Nor let my head, or heart, or hands,
Offend against my God.*

Watts

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EDITORIAL

EPHESIANS 2: 8,9,10.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any should boast. For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

The Apostle Paul wrote much about the grace of God and well he should have for his experience from beginning to end was a glorious display of this sovereign grace of a just and holy God who works all things according to his own will and purpose.

He was made to realize that but by the intervention of this amazing grace in his life in the way and manner which it came he would have lived his entire life believing that he was serving God when, in reality he did not know him at all. He was made aware of the fact that if things had depended upon him to change them of his own volition that he would have continued on his original course and never have been blessed to believe the truth or to worship God in spirit and in truth. He was well satisfied with the life that he was living, as he wrote to the Galatian Church, "I profited in the Jews religion above many my equal in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." He was practicing religion as he had been taught from his youth, was highly esteemed by his peers and was given letters of authority from them to wage war on this new sect of people which was rising up in their midst and challenging the traditions and practices of the Sadducees and Pharisees of that day.

There is no indication in the scriptures that Saul of Tarsus would have voluntarily changed his pattern of life, his faith or religion since he was extremely successful in what he was doing and the flesh loves the recognition for success. Yet this is the particular time in the career of Saul of Tarsus that the grace of God came into his life and through no effort of Saul he was made a new creature in Christ. It came upon him suddenly, sovereignly and forcefully in so much that he began immediately to preach the faith that he had so earnestly persecuted til that time, and as he wrote in one of his epistles, when a man is made a new creature in Christ,

old things pass away and all things become new. This experience made him know that it is by grace that you are saved and grace only. In relating his experience to the Galatians he said, "But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's 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." He realized that the work of grace in his heart was so perfect and complete that he did not need to inquire of the wisdom of this world or of the flesh regarding it. This is what caused him to declare that salvation is a gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.

All of the works of the Apostle Paul prior to his conversion was certainly no basis or reason for this sudden and dramatic change in his life, his convictions and new found faith in God because they were but leading him further astray. They are rooted and grounded in the world and worldly wisdom and regardless of what the world contends they will never cause the man of the flesh to turn to God, and this the Apostle learned in his experience.

This grace that saved the Apostle Paul led him the remaining days of his life, through trials, scourgings, shipwreck and other afflictions too numerous to mention and yet through them all he was faithful to this heavenly calling and related his experience to all who would listen. God's children love to tell their experience, to anyone interested enough to listen, hoping to find others of like precious hope and rejoice in the fellowship they have for one another. Paul never again persecuted the church or anyone else

from that day forward, in fact from then on he loved those that disagreed with him and prayed for them that did not know the truth. His hearts desire and prayer was, for all men, that they might be saved and come into the knowledge of the truth even as he had. See the difference that a work of grace in the heart does for those who are exercised by it. This is the heartfelt prayer of all who have known this change, that all men might have this experience and come to know and worship God even as they have. They know that they are no better or more deserving of this gift of grace than anyone else and must confess that it is a sovereign and holy gift from the giver of every good and perfect gift and for reasons known and understood only by the giver.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Although Paul acknowledged that he was not worthy of the notice of God he believed that it was for a reason and that the purpose would be fulfilled and the glory would be unto God. He realized that his entire life was the workmanship of God and that it would produce a result that was ordained before the world was formed. To this agree all who have been called out of the darkness of the flesh and by grace made to see and experience the glorious light of liberty bestowed upon them by the amazing grace of an all wise sovereign Creator. Their praise and adoration flows out with the realization that this work that has been done in their heart is the way of salvation, as they read in the scriptures of the way in which the saints of God in all ages of time have been brought forth and

made to declare the power and majesty of their Heavenly Father.

Whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power," and again, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." All that the Apostle was, he ascribed to the grace of God that was given him. He was made aware of the fact that it was given to him for a purpose and he was given faith by the same work of grace to go where providence sent him and to be content in whatever situation he found himself. As the milch kine which were tied to the cart upon which the ark was placed, he went not knowing where he would go but trusting that the one that sent him would also provide a way and that the desired results would be accomplished.

Jesus' Commission to the Apostle Paul Acts 26 vs 16. "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 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, an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." In view of the life of the Apostle Paul prior to that day on the road to Damascus, his experience that day, including the charge given him, and the change in his life from that day forward it is easy to understand why

the subject of the grace of God should occupy such a prominent place in the writings to the churches. It is the most common characteristic in the experience of all of those that have been born of the spirit of God and the most precious characteristic of God in the hearts of all of those who have known it. The Apostle realized that all of those who trust in God have been given this gift of faith by the grace of God and also how dependent that they are upon a continuance of this grace in their lives. He closed each of his epistles to the churches and to Titus and Timothy with the phrase. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," or "Grace be with thee." If not the last verse then in the last three or four verses one of these phrases appear, showing that grace was constantly on his mind and the necessity of the grace of God to continue to be with them in every step of their experience. He knew that they would never reach a point, in this life, when they would not be totally dependent on grace to support them if they are to walk a godly walk and live a godly life. He knew that they would desire and strive to live godly and fail, so, for their comfort he wrote "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not: but what I hate, that I do: and again." For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." This experience is painful but it is for good since it makes them humble, and then realizing that all experience it, strengthens their hope and the realization that their sufficiency is of God and his wonderful gift of grace.

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” This is a beautiful expression of the gifts of grace and the reason that there are varying degrees of this gift. It does not mean that anyone does not receive a sufficient supply of grace to accomplish the purpose for which it is given. One may observe their brethren and the gift that they have received and then wonder if they indeed have a gift because it is not the same. This is normal since it is only acknowledging the beauty of the gift as it is being made manifest in the church, and they are observing the fruit that is born as a result of the gift. Each gift is just as productive as the other. Each accomplishes the purpose for which they are given and fulfills a definite need in the church since no gift is in vain or unnecessary. We can all remember, in our travels through life, gifts which we have observed bearing fruit which was so lovely and edifying to the church and yet the brother or sister felt to have no gift. The beauty is in the eye of the beholder. All do not have the gift of the Apostle Paul but all have one equally as important to the church, since the church is the body of Christ and is complete only as it is made up of all of the members with their own special gift filling their own place. They render honor and glory to God as they make their calling manifest in the church and confess the work of grace in their heart and the faith in God that it produces.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, 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.” Is this what you have been taught and made to seek after and desire with all of your heart? If it is, that is because the grace of God has brought salvation and placed it in your life, redeemed you from all iniquity, purified, sanctified you and made you zealous of good works. He not only made you zealous of good works but he ordained that you would walk in them to the glory of the grace of God and to the praise of his holy name. Grace has supplied your every need for life and for salvation. It is a complete package deal and none will receive only a part of it and not all. It makes you hunger and thirst after righteousness and it makes you righteous before God. It puts you in need, gives you a heart to pray for the answer of your need, then supplies it so that you glorify God from the very depths of your heart. It makes you realize what you are in nature (no excuses) and see what you must be by the law and fully realize that only the grace of God can reconcile the difference which he did in sending his only begotten Son into the world to give unto every heir of heaven the ministry of reconciliation as a free unmerited gift.

All of the scriptures quoted above were written by the Apostle Paul on the subject of grace to which he owed his salvation and hope for eternal abode in heaven. He also wrote to Timothy, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them

which should thereafter believe on him to life everlasting." The longsuffering that he refers to here is the grace of God in action. Longsuffering is bearing with one when they are wrong because of a love that you have for them in spite of what they do. It is the characteristic of God that enables a just and holy God that demands perfection regarding obedience to his law, to save sinners who cannot keep the law for one day much less for life. Except for the longsuffering (grace) of God there would have been none to inhabit the earth for Adam & Eve would have been destroyed in the garden of Eden. Except for the longsuffering (grace) of God none would ever have been born of the spirit and enabled to worship Him in spirit and in truth. This is one lesson that all have learned in their own personal experience, "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:"

In bonds of love,
Elder Richard H. Campbell

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Brother Key,

I don't feel worthy of taking your time, or space in the Signs of the Times. For sometime I have been thinking of writing a little of my experience, dreams and the reason for my hope.

When I was about ten years old, we were playing hide and seek. I went inside the door to hide. As I stooped down, I heard a voice say you are hiding from your playmates, but you

are not hiding from God. For He knows everything you do--everywhere you go. These words are as strong in my mind today, as they were the day I heard them spoken. About two years later I went to spend the week with my cousin. One morning about eleven o'clock, it came the worst hail storm, I have ever seen. I have never seen a darker night--than it was that morning. It was hailing so hard it was coming down the chimney and rolling out in the floor. I was scared, I was afraid I would die. I wanted to go home to my earthly family. I said Lord if you will let me go home to my earthly family, I will be willing to die. Soon the cloud was over and the sun was shining again.

One afternoon I was weighted down with a heavy burden. I felt so heavy, like I had heavy weights around my neck. I went to bed that night in tears. I lay there begging the Lord for mercy. (So many times in my life I have had to beg for mercy.) I felt the burden was more than I could bear alone. I knew relief could only come from the Lord. I tried to go to sleep, hoping I would feel better when I woke up. Later in the night I went to sleep for a while, when I woke up the burden was still so heavy. I got up and hurriedly fixed breakfast, fighting to keep my feelings from showing. I wanted to get the children off to school, and the men out to work, so I could be alone.

When everyone was gone, I sat down at the table, sitting there crying and begging for mercy, I said Lord what is wrong with me? Then my mother came in, we sat there and talked for a while. When she left, not feeling any better, I went outside. I had walked only a few feet, when I felt that burden lifted from me. I stopped in my tracks, I was light as a feather. I stood there

looking toward heaven, and praising the Lord. It was a wonderful feeling, everything around me was so beautiful. For a while I was on the mountain top and I felt I would never be in the valley again. I soon found I was wrong, I was down in the valley again. I am glad we have to go down in the valley. Then we appreciate being on the mountain and know how sweet it is to be lifted up. I wish I could express my feelings like some I have heard, but I cannot. I have been to church, the preacher was telling some of my experience better than I could tell it myself. I felt like he was preaching directly to me.

One night I dreamed, I was out walking, I came to some branches. I wanted some water, there were some pans, some old, some new, on the branches. There was just a few drops of water in the new pans. I went to the end of the branches, some people were standing there. I do not know who they were. I don't know why, but for some reason they did not want me to have any water. I started walking away crying. I folded my arms across my eyes to hide my tears.

As I walked on I came to a well, I believe the well I saw in my dream was Jacob's well, where Jesus stopped to rest, being weary of his journey. I stood there looking at the well for a while. Then I walked on I looked to my right which was the east I saw the most beautiful long, round, hill covered in green grass. It was as smooth as if it had just been mowed. The hill was covered with snow white sheep, both young and old. They were grazing, all headed in the same direction. There was not one of them disturbed, they were so calm and peaceful. I looked over the hill, the sun was rising it

was shining as pure gold.

I walked on I looked to my left, which was the west. I saw a grove of trees, among them were seats and the stand like they were having an association. I stopped at the back of the seats looking at the people. I don't know how I got down there, but the next thing I knew I was laying on the ground, between the seats and the stand, at the feet of you dear people. Then a sister came by stepped over me and went on. Then I woke up. If you will let me live at your feet it is more than I deserve.

I had a very short dream sometime ago. I dreamed I was dead, then I was living again. I was standing there moving my fingers, they were the only part of my body I was moving.

The reason for my hope, Elder William Stadler was pastor of Prospect Hill Church. At the end of the service he would always say lets look to the Lord and be dismissed. I was sitting not far from the end of the bench. I closed my eyes and Christ appeared at the end of the bench where I was. He was looking directly at me. He had a long snow white beard and a long snow white robe on. There was not a spot or wrinkle on it. He kept looking at me. A thought came to me, open your eyes and close them back to see if He is still there. I opened my eyes and closed them again, He was still standing there looking at me. Then in a few seconds He was gone. I believe He came before me to show me He is the way, the truth and life, and there is no other way.

It is by Grace of God through faith that we are saved. It is a gift of God and not of works, lest any man should boast.

I hope my name is written in the book

of life. I love all my brothers and sisters in Christ. If we do not love our brethren whom we have seen, how can we love Christ whom we have not seen?

I am thankful for our pastor, and Greensboro church for giving me a home with them. You don't need me,

but I need everyone of you, I love you all. I feel so little.

I need your prayers, when at the throne of Grace remember me in your prayers.

A little unworthy sister,
Allie Clayton

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



REHOBETH PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Rehobeth Primitive Baptist church is located on State Highway #335, five miles North of El Dorado, Arkansas in Union County. It was established in 1891 and the present church was remodeled and finished in 1956.

Elder W.K. Smith was the first pastor called to serve this church. He served from 1891 until 1933. (42 years) Other

pastors who have served are Elders; R.W. Rhodes, W.A. Speer, E.J. Lambert, and others. At the present time Elders David E. Turner and Graydon Smith are serving.

Our meeting time is the second Sunday and Saturday before of each month at 10:30 a.m. We invite you to visit us.

 ARTICLES

HEAVENLY REALITIES AND DIVINE CERTAINTIES

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This the true God, and eternal life." - 1 John v. 20

I now pass on to show the knowledge which the believing soul has that the Son of God is come.

1. You will observe the positive certainty wherewith John speaks; and you may perhaps ask yourself the question, Whence arose this positive certainty in John's breast? John himself shall tell us. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you." (1 John i. 1-4) He was not speaking at a peradventure; there were no perhapses, or ifs, or buts in his knowledge, as there are none in his declaration of it. He had seen with his eyes the Person of Jesus; he had heard with his ears the voice of Jesus; he had handled with his hands Jesus as

the Word of life; and therefore knew by the witness of his eye, the witness of his ear, the witness of his hands, and the witness of his heart what he speaks of to us, and what he has by divine inspiration recorded in the word of truth, that we may have fellowship with him and all the saints of God.

You may say, "We cannot have that same certainty which he had. John saw our blessed Lord in the flesh; John could look upon Him with his natural eyes, John could hear His voice with his natural ears; and as John lay in His bosom he could almost feel the warm pulsations of the Lord's natural heart. But we cannot do this. We do not stand in the same position with John and the other disciples. How then can we have the same evidence and the same certainty?" All this is true; but did no others see the Lord with their bodily eye? Did no others hear the Lord with their bodily ear? Were there no other witnesses to his crucifixion? Were there no ears which heard, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthan?" but those of John? Did no other eyes but his see the spear pierce the Redeemer's side when forthwith there came thereout blood and water? Yes, but what did they see? A malefactor. And what did they hear? The cry of a dying man. And what did the Roman soldier behold before he raised his spear? One who was "dead already." And did not thousands see and hear Him in the days of His flesh who perished in their sins?

It was not then sufficient to see the Lord Jesus with the bodily eye and hear Him with the natural ear, unless there was the believing eye and the believing ear, springing out of a believing heart. Because then the Lord

has left earth and is gone up to be where He was before and is now seated at the right hand of the Father, is there no eye to see Him now, no ear to hear Him now, no hands to handle Him now? Just as much as there were eyes to see, ears to hear, and hands to handle Him when upon earth; for those only then "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 13.14); and regeneration gives the same eyes now. Thus if we have not the same full amount of certainty we have a similar kind.

It was necessary that the apostles should have the fullest amount of certainty, and especially those of them who were inspired to write the Scriptures, to be the food of faith to the Church through all ages. They believed what they saw with their eyes and heard with their ears with the fullest certainty; and having given a testimony of this certain knowledge to us in the word of truth, we believe their testimony. Having thus a measure of the same divine teaching, divine witness, and divine revelation, we are made able to say, not perhaps to the amount of their full confidence, but still with a measure of it, according to the strength of our faith, "We know that the Son of God is come."

2. Now let me unfold to you a little more fully and clearly how we are brought to know that the Son of God is come; and do you weigh in the balances of the sanctuary what I shall bring forward upon the point, and see whether, when you have weighed in them your own experience, you can say with your hand upon your heart and your eye to God that you know

that the Son of God is come. In working out this point, I shall come down as low as I possibly can, that I may not make the heart of the righteous sad whom the Lord has not made sad. But I shall draw the line as straight as I can.

i. We know it, first, then, by the testimony of the Scripture, by the light which the Holy Ghost casts upon the Scripture, and the faith which He raises up in our bosom to believe the Scripture. This is very important; for it excludes everything visionary and fanatical, as well as all the traditions of men from every side and quarter. When, then, we read the Scripture with the light of God upon it, and that light shines from the Scripture into our heart, raising up a living faith to believe what we read, then from the testimony of the word in our conscience, and the light, life, and power of the Spirit resting upon it, we know that the Son of God is come.

Have you not sometimes as you read the Scripture felt the power of it drop into your soul? The truth of it, the certainty of it, the majesty of it, the authority of it, and the very voice of God clearly and distinctly speaking in it, so came into your heart as the word of the Lord, testifying of Christ, that you could say, "I know that the Son of God is come." "As I read the miracles which Jesus wrought when He went about doing good; as I read the words which dropped from His lips in His parables, and especially in His gracious discourse with His disciples, my eyes are as if opened to see that this was not less than the Son of God. In His miracles I behold his Deity: in His eating, drinking, sleeping, groaning, agonizing, sweating blood, and dying on the cross I see His humanity; and I

view Deity and humanity shining forth in His glorious Person. My enlightened understanding and my believing heart receive Him as the Son of God; and feeling myself a poor, lost, guilty sinner, I receive Him as able to save my soul to the uttermost; I cast the weight of my sins upon him; I look to Him to save me, and to Him alone; and I do this from the light that I have in my mind and the faith that I feel in my breast; and I thus embrace Him as a Redeemer and Saviour, altogether suitable to my case." Now if you can say all that, you can add, with some measure of confidence, "I know that the Son of God is come."

ii. We will rise a little higher. When the Lord Jesus is pleased in some solemn hour to reveal Himself to our soul, when He graciously condescends to take the veil from off our heart that we may behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, when He kindly favours us with some manifestation and discovery of Himself as the Son of God, the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person, then we know, in fuller, larger measure that the Son of God is come.

How do you know that the sun rose this morning? By the light which rose with it. How do you know that it is not darkness now? By the light which even now streams in through the windows, and fills this place in which we are assembled. So we may say, spiritually, "How do you know that the Son of God is come?" By the Sun of righteousness arising upon you with healing in His wings and the shining light which He diffuses in your heart. So the Lord speaks to Zion: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the

LORD is risen upon thee." That is the way in which the darkness is dispersed; for He adds, "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." (Isa. ix. 1,2.) Did not our blessed Lord say: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness?" (John xii 46.) And has He not promised, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life?" (John viii. 12.) So also testifies John in this epistle: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (1 John i. 5.) Now as God is light, when He is pleased to shine into the soul, we walk in the light as He is in the light, and then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. This is the best, this the surest, this the safest way to know that the Son of God is come.

iii. Again, we know that the Son of God is come by the communion with which He favors the soul from off the mercy seat. You know what it is to come to the mercy seat, there to behold by the eye of faith Jesus sitting as the great High Priest over the house of God; there to pour out your heart before Him, to tell Him all your complaints, and to seek communion with Him. Now when He condescends to commune with you from off the mercy seat and speak a word to your heart, then you know that the Son of God is come - come from the bosom of the Father to save your soul; come out of heaven down to earth to bear

our sins in His own body on the tree; come to do the work which the Father gave Him to do and to do it fully and wholly, so as to be able to say with expiring lips, "It is finished," before He gave up the ghost, rose from the dead and went up on high. How faith sees Him now on His throne of grace as the Mediator, the only Mediator, between God and us; how hope, a good hope through grace, anchors in Him; and how love embraces Him as the Son of God. We thus know by faith and feeling, by an inward knowledge of Him, and by an experience of the power of his resurrection, that the Son of God is come, and come, we trust, into our hearts to draw up its sincere and warm affections unto Himself.

iv. We know also that the Son of God is come by His presence; by His power put forth on our behalf; by the answers which He gives to prayer; by the way in which He appears in dark and gloomy hours, making crooked things straight and rough things plain, discovering Himself to us as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, showing unto us that in Him there is rest and peace, solid abiding happiness, and in no other. He thus draws and fixes our eyes upon Himself, where He sits as the right hand of the Father in the fulness of His grace, glory, and majesty. Thus we know that the Son of God is come. Every prayer, every petition, every sigh and cry, every longing look that you cast up to Him, and every word of His grace, every sweet promise, every glimpse or glance of the King in His beauty, which you receive out of His fulness, are all so many testimonies that the Son of God is come, and that you know that He is come.

Let me put this one point to your soul,

that you may gather up from it some encouragement, if you are doubting and fearing through the power of unbelief. Take away the Son of God out of the word, off the throne of grace, and out of your heart, where are you? Where is your religion? Where is your hope? What is there before you but black despair? Thus, you know that the Son of God is come not only by your deep necessity, by your wants and woes, by your guilty conscience, by every cry, sigh, and desire of your bosom; but you know that the Son of God is come by the testimony which you have in your own breast of His presence and of His power, which alone support you in seasons of darkness and distress.

3. Another blessed word is added: "And hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true."

There is a point involved in these words, in which many both private Christians and ministers appear, in my judgment, confused or defective. They do not see - at least I have rarely seen the subject clearly handled by any man of God, they do not seem to see the difference between a gracious, enlightened understanding of the truth of God which springs out of the teaching of the Spirit, and what is commonly called head knowledge. There is such a thing - and a most dangerous, delusive thing it is, as head knowledge, and faithful ministers do well to warn people against it; for it is in our day widely prevalent in the Calvinistic Churches. But then there is such a thing as an understanding heart in the things of God: "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened" (Eph. i. 18), a spiritual, saving knowledge of the only true God and of Jesus Christ whom He

has sent; or what is so beautifully expressed here, "hath given us an understanding (God's own special gift,) that we may know him that is true."

Do you not find and feel sometimes that God has given you an understanding heart? - that you are not, as you once were, in ignorance of God and His dear Son? Is not your mind enlightened to understand the meaning of the Scriptures as they are opened up from time to time to your heart by the power of God? Do you see no beauty or blessedness in the word of God? Is it not commended to your conscience as divine truth? Has it not a liberating, sanctifying power and influence upon your soul? Do you not see at times wonders in the word of God, depths of wisdom, heights of grace, blessings and favours revealed and made known in it which seem to surpass all conception and all expression? Have you not seen sometimes "in one line of Scripture," to use an expression of Bunyan's "more than you could well tell how to stand under?" Is all this understanding to be thrown away and trodden under foot as mere head knowledge? Is it not rather an understanding which God has given us, and by which we know Him that is true? Let us not then confound these two distinct things or despise one of God's best gifts, but ever desire to be "filled with all spiritual understanding;" yea, "unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. i. 9; 2,3.)

You may say, "How am I to distinguish between mere head knowledge

and this spiritual understanding?" I will tell you. When a special light is cast into your mind; when the word is opened up in its spiritual, experimental meaning; when the Holy Ghost seals it with sweetness and power upon your heart, and you not only understand what you read but receive it in faith, feel its savour, and enjoy its blessedness. Is not this a very different thing from lifeless, barren head knowledge? But view also its fruits; look at what this enlightened understanding has done for us! Until we had it, the veil of unbelief and ignorance was over our mind; we stumbled at noon as at night, groped for the wall like the blind, and could not find our way to the city. We read the Scriptures, it is true, but knew nothing of their spiritual meaning; and though we talked perhaps about God and Jesus Christ, and it may be prattled a little about the truth of God, we were really shut up in the grossest darkness.

Do we not see this now in others, if we cannot distinctly see the change grace has made in ourselves? What ignorance we find in them when they talk about the Scriptures; and how we see through all their head knowledge even when they speak consistently with the truth. There is no power, life, or savour in anything they say. How highly favoured then are we if any of us can say, "We know that the Son of God hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true." Men think that we are fools, narrow-minded bigots, shut up in ignorance, or intoxicated with the fumes of fanaticism and enthusiasm, are walking in a false and delusive light. No; we are not fools; we are sober-minded men; we understand what we profess; we

know what we believe; peradventures will not suit us. We do not sit down with folded hands and sleepy eyes, dreaming our time away in airy visions and speculative notions in a fool's paradise. Our soul is at stake; heaven and hell are trembling in the balance.

I must not live and die at an uncertainty whether there be a Christ or not, whether the Son of God is come or not come, whether I have an understanding to know Him that is true, or whether I live and die in darkness and ignorance. Such a religion won't do for me, or for any one in earnest about his soul; I must have realities, to know for myself that the Son of God is come, and to have an understanding in my very bosom to know Him that is true, by His own blessed manifestations, discoveries, and sweet visitations to my heart. And if I know that the Son of God is come and hath given me an understanding to know Him that is true, I shall speak that which I do know and my trumpet will give a certain sound. If I profess to be your guide, I must go boldly on as knowing every step of the way. If I am to pilot your ship down the channel, I must know the chart, that you and I may arrive at the harbor of safety.

Though men may speak against certainties in religion, the most important concern of all, yet will not men have certainties in the things of this life? Who will buy an estate with an uncertain title? Who will even deal at a shop where he is uncertain whether the goods sold him are valuable or worthless, pure or adulterated? When you receive change, do you never look at your money whether it be right? Why you count the very pence, lest you be a halfpenny wrong. The children of this world are too wise in their

generation to do with uncertainties. "Let the thing be as clear and as certain as it can be," says the man of business, the trader, the farmer, the dealer, the buyer, the seller, "or I will have nothing to do with it; I will not be deceived if I can help it to the fraction of a penny."

If then the men and women of this world can so speak, so act as regards those poor, perishing things which are passing away like shadows, shall you and I, who have immortal souls and feel that we have them and that they are hanging in the balance, - shall we rest upon uncertainties, not to know whether the Son of God is come or not; not to know whether or not He "hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true?" Why the uncertainty of these things is our very life. Not that all the children of God have the certainty in their own bosom. As I before said, a man may certainly be the possessor of a property, yet be dubious as to its title, and yet have a good title too. You with the fear of God in your breast are as certain of being in heaven as that Christ is there now; but you may not have the certainty in your own breast. You may have, as most people of God have, thousands of doubts and fears which may seem to rack you to the very centre, and yet there is a certainty in the things themselves, though your doubting soul may be at an uncertainty about them. Still, it is not good to be ever fluctuating upon a sea of uncertainty; it is good to find the ground solid under our feet, and to have a rock, the Rock of ages, on which to firmly stand.

by J.C. Philpot

“And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.”—Isaiah xxxii. 2.

Who is this man? Need I ask the question? Is there not a response in every God-fearing breast? It is the man Christ Jesus—the man who is God’s fellow. How blessed it is to have a scriptural and spiritual view of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, to see him not merely as God, truly essential God, one in essence, glory, and power with the Father and the blessed Spirit, but also man, made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted. And what a suitability there is in the humanity of the Lord Jesus, when we view it in union with this glorious Deity! As man he suffered, as man he bled, as man he died, as man he stands a Mediator for his fellow men between God and man; as man, he has for human distress an affectionate, compassionate, sympathising heart; as man, he obeyed the law in every particular; as man, he bore all the sufferings of humanity, and thus became the Brother born for adversity, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone; yet perfectly pure, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and now exalted higher than the heavens. But what beauty, grace, glory, and suitability do we see in the man Christ Jesus, till he is revealed to the soul by the blessed Spirit? None. It is he who takes the humanity of Christ Jesus and shews it to the eye of faith. And this humanity he shews not as mere humanity, but as in union with, though distinct from, his eternal Deity. **O** this blessed man!—this man of sorrows; this suffering, agonizing, crucified man. View him on the cross, bleeding for thy sins; and then lift up

thine eyes and see him as the same man at the right hand of God. This was Stephen’s dying sight just before he passed into his presence: “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts vii. 56).

J.C. Philpot

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VOICES OF THE PAST

“he being dead yet speaketh”

ESTER 4, v.16

“So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”

Seeking the Lord’s help and your very prayerful attention, I

would direct your attention of Esther 4, v.16.

We read in the Word of God that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." Some may ask the question concerning this Book of Esther: Wherein is the profit? Certainly the name of God is not literally mentioned in it. There is no prayer actually, literally recorded, and yet the Book of Esther forms a very significant part in the revelation of God. We do well to remember that if you and I have eyes to see it, the finger of God is stamped on every chapter in this sacred part of God's Word. Furthermore, though we do not read any particular prayer within its chapters, yet if ever there was a time when secret prayer prevailed, it was in the time of Esther and Mordecai.

Let us for a moment consider the circumstances which led to this crisis in Esther's life when she was driven to this place: "So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." You will remember that in the Garden of Eden, when the Lord God banished Adam and Eve from it, He made a remarkably significant prophecy concerning a conflict. Speaking to the serpent He said: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." That conflict is the conflict between Christ's church and that arch-enemy Satan. Throughout the history of time, Satan has drawn up his battalions, his armies, again and again with this on one objective, to destroy the church of Christ. Blessed be God (and what a mercy it is as true today as it ever has been!), the Lord has said concerning His church: "Upon this rock I will build

My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It does not mean there is never going to be any conflict, that there is not going to be a warfare, but it does mean that the final outcome is assured. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Now in the Book of Esther we see Satan raising yet another attack against the Lord's people, and he had a ready agent in this man Haman, who figures much in the pages of this Book. But, whilst Satan was working his own devices, seeking to overthrow the Lord's people, to undermine God's own word, God's purposes were working fast.

*"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."*

There is every evidence in our day that Satan and the gates of hell have come against the church. Sadly and solemnly many inroads have been made, and yet midst it all remember this: "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth," and, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." When the Lord Jesus cried, "It is finished," one of the things that was assured was the final conquest for the church, the final victory of the church over sin, hell and Satan himself.

Now, in this sacred Book of Esther we see this conflict. We see how the Lord first of all moves in providence. Esther has much to say about providence. There is grace within this Book particularly seen, not so much in words but in the walk of those two gracious characters, Esther and

Mordecai. Let me pause there a moment. When all is said and done, your walk speaks far louder than your words. It is a very solemn thing if our words are different from our walk. May God give you young ones grace, and older ones too, that there may be that sacred consistency between our words and our walk. Remember, it is our walk that people watch; it is that which speaks loudest.

Notice how the Lord in His sovereign purposes brings Esther to the throne. There was at first another Queen, Vashti, and she offended the King who in his displeasure deposed her, removed her. Now that might seem insignificant to many, but it was one of the links in God's golden chain of providence. It was one of the all things working together for good. In God's purposes Esther, a Jew, was brought to the throne. Think of that. She was a foreigner, an alien by nation, and yet God had ordained that she should sit with the King as his Queen. At the same time as God was working out this great thing, which had a far deeper significance than could be seen at the time, Satan was at work in the matter particularly of Haman. Here was a man who sought after a position. Here was a man whose god was his own reputation, who hated the truth, and above all hated those who walked consistently. While all the city was ready to bow down to Haman at his request, Mordecai, that honoured servant of God, would not bow the knee. That may seem to some of you churlish. You may have said, "Well surely Mordecai was rather discourteous. Should not he have given him the honour due to the position that he had?" Friends, you must remember that Mordecai was a man of discern-

ment. He saw much more in the dealings of Haman that others had seen, and Mordecai knew that that man was soon to prove an enemy to the church. We need men of discernment in our day. They will not be popular; they will not be the ones to get the general applause. We need men of discernment who know the mind of the Lord in matters - Daniels, willing to stand alone." Mordecai was one of these. "Dare to be a Daniel; dare to stand alone." Mordecai was one of these. As the days grow darker we are going to need more Daniels and more Mordecais, whatever it may cost us.

Mordecai had one thing in view: the honour and the glory of his God. Mordecai would not move an inch; he would not move an atom from this one principle. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake." He would not bow the knee to mammon, to the world - none but his God.

Of course, Haman being what he was, a man entirely unregenerate, entirely left to his own spirit, soon showed that jealous streak. Remember what the Word says: "Jealousy is cruel as the grave." Beware of it. Beware of that burning jealousy within. Friends, it has caused havoc in churches, it has caused havoc in the nation, and here in the Book of Esther it threatened the whole existence of the Lord's people - all because of the jealousy of one man set on fire by hell itself.

You younger ones will know how Haman moved. He got the King to sign that deed that on a certain day of the month all the Jews in every nation were to be slain, and there were 127 kingdoms over which the King

Ahasuerus reigned. His was a vast empire. Think what this would have meant. It would have meant the annihilation of God's chosen people. You can see how Satan was working; you can see what his aim was. Would God stand idly by? Will God stand by and not be mindful of His church when it is in such imminent danger? No.

*"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."*

Already the Lord was at work. Already Esther was on the throne. Already events were moving in God's way, not Haman's way. But look what a trial it was. Look what a pressing time it was for both Mordecai and Esther.

Some of you young ones will be interested to know that one of the laws that governed the Persian Empire was that whenever the King made a law, it was called "the law of the Medes and Persians that altereth not." It could not be changed. Mordecai knew this; Esther knew this. What was to be done? It seemed an insurmountable object. The law had been passed and signed by King Ahasuerus. Surely now nothing could be done. Surely there is nothing now for it but to wait for our destruction. Friends, there is a stronger king than Ahasuerus; there is a stronger, more certain law than that of any earthly king. It is only God's laws and God's Word which in the end will never be broken. It is God's Word which cannot be broken. He has broken the "I wills" of men all down the ages. May He break some of the "I wills" of our present leaders in respect of breaking down that precious heritage, our Sabbath. They have said, "We will

break it down," but, friends, the "I wills" of God are stronger, if that be His sacred will to preserve to us His day.

What was to be done now? Let me tell you what they did first. Although it does not say so, friends, I am sure they did something first - they went to prayer. Be sure of this, there was secret prayer. We are thankful for public prayer. It is a good thing for the Lord's people to gather together for public prayer, but there is a special value in secret prayer. Jacob was left alone - then what? "There wrestled a Man with him" (not against him, but with him) "until the breaking of the day." What was the result of it? "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." What was the fruit of it? "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

*"Wrestling prayer can wonders do;
Bring relief in deepest straits!
Prayer can force a passage through
Iron bars and brazen gates."*

You may use every means, and it may be right to use every means, but if those means are not sanctified by the Word of God and prayer they are useless. O may God give you grace that the means that you use be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.

*"Pray, if thou canst or canst not speak;
But pray with faith in Jesus' name."*

It fell to Esther's lot to put her own safety and her own life in imminent danger. Now, Queen Vashti was deposed from the throne because she did something that was not lawful. When the King bade her come according to the law, she was supposed to

come, and in disobedience she did not, and she was cut off for it. Here was Esther about to do something else not lawful. She was not supposed to go into the King's presence unless he called her. She could remember what had happened to Vashti and yet, you see, such was her case, such was her extremity, such was the pressing nature of her need, she says, "So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to law."

Now just a word about the maidens and those companions of Esther. What were they doing? Friends, they were praying for her. Our Secretary, in reading the Report just now, quoted, "Brethren, pray for us." Here is the secret of prosperity in the ministry, in our churches, in our nation. "Brethren pray for us." Secret prayer. Those of us who are pastors have valued those who we know spend nights in prayer for us; dear saints of God, many confined to their homes who cannot even attend the means of grace, but their hearts are exercised, they are travailing for Zion. There is the secret of real prosperity: "Brethren, pray for us." Those women prayed, and Mordecai prayed while Esther went on this venture: "So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."

There was another insurmountable object to natural wisdom. Who else was in the presence of the King? Who else was sure to be there when Esther went? Why, Haman himself. He was going to be there; he was the King's most trusted adviser, and he would be there. It was an obstacle. Yet, knowing that her chief adversary would be there as well, still Esther presses on, still she says: "So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the

law: and if I perish, I perish."

Do you know what happened? You young ones will know. When she ventured into the presence of the King, he put forth the golden sceptre. What an answer to prayer! O what a moment it must have been to Esther when at first she saw the King and he first saw her! Will he cut me off? Will it be a frown or will it be a smile? Will it be "come" or "depart"? He put forth the golden sceptre. "What wilt thou, Queen Esther?" What an answer to prayer! The hearts of all men are in the Lord's hands. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord... He turneth it whithersoever He will." Some of you may have one in authority over you, one who in God's providence you are forced to deal with, and you may tremble at the outcome of it. Friends, God is higher than all second causes. He has the hearts of all men in His hand, and He can turn matters to His own will and to His own purpose, and for His own honour and glory. "Is there anything too hard for the Lord?"

So Esther ventured, and you know the outcome. The eventual outcome was that the Jews were saved. Haman, in the sorrow of the world that worketh death, hangs on the gallows. Satan, as he always will do in the end, overreaches himself, and those blessed words: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" are vindicated once more. The law of the Medes and Persians was overruled. Although not according to the law, Esther gained her request.

There are those of you here this afternoon, and O that it were all of you (may the Spirit so work in each heart), who will say, there is deeper truth beneath these sacred words which I have read this afternoon. There is a

greater King than Ahasuerus to go before. There is a greater King than any earthly monarch, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and you and I need grace to approach Him. It may be with you this afternoon as it was with Esther. So much may seem against you. First of all, the case itself may seem impossible. It may seem irrevocable. You need the faith of Martha is much criticized at times for being over careful, but if ever a child of God's faith flourished, it was Martha's when she said this: "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." That is faith. "All things are possible to him that believeth." If He gives you a grain of faith, that grain of faith can remove mountains. That grain of faith can force a way through iron bars and brazen gates just as it did for Esther and Mordecai. The Lord Jesus stretched forth His almighty hand and cried, "Lazarus, come forth," and he was restored to life again. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" You may have a hard matter this afternoon; it may be something quite beyond human reason. Well, if it is done, you will know who did it. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

Secondly, "not according to the law." It may be there is one here this afternoon who says, "That is just how it is with me. The very Word of God seems to condemn me; it seems to cut me off. I can find no hope there; I am a sinner indeed, and the sins that I am guilty of condemn me in God's Word. It says, 'The soul that sinneth it shall die.' I am a perishing sinner, but 'so will I go in unto the king, which is

not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.' "

Just as it was with Esther, you have an adversary, have you not? John Newton wrote:

*"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,"*

but he also wrote:

*"I know the Lord is nigh,
And would but cannot pray,
For Satan meets me when I try,
And frights my soul away."*

It was just the same with Joshua when he stood before the Lord: Satan was there to resist him. Is that how it is with you?

*"Does Satan tempt you to give up,
And call no more on Jesus' name?
Cast not away your little hope;
Come hither, and behold the Lamb."*

You have all these adversaries, an impossible case - a soul case, and perhaps a providential case. It is not according to the law; it is something different; it seems so out of the question. There is a stumbling block whichever way you look. What are you to do?

This is it:

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

This poor soul will have to press through everything, all the unbelief he may feel, all the guilt he may feel, all the opposition he may encounter,

everything that seems against him. "If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." That is how this poor, venturing soul comes. Will the Lord receive me? Will He extend that golden sceptre? Yes! Look at this, dear friends. What did the Lord say to Satan when Joshua stood before Him? "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan...is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Is this not one of My dear children coming to the mercy seat, seeking pardon and forgiveness? "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan," and the Lord is able to do that. He can silence the adversary; He can silence your unbelief as well. He can put paid to all these objections.

What about it not being according to the law? That does seem a closed door to some of you this afternoon.

*"The door of hope is open wide
In Jesus' bleeding hands and side."*

The law has done its work. It wounded the side of the Lord Jesus and in doing that made a way of access for these impossible cases. The blood of Jesus has a blessed and sacred effect. It is the very thing that is the key to the holiest of all.

*"But since my Saviour stands between,
In garments dyed in blood,
Tis He, instead of me, is seen,
When I approach to God."*

O poor sinner, plead that grace, that precious blood.

"So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." What will the Lord say to this poor sinner? He will not say, "Depart"; He will not say, "No"; He will not say, "The case is too difficult";

He will not say that you are altogether too vile. What does He say to such poor sinners? He says this: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." He will bring you through all these difficulties. "And him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."

*"Approach, my soul, the mercy seat,
Where Jesus answers prayer;
There humbly fall before His feet,
For none can perish there."*

One last thought. Dear friends, this word has heaven in it, if we look at it like this: "So will I go in unto the king." How do poor sinners at last enter glory? Not in their own merit, not in their own strength, not because of anything of the flesh. It is because of this glorious word: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me," and, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory." As each redeemed soul is taken from time into eternity the golden sceptre is put forth — Welcome, welcome. "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord: wherefore standest thou without?" It is like this: if you are one of these coming sinners this side of the grave, you will hear that blessed eternal "Come" that will land you safe in glory.

So will I go in unto the king, which not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." Esther did not perish, and neither will you, poor trembling child of god because it is Jesus who has the matter in His hand; "and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand."

G.D. Buss
(Pastor, Chippenham London)

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OBITUARIES

WILLIAM EZRA CUMMINGS

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to remove from our midst our beloved brother William Ezra Cummings. He was born August 2, 1904, passed away May 7, 1986.

He was the son of Elder Harlie and Amanda Cummings. He was married to Delma Whiteneck in 1936, who he leaves to mourn his passing. He also leaves two sons, Ralph and Paul Hale.

He and his dear wife joined Valley View Primitive Baptist Church, July 15, 1979 and were baptized by their beloved pastor, Elder Raymond Goad on August 15, 1979.

We will all miss his presence, but feel he is in the presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ where there will be no more pain, nor tears to shed, where he can give all praise, honor and glory to Our Heavenly Father. A graveside service was conducted by his pastor, Elder Raymond Goad, at Sunset Cemetery. The body was laid to rest beneath a beautiful mound of flowers.

Written by Sister Fannie Sue Lucas

WILLIE KELLUM

Be resolved that we the members of North East church do humbly submit to our Father's will in calling home our beloved brother and deacon Willie Kellum. He was born April 20, 1900.

He married Mollie Humphrey May 21, 1921. To this union was born five children of which 2 are deceased, leaving 3 to mourn his death. They are James Kellum, Dorothy Williams, Glenda Bright, all of Jacksonville, N.C. He had 10 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren and 2 sisters, Rosa Morton and Effie Hewitt of Jacksonville, N.C.

He joined the church the first Sunday of February 1937. He was a devoted and faithful member and served the church as deacon until his death.

He died May 21, 1986. His funeral was conducted in Jones Funeral Home by his Pastor, Elder J.T. Prescott. He was laid to rest in the Humphrey cemetery to await the resurrection day.

Written for the church, with a copy sent to the family, one for the church record and one sent to Signs of the Times, done by the order of conference at our August meeting.

Elder J.T. Prescott, Moderator
Lewis J. Sammons, Clerk

MURRY MOTLEY

“**B**lessed are the dead which die in the Lord.” I feel this could truly be said of our brother, Murry Motley. His toil and suffering in this life is over. He joined Malmaison Church August, of 1983, and most of that time since suffered from an incurable illness. He continued to attend his meetings until hospitalized. I can think of no better way to prove ones faithfulness and love for the truth.

Brother Motley departed this life Sept. 8, 1986. Survivors include his widow, sister Jewel Motley, two daughters, two sons, three brothers, ten grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren. The funeral was conducted at Malmaison Church by Elders O.K. Tench and Julian Williams. Interment was in the cemetery at the Sheva Church of Christ.

Humbly submitted
Peggy Wells

ELDER RAYMOND S. PAYNE

At the request of Old Mt. Church, and help from on high will try to write a few lines in memory of our brother Elder Raymond S. Payne, who passed away July 14, 1986, in Memorial Hospital, Danville, Va. Brother Payne was born Sept. 26, 1905. A son of the late J.R. Payne and Alice Booker Payne, in the Whitmell Community where he spent his entire life. He was married to Ruby Scarse Payne, who survives. Brother Payne joined Old Mt. Church July 21, 1934 was baptized by his pastor, Elder Robert Dodd. Began speaking and was liberated Dec. 24, 1936, was ordained June 25, 1939, and has served a number of churches. At the time of his death, he was pastor of Strawberry, Canes Creek, and North Fork churches.

Was Moderator of the Staunton River Association for 20 years. Was well established in the doctrine and widely known among the Primitive Baptist. Attended many associations in several states. He was a retired farmer, and had worked for the A. S. C. office in Chatham, Va. as a crop surveyor, until his health failed.

Having been in declining health a number of years, yet faithful to attend church as long as he was able. At times it seemed almost impossible, but moving his feet a few inches at a time, he would get there. We feel he could say as one of old, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course, I have fought a good fight, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord shall give me at that day. And not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing. He leaves to mourn: his wife, one

sister, Pattie P. Brumfield of Danville, Va.; one brother, Luther H. Payne of Dry Fork, Va. May his dear wife and family be reconciled to his will, knowing the Lord doeth all things well.

His funeral was held at Wrenn Yeatts West Over Funeral Home Chapel by his pastor Elder H.W. Wray, Elder Wallace Smith and Elder Amos Hash. His body was laid to rest in Highland Burial Park beneath a beautiful mound of flowers, a token of love and respect from his family and friends. Done in order of conference. Oct. 18, 1986.

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

ARTHUR WELDON STRADER

Though we bow in humble submission to the will of our Lord, we, nevertheless, are saddened as another of our dear brothers is taken from our midst. Arthur Weldon Strader was born February 14, 1907, in the Ruffin township of Rockingham County where he lived all his life. He was the son of the late Arthur and Lizzie Barber Strader. On June 11, 1927, he was married to the former Muriel McKinney. To this union were born five children --- two boys and three girls, as follows: Harry Strader, Ridgeway, Virginia, Wallace Strader, Knightdale, N.C., Mary Travis, Danville, Va., Frances Stump, Greensboro, N.C. and Florine Lillard also of Greensboro. There are eleven grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren.

Brother Weldon joined the Dan River Primitive Baptist Church on September 12, 1982, and was baptized the following October 10th. He dearly loved to attend his meetings and the love he had for the church and its

members and friends was manifest in his countenance.

This writer has, on many occasions, had the opportunity to talk with Brother Weldon at length. Though his health was not good, he did not dwell for long periods on his physical condition. Rather, he was thankful that things were as well with him as they were. One night at Brother Reuben French's home, he talked with me at length concerning the former years of his life. Like most of us, he was not at all proud of various aspects of his past. He just thanked God for having been shown a better walk and he praised his dear companion for her love and faithfulness toward him throughout the years.

Brother Weldon attended his meetings faithfully until he was no longer physically able to go. His two favorite hymns were Amazing Grace and Rock of Ages. What better hymns could one choose to point out the way of salvation and the sinful nature of the creature man?

Brother Strader died at his home on September 2, 1986 at the age of 79. His funeral was conducted at his home church by Elders Kenneth Key and Haywood Wray and his body was laid to rest in the church cemetery to await the coming of the Lord. Though saddened by his passing, we are indeed made to feel that our loss is his eternal gain. May the Lord be praised!

This memorial resolution is written by order of the church seated in conference October 26, 1986. It is requested that a copy be made available for publication in the Signs of the Times and that a copy be given to the family.

Written in Love,
Bob R. Collie

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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*God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
He rides upon the storm.*

*Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.*

*Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.*

*Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.*

*His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.*

*Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.*

Cowper

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EDITORIAL

EXPERIENCES IN THE TRIALS OF LIFE

It is not my intention nor is it my desire to write about our exploits of life in this natural realm of existence. There is much in the life of those born again and those still in captivity to ungodliness that is much related. This is because that those born again are still citizens of this world and are still contending with the body of flesh. From a natural standpoint, it is the same life that both are living. Each have their own problems in making ends meet in this earthly life. Until the spiritual life of a born again child of God is made manifest

there would be little, if any, difference made manifest between the two.

It is not promised to the natural man that he shall have tribulations in this present life; it is not promised to the natural man that in this life he shall be tried by many sad afflictions, trials and dark scenes wherein they will be in despair. You (the reader) may closely observe those that have not yet been blessed to make a good profession, and you will never hear them speak of their dire trials and troubles in this life.

How different it is when one is born again or from above. Troublesome days and nights follow, often fast one upon another. These changes nearly always, if not always, brings a change in both they that are thus exercised but also in them not thus exercised. To the one exercised by these sad things this is often used as a witness against ourselves. We see our former days of peace, and we are not at ease anymore. Ofttimes this is a witness against us because our neighbor is not disturbed as we are. This is an added trial; this is the beginning of the training of the soldiers of the cross. This is, in a spiritual sense, the being taught of the Lord. This is where we begin to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. No sooner than one begins these divine lessons than trials, afflictions, tribulations, long deep valleys all begin coming as a deluge upon the fragile barque that often will still find themselves encompassed by a desire to go down to the sea there to do business in great waters (Psa. 107).

This travel of a new born child is oftentimes, if not always, accompanied by great blessings at first. What a lovely way indeed that it is to travel under the influences of a new hope.

Everything is to the liking of one thus newly brought into this living way. But the young believer is not yet acquainted with what is in the pathway of one belonging to the kingdom of God's dear Son.

I have dealt with the life of Joseph in much of my writing, but I do not think of my feeble efforts as having exhausted the beauty, the grandeur, the majestic setting of his travels down into Egypt, and his majestic handling of the great starvation time in that country. In the relationship of Israel and Egypt with that period, I do not have any idea that God planned it even in a secondary manner for the benefit of Egypt. This was not for the trial of Egypt at all, but it was conceived in the eternal mind of God, brought forward and perfected for the good of Israel and the glory of God.

First, let us call to remembrance that from the beginning men have been making amends for God's mistakes, shortcomings, and even carelessness. He needs none of their attention. Not a created thing, man or beast or thing before God spoke the world into existence. Now if anyone has proof that I am wrong in that statement, let he or she come forward with proof, but if they do not have that proof, let them be still, for anything that is produced is a reply against God. I think it becoming in each recipient of the goodness of God to be quiet and not rail against those that reply against God.

God made and created the world and the fulness therein. Before that there was a void, an emptiness, a nonentity; there was not anything there. By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers,

all things created by him, and for him (Col. 1: 16). I am not soliciting anyone giving me proof contrary to that. There is none. In the next verse is fitly placed in doctrinal arrangements by the Holy Ghost. To forego, and to forever settle the matter as there being a power of any kind or description, Paul continues in the 17th verse by saying, And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

There was not one existing thing or mouthpiece to raise an objection to what God inspired Paul to say. In thankfulness to God, I am glad and I trust thankful that there was not any disappointed office seekers to raise objection to what God was doing. Therefore, I say humbly, but I hope in thankfulness to my God that any created tongue that dares rise up against the way that God created the world and put people over the world had a perfect right to do as He did do. Any dissenters to what He was pleased to do were replying against God, and any at this late date that are carping and objecting to His creation are all of them replying against God. And I would beg for grace to stand as firmly devoted to the whole truth of the gospel of Christ in saying or defending any false theory in regard to His divine creation. I am writing about the travels of God's people. This travel started in the garden of Eden and it has extended until the present. Adam went out from the surroundings of the garden in sorrow, in grief, in labors, in misgivings, in sweat of the brow for his daily bread, in condemnation. Reading about it by those that have not yet come into a knowledge of what he was passing through brings from them a disdainful toss of the head "that he got what he deserved." That has ever been the

demeanor of those that have not yet had the finger of divine justice laid upon them. When that has first come about the accuser of Adam becomes as low and as guilty a culprit as Adam. Until the finger of divine justice is pointed into his own behaviour he will continue to gather his silken skirts closer around them lest they be spattered with their sins. And I say it without fear of successful contradiction that the trouble makers, the scoffers, them that are ever meddlers in other men's business, all those that dispute about matters that they know nothing of are today the same body, the same house of wreckers on the little groups of believers scattered over the world.

There is not near as much danger of trouble where a wretched heart broken sinner as Adam was when he was afraid as those that have not yet been brought into condemnation, that have not yet experienced that condemnation that our foreparent Adam felt. Poor sinners do not give much trouble in the organized church of Jesus Christ. Trouble comes from trouble makers; troubles come from the contentious, not from those that are contending for the faith.

To those that God has raised up in past days, and is still raising up today, I pay all respect to each of them. I look back over the history of the Church (the Bible) and I am lifted above my daily routine, above my ups and downs, trials and afflictions and am made to sit down in the assembly of God, those that have been made to walk humble before God not looking to men for what they preach and practice but to He that called them out of darkness into the marvelous light and glorious liberty of men called and qualified, strengthened to go forward, taught to be still, put on the firing line,

staying at the post of duty, ever counting it a holy calling to be called to leave earthly treasures, to leave families, assets of an earthly nature and to follow the Prince of Peace through thick and thin.

First, I want to write my feelings and to examine the life and to meditate on the printed page the beauty and the exquisite sweetness of the life of one raised up for the glory of God.

I do not have any desire to pay homage to Moses as a man, as an individual of Adam's posterity, for not unto us belongeth the victory, but that His arm hath gotten the victory. The coming of this man into the congregation of the righteous was spectacular and certainly is a phenomenon that no set of educated men will dare to explain on the basis of human merit of ingenuity.

God created and made all things. Let us put a strong stake down deep right there. Any argument against that doctrine will fall upon deaf ears in the kingdom of heaven. It does not matter what others say or do, because He that created all things has ultimately set their destination. Another vital truth ever present in the Book is that at beginning of creation there was not a being present to suggest or to meddle in the way that any created thing would go or do or say. The order of all created things was ordered by He that created all things. This conclusion is biblical from the first of Genesis to the Amen in Revelation. It also is in keeping with good language and grammar. The Bible says clearly that God declared the end from the beginning. How much of the end did God declare from the beginning? How much dear brethren? How precious Bible readers? Now let us ask this question, to wit, Who determined the

end from the beginning? We have it on good authority that God declared it, but did He determine it? If God did not determine what He declared from the beginning, just who or what did?

The subject, dear readers, is the fiery trial of God's people, which, Peter tells us, is to try the elect family of God. Our heavenly Father and our blessed Saviour warns the people of God that many sad and trying things are in store for them. He does not say that they may come. He tells them that persecutions, tribulations, false witnesses, and a host of sad trials and afflictions are sure to come upon them, yet, He does not leave them comfortless. If I may call Him my Head, he is to pass through these trials also but in telling them, He does not issue a single conditional affliction or persecution or tribulation. He tells us in the most emphatic language that they shall come. If He is making them a conditional promise of a trial for the purpose of trying them I do not see nor understand why that He always told them in positive terms that they shall be tried.

I now conclude this little article by asserting once again that the trial is promised to all of the elect by Him that lived and died and gained the victory over every single one of them "shalls", and as I have lived a long time and have been closely associated with a lot of sad events that belong to sad trials.

The intention of the king of Egypt was for the purpose of reducing the number of the Israelite nation. Now that is right, isn't it? How simple, and yet, when it was utilized for the destruction of Israel, it is so puerile that it becomes incredulous. Just issue a decree that the attendant at the birth of an Israelite baby murder it to keep

Israel from growing. Who designed that? What a trial for the mothers. Now tell me, did God have anything to do with that? Did Satan, independent of God's design or intention, stir the women attendants to lie about the liveness of the Hebrew women? Did God have anything to do with the mother of Moses in her hiding her baby in the flags? Was her object the only one carried out? Was it the mother's wisdom that hid the tiny child near where Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe? Was it the frantic mother that had her baby hid where it was hid, or was it God that had it put at that specific spot so that Pharaoh's daughter would find the infant, fall in love with it, adopt it and carry it home to have the run of the kingdom as the adopted grandson of the King, learning all the secrets of the empire, and be ready and equipped in mind and body for the delivery of the children of Israel at the opportune time of God to carry out His promise to Israel?

The intention of the King was exactly like Joseph told his brethren. Furthermore, every case is just like that. God meant it for good, Pharaoh meant it for evil. What a solemn trial has been by predestinarian ministers in the last hundred years. They have preached the true doctrine of God being a God of purpose; that He purposed things for good for the children of His kingdom; that He only meant it for good. That is what Joseph said about the whole train of evil trials that were brought upon him and his family. If there has been, or there is, one anywhere that advocates the predestination of all things and has anymore to say than what Joseph said, then I denounce it as being untrue. Joseph said all that is necessary. Nor do I need the explanation of any man,

anywhere, at anytime to explain God out of the dilemma that He has caught Himself in by such an expression. Anything that any man says, in argument about the trial of the children of God, that brings up anything in the trial in the travel of God's children, that forces anything into what Joseph said about evil, is adding to the inspiration of God. I do not have anything to say about what is assigned those that add to what God has said.

In trials and afflictions but in hope,
W.D. Griffin

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Elder Williams,

Please renew my subscription for the Signs of the Times for the year 1987. I have truly gotten a blessing from the material that has been published in the past, and am sure with the dedicated work you and your associates are doing it will continue to be so in the future. Hope you and yours will have a blessed Christmas and God will bless you all with good health, safety, prosperity and happiness throughout the coming year.

With Christian Love,
W. T. Giles
868 Fieldstone Rd.
Mooreville, N.C. 28115

Olympia, Washington
Dec. 8, 1986

Signs of the Times, Inc.

Enclosed is my personal check in the amount of \$25.00 to cover a 2-year renewal and please use the remaining \$7.00 toward the Contribution Fund.

Would like to compliment your editorial staff on the improved format of the Signs as well as the heavy black print. May God continue to be with you all.

In hope of His grace,
Alma F. Coate

MEETINGS

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The Stauton River Primitive Baptist Union meeting, if the Lord willing, will be held at Danville Church the Fifth Sunday and Saturday before in March 1987. We invite all lovers of the truth to meet with us. All ministers of our faith and order are invited.

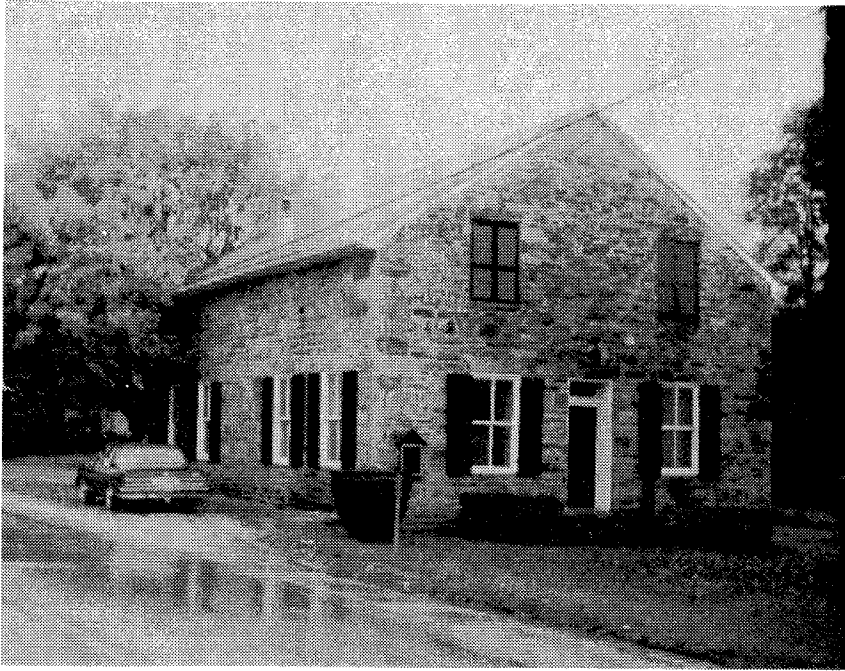
R.T. Holley - Church Clerk

Buttahatchie

The next union meeting of the Buttahatchie Association will be held with Mt. Carmel Church March 27,28 and 29, 1987. Mt. Carmel is located in Millport, Ala.

Ray M. Hayes, Sec.

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



BLACK ROCK CHURCH

Black Rock Church was organized in 1828. It was a lovely place for the Lords people to meet for over 150 years. It was also the location of the "Black Rock Address." It is located in Baltimore County, Butler, Maryland.

The pastors who served Black Rock were Elders; Edward Choate, Eli Scott, Samuel Trott, William Grafton, W.J. Purington, H.C. Ker, Farris A. Chick, Joshua T. Rowe, Douglas L.

Topping. The last Elder to serve was John D. Wood who served from 1938-1985. He had to discontinue to serve because of poor health and has since died.

Black Rock meeting house stands today as a plant that was planted, was kept watered with the dews from Heaven, budded and bloomed and now faded. All members have died and the building remains only as memories of the past.

ARTICLES

HEAVENLY REALITIES AND DIVINE CERTAINTIES

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This the true God, and eternal life." - 1 John v. 20

This brings me to my last point. "And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

Here the man of God points to the union and communion which the saints of God have with His dear Son. "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ."

How are the saints of God "in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ?"

1. First, they are in Him by covenant ties, by solemn engagements, by eternal choice, as the Holy Ghost speaks by Paul. "According as he hath chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." Men may quarrel with election, but it is the grand foundation of the union which the Church has with her covenant Head; for she was chosen in Him; not chosen in herself, or chosen out of Him; and being chosen in Him, she can never, so to speak, be lost out of Him. This will be very plain by a moment's consideration. If every member of the mystical body of Christ was chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, it is impossible that any member of that mystical body should be lost. The whole body would suffer, and the Head would suffer with it, if the smallest member of the mystical body of Christ could perish. It would not be a complete body if it lost the smallest member. If, therefore, you are in Christ by vital union, you were in Him by covenant ties before the foundation of the world. This is the grand security of the saints; this is that which kept the Church from being swamped and swallowed in the Adam fall, and held her up in the midst of that transgression which was attended with such fearful consequences.

2. There is another way in which we "are in him that is true;" and that is by

vital union.

This vital union is of two kinds: a union of Him with us by His participation of our flesh, and a union of us with Him by our participation of His Spirit. There is thus, so to speak, a double union.

In order to make the Church wholly His, by becoming one with Himself, the Lord took her nature into union with His own divine Person. The apostle, therefore, says: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." (Heb. ii. 14.) We therefore read: "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v. 29, 30.) Thus there is a union which the Church has with Christ by virtue of His partaking of her flesh and blood. As the wife has a union with her husband from being one flesh with him, so the Church has a union with Christ as being one flesh with Him. How beautifully does Paul unfold this mystery: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." (Eph. v. 31, 32.)

This union of Christ and the Church as one flesh, by virtue of His incarnation, is the ground and basis of that other union with Him, which I have already mentioned — a union with him by a participation of His Spirit; as we read, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." (1 Cor. vi. 17.) Thus our union with Christ is not only a union by covenant tie, which was the source, not only a union by His partaking of our flesh as the great mystery of godli-

ness, but a union with Him in living experience, by oneness of Spirit. Now if you know anything of the grace, the presence, the power and love of Christ; if you have been baptized with His Spirit and have ever felt anything experimentally of communion with Him, you are one spirit with Him. There is a oneness of spirit between you and the Son of God. You see with Him; you feel with Him; you sympathize with Him; you walk with Him; you talk with Him. And He feels with you; sympathizes with you; walks with you; talks with you; communicates of His grace to your soul, infuses His Spirit into your breast, and makes you a partaker of the divine nature, that you may escape the corruptions which are in the world through lust. Now it is only by this oneness of spirit with Christ, and by being able to realize it, that we can ever say without fear, "we are in him that is true." When you feel a oneness of spirit with Christ, then there is a testimony in your own bosom of your union with Him, which can never be described, and yet can be and is blessedly felt. To melt into His Spirit and His Spirit to melt into yours; to have the mind of Christ; to see with the eyes of Christ, to feel with the heart of Christ; to love what Christ loves, to hate what Christ hates; to be jealous of His honor, tender of His glory mourn over Him and with Him, hate your sins because He suffered for them, abhor yourselves in dust and ashes on account of your unlikeness to Him: to be sighing continually that He would draw you nearer to His bosom, supply you out of His fulness, manifest His love to your soul and baptize you into His Spirit — this is oneness of spirit with Christ, and by this oneness of spirit you can clearly make out our union with Christ. Let me illustrate this by something of

a similar character. You talk with a child of God, say for the first time; but from some cause or other, you feel no union or communion with him. Why? Because there is no present oneness of spirit between you and him. But another day you meet him: he says something that drops into your spirit; you say something which drops into his spirit: heart flows to heart, spirit melts into spirit; you are one with each other, know the same truths, believe the same things, feel the same power, can unfold to each other your mutual sorrows and your mutual joys, and love flows into each other's breast. This is oneness of spirit. So it is with us and the dear Redeemer. There is a oneness of spirit with Christ the Head as there is oneness of spirit with the members of His mystical body; and thus as we are able to trace out this oneness of spirit with Him, we arrive at the sweet testimony that "we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ."

Then it is, so far as we are enabled to enter into the vital reality of these divine things, that we can say with holy John, "This is the true God," lifting up heart and mouth for ourselves, and pointing out to others God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, as manifested and revealed in the Person of Christ. "This is the true God, and eternal life;" for I have a testimony in my own bosom that "this is the true God," from the experience I have of His truth and blessedness; and as I look up and see by faith eternal life in Him, I can add also that this, and this only, "is eternal life."

Some of you may not be able to speak with this blessed certainty of your interest in this only true God and this eternal life; and yet you may be certain that these things are true. Faith, I believe, has in it always a

measure of assurance. For what is assurance? It is merely the larger growth and fuller development of faith. The nature of assurance is much misunderstood. It is often considered something distinct from faith. This is not the case. It is merely faith in a fuller, larger development. The word "assurance" in the original has a very simple yet beautiful meaning. It means literally "a full bearing;" and the word is applied sometimes to a large crop of corn or fruit, and sometimes to the tide coming in with a fuller wave. Now it is the same corn which grows in the fields, whether the crop be much or little; it is the same tide that comes up the river whether in a scanty or full flow. So it is with assurance and faith: it is the same faith, only increased, enlarged, bearing more abundant fruit, or flowing in a more abundant tide.

Assurance in Scripture is not confined to faith; there is "the full assurance of understanding" (Col. ii. 2), that is, a fuller measure and amount, a greater enlargement of understanding to know the truth of God. The understanding is the same; but there is a larger measure of it. So there is the full assurance of hope, that is, a hope strengthened and enlarged, bearing more fruit and flowing in a fuller tide. But it is the same hope — the same in kind, though larger in degree; a stronger anchor and yet an anchor still. (Heb. vi. 11.) Similarly there is the full assurance of faith (Heb. x. 22), that is, a larger, fuller measure of faith — a richer crop, a more abundant tide. Thus you have a measure of the assurance of faith if you have faith at all. In fact, if you have no assurance of the truth of these things, why do you follow after them? Why do you hang upon them, why do you hope in them? and why do you seek the power and experience of

them in your soul?

Have you not arrived at this point yet? "we have not followed cunningly devised fables; these things that I am following after are realities; these objects set before me are certainties." I grant that you may be much exercised about your interest in them. Still, unless you know that they are certainties, why do you believe them? Why are you anxious to know your interest in them? Why do you sink in doubt and fear for want of clearer evidences of an interest in them? And why do you spring up in peace and joy the moment that a little light from them beams upon your soul and a little sweetness out of them drops into your heart? Because you know that these things are realities. So far then you have an assurance that they are certainties, and in due time, as God is pleased, you will have the assurance in your own breast, not only that they are certainties, but that you have them in your own sure and certain possession.

by J.C. Philpot

(Written By Elder E. Rittenhouse.)

To the churches known as the Delaware Baptist Association, this letter is addressed in accordance with what will be your expectations.

DEAR BRETHREN:—In recognizing you as worshipers assembling yourselves at stated times to worship him to whom worship and praise belongeth, it may be profitable to contemplate the character and perfections of him who was, and is, and is to come: the Almighty. It will be necessary in treating of the attributes of Deity, to avoid anything that has the

appearance of presumption, confining ourselves to what the Lord has been pleased to declare to us of himself. The inspiration of worship in the hearts of the children of men is undoubtedly the result of a revelation that God has made of himself so that all worshipers have received that knowledge of the object of their devotions that has qualified them to worship with reverence and godly fear. The Scriptures bear witness to all that revelation that God has made in the experience of his people. To them we may go as to a man of reliable counsel, and for a confirmation of all the ground of our hope. It is clear to our minds that all experimental knowledge that we have of God has come to us in and through the person of Christ. Christ was a man, and as we are men, God has seen fit to communicate with us always by men. So the apostle calls our attention to the matter thus: "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,...." God is a Spirit, and so no man hath seen God at anytime. This communicating with men in divers manners has seemed to confuse the minds of many theologians, and so we find them engaged in dividing up Deity into different persons, having different and entirely distinct offices. The revelation that was made to Moses upon the fiery mount has never been superseded, nor has any revelation conflicted with it. "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord." All subsequent revelations then must be understood to be in accord with this, carrying out and confirming the concentration of all the divine attributes and perfections in one supreme and eternal Jehovah. While we may hold that these promises are fully sustained by the Scriptures, yet we are aware

that a vast amount of labor and talent has been devoted to the establishing of a theory quite at variance with this. Terms have been coined and phrases arranged and adapted and strenuously contended for that are never used by any inspired writers. Unscriptural theories are generally contended for strenuously and in an intolerant and proscriptive spirit. Such expressions as "three equal persons," and "equal and distinct persons," and even the word "Trinity," are terms and phrases not found in the Bible at all. The plural form is sometimes used because God has made himself known through various channels and in a great diversity of ways. We read of the seven Spirits of God, and yet in the same connection are told that it is one and the selfsame Spirit. An expression that is relied upon somewhat to support the idea of a Trinity is this: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." The closing expression at once annihilates all the trinitarian theories that have ever been invented. Though God has revealed himself through these three different channels, yet it is the one God, and no other but he. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Jesus is abundantly and continually set forth as a man, in both the Old and New Testaments, and his qualifications to be a Mediator, and to be a merciful and faithful High Priest, are hinged upon the fact that he was a man in all things like unto his brethren; touched with the feeling of all their infirmities, and tempted in all respects as they were. But God was with him. While all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in him, yet he was and remained a man in distinction from that Godhead that dwelt in him. Mighty works were done, but the

Father that dwelt in him, he did the works. Jesus said he could of his own self do nothing. As these things are set forth, all Scripture testimony harmonizing in plain and explicit declarations, the infinite wisdom and fitness of the divine arrangement, continually appears. Christ as the child born and the Son given. "The Spirit of the Lord God was upon him," and thereby he was anointed to execute all the glorious work provided in the covenant of grace. But unless he had been under the law it could not have received fulfillment at his hands. He is the Daysman betwixt God and men that can lay his hand upon both. If no man can see the face of God and live, how condescending and kind of God to communicate with men through a man like themselves, one whose presence does not forbid their approach. Nowhere in all the Scriptures is "The second person of the Trinity" spoken of, or any such phraseology ever used. "God was manifest in the flesh." The psalmist speaking of the King of saints says, "He is fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into his lips, therefore God hath blessed him forever." God, as God, hath appointed him heir of all things, while he as man receives the appointment, and is thus empowered to execute judgment. Not the second person in the Trinity, but God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. For as the Father hath spiritual and eternal life, and this life is in his Son. For as the Father hath spiritual and eternal life in himself, so hath he given the Son to have life in himself. It is God-given life, but it comes to us through the Mediator. If were three distinct beings or persons that were objects of worship, we should certainly have been so informed in the Scriptures. But instead of this we are continually informed that

there is but one living and true God, and that he alone is to be adored, and had in reverence of all that are about him. "That ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Savior."—Isaiah xliii. 10, 11. Christ himself refused to receive worship at the hands of men, directing them always to worship God, and to pray to the Father in his name, and assuring them that God would give them whatever was thus sought in and through his name. When the time comes that every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, it will be to the glory of God the Father. Theologians have noticed that the name of Jehovah is sometimes made himself known. It was the same God, but he had not before made himself known by the name that he now announces unto them. A proper conception of the attributes and perfections of the divine Being, and a proper discovery of him where he has revealed himself, inspires in our hearts those sentiments of adoration that are required of us. Idolatrous worship is utterly abolished. The glory of God that was seen in the face of Jesus Christ had never been seen anywhere else, and we know of no other way in which God could be revealed to men only in the person of a man.

"God is a Spirit." By the term person, we understand something different from a Spirit. Among the ways in which God reveals himself, and makes his salvation known, is as a Spirit. This revelation comes in quickening, in teaching, in convincing of sin, and of comforting, and in witnessing to our heirship. This Spirit is called the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ, and also the Spirit of truth. By

this Spirit the saints are guided into all truth. The apostle speaks of different gifts, and diversities of operations, and differences of administrations, but asserts emphatically that it is one and the selfsame Spirit. Then again, after repeating the several gifts he says, It is the same God that worketh all in all. It will not be expected of us in this place to notice the theories and the arguments that have been promulgated with a vast amount of labor to maintain the idea of a trinity of equal and distinct persons. If the Scriptures do not teach any such thing we can leave all errors of every kind to fail and come to naught of themselves. Some phrases that have been promulgated, and jealously advocated, are not only unscriptural, but utterly absurd and tending to confusion. If the infinite and incomprehensible One has seen fit to reveal himself in and through a Mediator, may we not recognize and trace the power of God, and the wisdom of God, to its source as they shine and reign in the life and immortality brought to light in the gospel? With the Spirit that God has given his people is a knowledge of those perfections that inspire spiritual devotion, so that he who is a Spirit is worshiped in Spirit and in truth.

These things are suggested with deference, and with a sense of their sacredness, to be considered and accepted only so far as in strict accord with that record in which the glory of God is revealed.

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

SINGING IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

Inquires and answers in Gospel
Standard, August 1, 1855

Sir: Is singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, a part of the worship of Almighty God? If so, is it right that eight or ten persons should be huddled together at a corner of the chapel and pitch scientific tunes, so that hardly any one can sing but themselves? There are many of the Lord's poor, who after a week of toil, would be glad to join in singing a gospel hymn in honor of their once suffering but exalted Lord, but are hindered by theatrical singing.

A few words from you on this subject would very much oblige, Sir.

A few poor broken down sinners.

When heart and voice can go together there is no sweeter part of the public worship of God than the singing. "I will sing with the spirit," says the apostle, "and I will sing with understanding also." (1 Cor. 12:15) It not only forms a most suitable commencement of the service, softening and opening the heart, and preparing it for drawing near to God; but after the attention has been strained in listening to the chapter read, and uniting in spirit with the prayer offered it forms a sweet relief of mind, it being, so to speak, a relaxing of the stretched string, and a consequent enabling of it again to be tightened to attend to the sermon. It is also the only mode in which the congregation, consistently with solemnity and order, (for the Wesleyan interjection of Amen, Lord hear, etc., are a thorough nuisance, and for the most part the mere expression of canting hypocrisy) can give vent to their feelings, and take an expressed part in the worship of God.

Singing is as much a part of the public worship of God as prayer or preaching, and ought therefore not to be choral, but congregational. A certain knowledge of music, indeed, is needed to preserve our ears from being distressed by horrid discords, and

this part of the service of God from being made a misery instead of a delight; and to a certain extent it is necessary for those who are gifted with musical ears and voices to sit together, that time and tune may be observed and a body of harmonious voices have sufficient strength and unity of sound to lead and sustain the scattered voices of the congregation. As this accuracy of time and tune, and this full harmony of sound, can only be attained by practicing together, what is called a choir is gradually formed; and by degrees the more scientific portion, often alas! the least gracious, begin to hanker after, and perhaps introduce tunes, which, however beautiful, in themselves, are out of place in the public worship of God, and actually destroy that part of divine service, from the inability of the people to follow them. This is an abuse of singing, which should be testified against, and if possible, put down.

Our own view is this, that, as a general rule, the good old stock tunes are the best. They have stood the test of time, possess in themselves those only real sources of musical excellence and delight, melody and expression, are generally well known to the congregation, are pitched in keys within the compass of ordinary voices, and therefore are capable of that full body of sound which constitutes the sweetness and force of congregational, as distinguished from choral singing. We do not want in our simple humble chapels the graces of a concert-room, the science and harmony of an orchestra, or the loud swell of the organ of a cathedral. We want simplicity in the service of God. Simple and childlike should be the prayer, simple and plain the sermon,

and simple though not unmusical, the singing. . . .

Wm. L. Beebe

Memphis, Tenn., May 10, 1901.

DEAR EDITORS OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES:—While I esteem all the salutations of the apostle Paul to all the saints in every place, as being very precious and replete with comfort, I have selected his salutation to the church at Corinth which reads, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours,"—1 Cor.i.2, as a salutation to you and to the readers of the SIGNS. The fourth verse reads, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for [which word for means because of] the grace of God which is given you by Christ Jesus."

The reason why Paul thanks God for the grace given, is because of the result, the evidence or fruits of grace. He says, "In everything ye are enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge." So when we utter words which become sound doctrine, it is not we that speak, but the grace of God which is given by Christ Jesus. Divine inspiration is essential in order that we may speak the words which become sound doctrine, and all utterance as declared by the apostle is the gift of God, the result or fruit of grace. "Ye are enriched in all knowledge, so that ye come behind in no gift." And Paul goes on to say in substance that this is in order that ye may be blame-

less in the day of Christ, and that ye wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end. Thus he would say to them that they are not left, no, not for one moment, to themselves to save themselves, either in time or eternity, but are kept by the effectual working of grace. The gifts which are by grace are the righteous obedience of faith, and this obedience or work of faith, is our meat and drink, and as such does sustain us, that is the inner man. And thus in obedience, or in doing his commandments, there is great reward. This is because all obedience is the work of faith, and this work of faith, is given us by the grace of God: "By grace are ye saved," now in time, through faith. And being thus saved in time by the righteousness of God, which is by faith, and which is also the gift of God by faith, we are confirmed unto the end. Now that his will and purpose regarding these things, that is this good work might be fulfilled in all the saints, our God decreed in his own one mind (and who can turn him?) that all his saints shall work, not under the ceremonial law, as given to Israel, but by the law written in their hearts, and printed in their minds. Thus, in these gospel times, both when the apostle wrote and now also, every member of his church has his several work, a work which each man shall do, so that the hand cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee. There is a needs be, not only for every member of his body, but also for the work of each member, by which work each other member is edified in love. All these works, collectively and severally, redound to the glory of God, because they are the gift of God unto each member. Now that his righteousness through Jesus Christ might

be fulfilled in his people, Jesus himself in the beginning of the gospel, came quickly as testified to John in the Isle of Patmos, and his reward was with him, to give to every man according as his work should be. (Rev. xxii. 12.) This Scripture testifies that there is a certain amount of work which every man should do. Therefore, upon the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost was poured out according to the promise, some came to realize in their hearts (the law having been written there) that there was a work for them to do, and cried out, "Men and brethren what shall we do?"

Now having no righteousness of their own, it was essential that every man should be rewarded with grace, and the gifts of God, which are all by grace, in order that each one should do the exact thing appointed to him to do. This work was prophesied of, and when the time appointed of God had come, he, Jesus, came quickly and rewards them according to their work; he metes out to each one the measure of faith, and all the obedience which springs from faith, and this obedience is not their own righteousness, but the work of faith, as Paul has said, "For I say, through the grace given unto me." (Notice he did not say this of himself.) Thus the reward which the Lord gave Paul preceded his work or testimony, so that Paul spake with power, the power of the Holy Ghost. Thus it was the gift of God which was given unto Paul, which spoke in and through him, saying to every man, "Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

All will do well to Rom. xii. 3-8. There we see that all good works are the works of faith, and not of ourselves,

and that they are done according to the proportion of faith which is given as a blessing. The work of faith is not limited to what we generally esteem as church work, such as uniting with the church, repentance, baptism, assembling ourselves together,..., but every good work, every act of obedience done, is the work of living faith, whether done by those who are visibly members of the church or not. Obedience to the law written in the heart has merit or virtue in it, because it is the work of God in the heart. Thus the poor woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years, had a work to do and a reward was given her; the Lord came quickly and relieved her, and her reward was that she touched the hem of his garment. Thus the Lord's reward did precede the work done, that is faith preceded her work, and although the multitudes did throng Jesus, yet nothing could hinder the God-given reward, or the perfect faith, and it did its perfect work, so that Jesus said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. Her own works had all failed, she resorted to science, (the physicians) only to find that vain is the help of man.

Thus also the Lord rewarded Peter and the other apostles with the gift of healing at his own time, and we read that as Peter and John went up together to the temple, God by them did heal the impotent man, and Peter did not say we are able, and that we have healed the impotent man at our own option, but he said, It is not by our own power or holiness that this man has been made to walk.

Dear brethren, it does seem that all enlightened minds would accept it as truth, that both the poor woman, and the impotent man, were saved, and

saved here in time from their affliction, so that if it be lawful to speak at all of a time salvation, it would include these cases. The Savior had dealt faith to them both in such proportions as resulted in the work which each did, so that the woman touched the hem of his garment, and the impotent man immediately obeyed, not Peter, but God, and walked, praising God, both doing this by faith, and Peter while standing there, declared it was Jesus, the only name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved, that had given to this man this perfect soundness, in the presence of them all. So, dear children, whose only Savior is Jesus, and whose God is the Lord, let us remember that the works embraced in the words, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation," or from the delusions which abound, are not works of righteousness of faith, and thus faith is made perfect by works, or the exercise of faith, but it is God, who by his own power has exercised this faith and made it perfect by works, for Jesus is not only the author of faith, but also its finisher, and a finished faith is a perfect faith, and it is perfected by works, it is not, as said before, our work, but the Lord's through faith. The body is dead because of sin, and therefore cannot do good works or works of obedience. But some critic may say, "Is it not your natural body of flesh and blood that is buried in baptism?" I answer yes, but the dead body does not bury itself, in baptism the body is as passive, as I might say, as a lifeless machine, held in the power of faith, and it is the power of faith which takes the body, and buries it in baptism, in the likeness of the death of the Lord, and raises it again up out of the water.

Now, dear brethren, I commit this entirely to you, I had much rather read from others, but I have felt impressed to write this, if I am in error with regard to all good works or obedience, that they have no merit in them, I desire to be informed of my error. Obedience is as a light which shines. Jesus said to his disciples, Let you light so shine,.... Now it is God who commands the light to shine out of darkness. He commands the obedience to shine, so therefore we do not obey at our own option, but according to his own purpose and will working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight. I cannot express just what I can see in this subject, but perhaps my feeble words may stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance of these things, and cause you to write one to another concerning these great and good things. Does not faith perfected, mean faith finished? If so it is evident that Jesus finishes this faith by works, and therefore the work, as well as the faith is his, and not ours. Thus he is the author of both faith and works, and he says that he will be with us always, even unto the end of the world.

David L. McNees

“IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE.”

(1 CORINTHIANS XV. 22.)

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Inspiration reveals the truth and the work of God. Not one word of all that he has declared shall fail. The reason is, the Holy One is the I AM, the Almighty. Both is wisdom and power the Most High is unlimited. With

him is absolute sovereignty. In all his attributes God is limitless, perfect and sovereign. To deny this is a denial of both his sovereignty and his Godhead.

It is an absolute truth, therefore, that the omnipotence of the Almighty is equal to and co-extensive with his omniscience. So not one thing of all that God hath spoken shall fail to come to pass. For his power is infinitely above and greater than all other powers. His kingdom ruleth over all, and his dominion subjects all beings and things to his “eternal purpose.” This was fully proved in the person of his incarnate Son, whose voice at once subdued and controlled all creatures and things to whom he spoke, whether animate or inanimate, raving devils and men, warring seas and winds, hopeless maladies and remorseless death, all yielded at once to his simple word. Jesus spoke but once, the Lord makes no efforts — never tries. Of himself he says, “I will.” To his people he says, “You shall.” “He speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast.” “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.” This is our God, the God of Israel his people, the Lord God omnipotent. He is the Rock, his work is perfect. He is our refuge, our salvation, our defense. O how safe and good it is to be sheltered under his almighty wing!

How fearful and woeful to us is our relationship in Adam! Our whole lifetime in the flesh is but the realization and experience of the solemn fact that we are in Adam. Here we sow in tears. Thorns and thistles abound. All the mighty works of merciful power which Jesus wrought, blessedly healing all the afflicted and raising up the

dead, were overcoming and removing the ruin that is ours in Adam. So all these gracious miracles of the second man are typical of his mighty work of redemption. To his wondering disciples he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "And thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Salvation, therefore, is the work of Jesus—the salvation of his people. They are his people in every dear and sacred relation and meaning of the term "his people;" yet they are sinners. The text shows that their sins and death are because they are in Adam. Therefore they are born of the flesh, and are flesh. So Jesus taught. All in Adam die. Here none are exempt. "By man came death." "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." All sinned in the one man Adam. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." "For the wages of sin is death." "That as sin hath reigned unto death." All this solemn fact is positive and absolute, unconditional and irresistible. This is the dominion of sin by man and in Adam. "There is no discharge in that war." "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Whence, then, cometh obedience and righteousness, salvation and life. Not from Adam, nor from any who are in Adam, nor from the flesh; for in the flesh dwelleth no good thing, said Paul. Jesus, who spake as no other man, makes a clear distinction between "that which is born of the flesh," and the other "is spirit." Therefore, that we may have life and obedience righteousness and salvation, we must be in Christ. It is a divine mystery, not known to the wise of the

flesh are in Christ Jesus and he lives in us. Paul thus states this truth: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." All this we need, and need it because "in Adam all die;" but this is all we need and shall receive. Our God has made his and our Christ all this to us, and it is of the Father that we are in Christ. Chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and blessed in him with all spiritual blessings according as we were chosen in him. This choice and these blessings are positive and sure, therefore, because they were vouchsafed to all the chosen of God in Christ before the world was. This blessed fact places all spiritual blessings infinitely above every conditional principle and basis, and secures them to us, "not according to our works" or obedience, but according to God's choice. And since all spiritual blessings were given us in Christ according as God hath chosen us in him, these blessings are no more conditional or contingent on our part that the choice itself. And more than all spiritual blessings we do not need nor shall ever receive. Where, then, is there any place or need for conditional spiritual blessings? And since all spiritual blessings are ours in Christ according to the will and choice of God, why should it be thought that God bestows them upon us according to our will and choice? In this connection Paul goes on and says, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgive-

ness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." In all this way of life and salvation unto sinners, the sovereign choice and pleasure and power of God supremely prevail, and all "according to the riches of his grace." In the wisdom and love of God he ordained it thus, because "so it seemed good in his sight," and he saw that there was no other way that would glorify him and bring them into the blessing of life.

"In Christ shall all be made alive." But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." The clause "in Christ," qualifies and limits the "all" that shall be made alive. It is because they are in Christ that they shall be made alive. None who are not in Christ shall be made alive. All die in Adam because they are in him. They could not die in Adam unless they first lived or had their being in him. When a living tree dies, all in it die, because the life of the tree is the life of all its members. So it is with all in Adam. "Even so shall all in Christ be made alive." In Christ is perfect obedience, holiness and life. So all in him shall be made righteous by his obedience. All sin and death shall be separated from them, and they shall be perfected in the holiness and life of Christ. His unfailing word to them is, "Because I live, ye shall live also." "And whosoever liveth and believeth on me hath everlasting life." This one falls asleep in Christ, but is not dead. For in Christ is no sin nor unrighteousness nor death, but righteousness and life and peace. The sin and curse and death are in Adam—in our mortal flesh. So for the sins of his people Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, to die no more. Thus our risen Lord made an end of

sin, and abolished death, for his people.

In his resurrection Christ was the firstborn from the dead among many brethren. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and because the first-fruits of them that slept." He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Now, all that Christ is in holiness and life and power, he is all this to all in him, and they shall know the power of his resurrection, shall be perfectly conformed to his divine image, and shall know the glory of his ascension into heaven. All this is by the power of the Lord God Almighty and the riches of his grace.

The death of all in Adam is the time present—"all die;" but the text and its connection show clearly that the resurrection unto the life in Christ, of all who sleep in him, is in the future time—"shall all be made alive."

"We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." In our mortal flesh we cannot thus see the glorified man Christ Jesus. John was given a glimpse of him in his glory; but he said, "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." Paul said, "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

*** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." "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." For this the holy Son of God prayed, saying, "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."

"Afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." When they die in Adam, at the dissolution of their mortal man or body, they fall asleep in Christ, and in him they shall be made alive when he shall come the second time without sin unto salvation. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

This will be the perfect fulfillment of the Lord's prayer for us, and we shall be with him where he is and behold his glory. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "Have borne," is past, "shall also bear," is to come. We now bear the image of Adam after the outward man, and the image of Jesus after the inward man; so we now, in part, bear the image of the two heads, the earthy and the heavenly. But God has predestinated his foreknown and chosen people to be entirely conformed to the image of his Son, whom he raised up from the dead. This good work of grace in us shall be gloriously finished in us when we shall receive the adoption, for which we now wait in hope, "to wit, the redemption of our body." This will be our change, of which Paul says, "Behold, I shew 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 victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Then, O then! "in Christ shall all be made alive." "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." The infinite and almighty wisdom and power of God in Christ Jesus our risen and glorified Redeemer shall gloriously triumph in the fulfillment of all this great and wonderful mystery of godliness, according to his own will, notwithstanding the opposition of all the wicked, who hate God and his sovereign power, and the unbelief of some of his own people. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." Paul again says, "For our conversation" (our citizenship and inheritance) "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." In the divine assurance of this faith and hope,

afflicted Job said, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." And David said, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." So shall we all.

Hoping to "attain unto the resurrection of the dead," yours in Jesus,

D. Bartley

CONTRIBUTIONS

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IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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PSALM 91: v.16.
*With long life will I satisfy
him, and shew him my salvation.*

OBITUARIES

RUTH VIOLA DONALDSON

Mrs. Ruth Viola Donaldson 70 of Star City, Ark. died at her home on Saturday June 8th, 1985.

She was an active member of the Primitive Baptist Church of Star City.

She was born March 18th, 1915 to the late William Albert and Lutie Edna Womack both of Star City.

She was the widow of Harris Donaldson who died February 10th 1981.

She was survived by four sons, two daughters, 18 grandchildren, one great grandson, two sisters and two brothers and many nieces and nephews.

She has been very sorely missed by all who knew her.

Marjorie LaRue

DESSER MAE GREEN

It is with deep sadness that we report the death of our sister in Christ, Sister Desser Mae Green who was born February 8, 1891 in Wood County, Texas to Lizzie Cobb Hinson and Everett Hinson.

She passed away in Irving Community Hospital, Irving, Texas at 3:00 P.M. Friday, September 12, 1986 making her stay upon this earth 95 years and 8 months. She was married to Barney Taylor Green over sixty years. He was a deacon of Hopewell Church when he preceded her in death October 15, 1971. She was also preceded in death by her two sons: Felton of Dallas and Kenneth of Irving, Texas.

Sister Green joined Hopewell Primitive Baptist Church in 1914 and was a faithful member of this church for over 72 years attending regularly until hindered by bad health. She loved the pure doctrine of the sovereign grace of God. She loved to sing the beautiful songs of grace. The following poem was written by one of our present members, Sister Paula Thomas, expresses her childhood memories of Sister Green.

**MEMORIES OF SISTER GREEN
AT HOPEWELL CHURCH**

*Many seasons have come and gone
As the years go swiftly by,
And loved ones have passed
as quickly
As the twinkling of the eye.*

*But, through the grace of God,
We have precious memories
in our minds,
Always there, always remembered
Down through the passage of time.*

*In my mind I go back to
my childhood,
The springtime of my life,
And I recall a dear old sister
With soft and gentle eyes.*

*She had a peaceful face,
And at times her eyes filled with*

*tears,
I scarcely had begun my life,
And she in the winter of her years.*

*She sat in the front pew by
the window
Near the pulpit so she could hear
Each meeting day she was present
Year after year after year.*

*She loved the singing, the
fellowship,
And she stirred a warm feeling in me,
She had been there many years
longer
Than my childish imagination
could see.*

*I would sit and watch her listen,
I was a child and didn't hear
The precious words and promises
That fell on her hungry ears.*

*I'm no longer in the spring of my life,
And only hope to see the seasons
she's seen,
But there in the front pew
by the window
I'll always see dear Sister Green.*

Paula Thomas

Sister Green's survivors include 2 daughter-in-laws: Geneva Green of Dallas and Jessie Green of Irving. Also 2 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren, and 3 great-great-grandchildren all of Irving and a host of nieces and nephews and friends.

Her funeral was conducted by her pastor, Elder Joe Hamrick and his son, Elder Jimmy Hamrick. Her mortal body was laid to rest in the Hopewell Cemetery to await the second coming of her Lord Jesus Christ.

Done by order of Hopewell Church while in conference November 8, 1986.

Elder Joe Hamrick - Moderator

ELDER DENNIS RUSH HENDRIX

Words are very poor and inadequate vehicles to convey the true feelings of a heart that is saddened by the sudden and tragic death of a close friend and a beloved brother in Christ. It is even worse when that brother is a younger yokefellow in the ministry and you have been closely associated with him for many years. Such is my position as I inform you of the tremendous loss to the Primitive Baptist in Tennessee, Kentucky and surrounding states in the death of Elder Rush Dennis Hendrix, November 6, 1986 in an accident at the Nashville, Tennessee Airport where he was employed by T.W.A. Airlines.

I have known and had a special love for Rush, since I first met him, prior to his joining the Dotson Creek Primitive Baptist Church in the Powell Valley Association in eastern Tennessee. We have been close through the years as we pastored churches in the Nashville Tennessee area and alternated the annual meeting. One year at the Friendship Primitive Baptist Church which he served and the next year at the Bordeaux Primitive Baptist Church that I serve, and in visiting other churches and associations in the area. It was beautiful to observe his being called out from the world and directed in ways pleasing unto God as he graciously placed Rush in his vineyard to minister unto his chosen people. It was an inspiration and a source of great joy to all who knew Rush and who were blessed by his presence and his preaching. One could not be with him long and not

sense his intense interest, deep convictions and his experimental knowledge of the way in which God deals with his people and has led and directed his elect in all ages of time. He had a unique gift and it was greatly appreciated by all who knew and loved him.

Elder Hendrix was moderator of the Powell Valley Association, Pastor and member of the Dotson Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Pastor of the Soldier Creek Church in Benton Kentucky and Pastor of the Friendship Primitive Baptist Church near Whitehouse, Tennessee. He traveled to churches and associations in Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Alabama and Texas, to my knowledge and was loved and respected by brethren everywhere he travelled. He will be sorely missed by all who were blessed to know and hear him.

Rush was born June 25, 1932 to Alfred and Ina Hendrix in Maynardsville Tennessee. He was married to Delores (Del) Westland and to this union was born three children Sandra, Lisa and Dean. He is survived by his wife Del, his three children, his mother and three brothers Alfred "Bill, Okla City Okla Howard E. and Douglas L, both of Knoxville Tennessee.

Funeral services were conducted by the writer and Elder D.R. Cabbage Monday November 11, 1986 at the Cooke Mortuary Chapel in Maynardsville Tennessee with interment in the Beeler Cemetery near Maynardsville.

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 Rush's life was one of God's greatest blessings given unto each of them to enrich their sojourn here on earth. May they

remember and praise God for this and all of his many blessings upon each of them as he leads them in ways known only to him.

Elder Richard Campbell

ISAAC ELDRIDGE MARTIN

Born June 21, 1903, to the late George and Ibra Lawrence Martin, and passed from this life December 1, 1986.

When a young man he was married to the late Alverta Williams. To this union was born two sons, Marvin Taylor and Charles Ray.

He is survived by one son Marvin Taylor, three grandchildren, two great grandchildren, one sister Mrs. Annie Reed, two brothers, Luther and Albert, of Pilot, Virginia.

He was married the second time to Eula Bell Williams. He is survived by his wife, six stepchildren, thirteen step grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by one son, Charles Ray, daughter-in-law Ella Mae. Also his parents.

Eldridge was a firm believer in salvation by grace of God. He had deep religious convictions. The writer has been comforted many times by hearing him speak of the wonderful works of God.

He could witness with the Psalmist—
— (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. He received a hope in Christ, who is our hope, many years ago.

His funeral was conducted by Elders Hale Terry and Larry Hollandsworth,

at Gardener Funeral Chapel, Floyd, Virginia, December 3, 1986. His body was laid to rest at Roselawn Memorial Gardens, Christiansburg, Virginia, to await the second coming of the Lord.

May it please God to comfort all who mourn.

In need of mercy,
Gaye A. Thompson

BETTY ADKINS STEVENSON

Sister Betty Adkins Stevenson was born near Parsonburg, M.D. Feb. 20, 1897 and died Dec. 9, 1986.

In Sept. 1915 Sister Betty married Edgar Adkins who died July 31, 1961. This union was blessed with six children, two preceded her in death. Ina Adkins and Brother Reginald Adkins.

Jan. 8, 1983 she married Marion Stevenson who survives, also surviving are three daughters Dorothy Wilgus, Louise Hadder and Bernice Blades, one son Brother Jimmy Adkins, two brothers, Louis and Brother Lawrence Holloway.

The second Sunday in Dec. 1945 she asked for a home with the Forest Grove Church and was baptized by her pastor Elder Harold Bennett. Sister Betty was a dear and faithful member all these years, loved by all who knew her.

Funeral services were held in the Holloway Funeral Home, Salisbury, Maryland by her Pastor Elder Julian Williams assisted by Mr. Wm. Sterling. Interment was in Forest Grove Cemetery.

Written by her sister-in-law
Ethel Holloway

Signs of the Times

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POETRY

Could we with ink the ocean fill,

And were the skies of parchment made;

Were every stalk on earth a quill,

And every man a scribe by trade.

To write the love of God above,

Would drain the ocean dry.

Nor could the scroll contain the whole,

Though stretched from sky to sky.

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EDITORIAL

“Jesus answered and said unto him, 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.” John 14:23.

This is a blessed chain of gospel experience bringing to our minds the very painful shortcoming in our experiences in respect of them. This text is not meant for the men of the world who have their portion in this life; but for the chosen, and called, and faithful who are brought into and to understand the mysteries of his kingdom. “If a man love me, he will keep my words.” We might be able to say, “we hope we love Him.” Christ brings forth in this text that it would be

manifest who were his own people by certain marks and signs. They would be those who love him and keep his commandments.

The first link in this golden chain is love to Christ. “If a man love me.” This “if” separates those who are to enter and to prevent anybody from entering who ought not to enter. This “if” stands as a drawn sword, like the cherubim at the gate of the garden of Eden, to keep anyone from venturing or to intrude where you have no right to go if you do not love the Lord Jesus Christ. “If a man love me.” Do we love Him? Let us not put this question aside but may we meditate upon it, for there are many who pretend to love him but really do not, for their conduct is not consistent therewith. Remember, that, if you do love him, he must have loved you first. Think of this ancient love, a love that was fixed upon you from all eternity, even though He knew you would be involved in the ruinous fall of Adam, and by your own personal transgression; yet loved you, notwithstanding all.

My dear ones, think of him, when the fulness of time was come, stripping himself of all his glory and descending from the throne of infinite majesty to the manger or humiliation and as a babe swaddled in his weakness. Look at His life, a life of poverty, for he had not where to lay his head; a life of rejection, a life of pain, for he bore our sickness, a life of dishonor, for he was despised and rejected of men. Think of him on down through his life and especially in the garden of Gethsemane. Think of him on the judgment seat when he was falsely charged with blasphemy. Think of him hanging on the cross of Calvary wearing a crown of thorns. Stand and watch

when the soldiers pierced his heart and made the blood and water flow forth for your pardon and cleansing. Do you have a hope that he suffered all this for you and do you not love him in return? But let us not stop here: think of him as he rises from the grave for you, as he ascends to heaven for you and obtains great gifts for you, and now pleads before the Father making intercession for you as King of kings and Lord of lords. As you think of all this, can you refrain from loving him? Ye who are united to him in bonds that can never be severed, love him.

The next question is do we know him? If a man knows him not, how can he love him? There are many people in this world who profess to know him, but profession is not possession. "Whom say ye that I am?" Can we say with Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"? His enemies were constantly disputing with him. They knew him not, except as one who was setting forth a strange doctrine and they judged he was not fit to live. But whom say we that He is? Is he the Christ, the Son of the living God? Is He the foundation of our hope? Is his cross the attraction of our soul? Is His righteousness the robe we desire most to wear? Is to be cleansed by His precious blood, our greatest desire? If a poor unworthy sinner is convinced of his sinfulness, of his deadness, of his helplessness gets a sight of Him as the new and living way to the Father as the foundation of his hope, does this knowledge of Him not cause His people to cleave to Him? You may be able to say, I feel that my heart is drawn toward him, but I know I don't and can't know him as I would like to feel from the depths of my

heart. What is it to know Christ? Is it not life eternal? "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John 17:3. How is this knowledge brought about? Only by that blessed Comforter whom Jesus said the Father would send in my name and "He shall teach you all things." And Jesus says concerning this Comforter, "Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 14:17.

"Even the Spirit of Truth." We are surrounded with error, I mean religious errors. God's own testimony is that they "love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." John 3:19. Man, dead in trespasses and sins, loves religious error and while this darkness of error is hovering over them, how can they see any light? The Spirit alone can disperse the clouds and darkness of error and shine divine light into one's heart to give any true knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He is called the "Spirit of Truth" because it is his prerogative to unfold truth into the hearts and souls of the quickened children of God make them experimentally acquainted with it. Truth in the bare letter brings no deliverance from the guilt, filth, love, power, and practice of sin. The work of the blessed "Spirit of Truth" is to take the truth of God and open it up, reveal, and make known, apply and seal it with power into the hearts and consciences of his people.

Have you ever felt at times a darkness pervading your soul, a gross darkness that you felt so that there

seemed to be no light and understanding at all? But remember it is spiritual light that makes you see and feel this darkness. You will groan and sigh beneath it, making you realize the need of the blessed "Spirit of Truth" to open up, apply, reveal and make known the truth to your soul. Thanks be unto God, there are times and seasons, when through his abundant mercy, He shines a spiritual light upon the word of Truth enabling you to read the Bible with enlightened eyes, and power and sweetness seems to run like a stream through every word softening your heart and filling your eyes with tears as the Truth of God shines into your understanding as bright as the noonday sun. You may wonder why anyone cannot read the Bible and see the covenant of grace revealed, the electing love of God, the deity of Christ, his eternal sonship, his atoning blood, the full salvation wrought out by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the regenerating work of the "Spirit of truth." But my dear ones, can you always feel this? Not unless it is opened up to you by the "Spirit of truth." He never teaches anything except the truth. He works truth and understanding into the hearts and consciences of his people without His power and teaching, we cannot of ourselves obtain spiritual truth. Truth would only come to us in word only, but He says: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." 1 Thess. 1:5.

"He will keep my words." I'm sure we all feel to fall far short of keeping His words. Do we search the scriptures and do we desire to live upon the truth the Lord hath spoken?

Do we prize His precious words of truth higher than anything else? Do we strive to keep them in our hearts? If our hearts are right, we will have a sincere desire to put them into practice by the grace of God. May we be blessed to say, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart; for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts." Jer. 15:16. You may err, you may make mistakes, and may commit sin; but the intent of your heart is to keep the words by the grace and strength of God. The gospel is the Word, and Christ is the gospel, it is called the gospel of Christ. Here is the gospel, and here is our lost soul: if the gospel is done away with, you are undone forever. Therefore, by the help of God we will keep the gospel, we will reject every teaching that contradicts the gospel. We should hate everything in our soul that is against the gospel. We should have a desire to turn away from every temptation that would turn us away from the gospel.

"And my Father will love him." How do we know anything of the Father's love? Because "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." When it pleases God to visit our heart with a felt sense of His love toward us, does it give joy to our hearts? Can we say, I believe that I love His precious truth? I believe I love the brethren? The Father has loved the elect with an everlasting love.

"And we will come unto him." God's people are drawn to come unto him. "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me." But the text says, "We will come unto him" meaning the

Father and Son will come unto him, unto us. There is no longer a bar between God and our soul. We may feel so sinful and weak that there is no way we can come unto Him; but He says, "We will come unto him." This should be a comforting message to us all. O, we may be very poor and living in a hut, but Jesus says, "we will come." We may be uneducated in worldly knowledge but "we will come." Do we know anything about His coming to us? Do we know Him as coming with His precious blood and applying it to our consciences until joy springs up in our hearts giving us a blessed hope that all our sins are forgiven? Have you ever felt the presence of Christ so strong in your heart that you wanted to take Jesus up in your arms, spiritually, as old Simeon did literally, and say with him: "Then took he him up in his arms and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Luke 2:28-30. Jesus reveals himself to His people by coming to them as he did the two disciples on the way to Emmaus.

"And make our abode with Him."

This, no doubt, is one of the sweetest of all, yet it is difficult to attempt to communicate it to your minds and hearts. God does not come to dwell with his enemies but his friends. My dear ones, if we have ever experienced his presence to some degree, it is because we are his friends and Jesus has laid his life down for us. "I lay down my life for my friends." God knows all about the man with whom he comes to live. They are His elect, given to Christ, saved by the blood of Christ, and quickened by the Holy Spirit. Therefore God knows by the

operation of the Holy Spirit and has purified and sanctified our hearts making them ready. To make his abode with us denotes habitation, for the saints are the dwelling places or temples of the living God, Father, Son and Spirit; not as a wayfaring man, but always, though this may not always be felt by believers, yet, it is a wonderful demonstration of His grace and mercy for God to condescend to dwell on earth with sinful man. A man without the indwelling of God is like a bush in Hareb when it was only a bush; but when the bush burned with fire yet was not consumed. The Lord brings a taste of heaven to you when He comes into your heart and you become rich beyond the intents of bliss. And, then it can be said: "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." John 17:26. The love I feel in my heart for you dear brethren, I trust, is shed abroad in my heart by the Spirit of Truth.

Please remember this poor sinner in your prayers.

Love,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

John 6: 68.

Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

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CHURCH OF OUR FAITH

If you have enjoyed knowing of the various Churches all over this Country, please help us by sending us a picture of your Church with a brief history, location, date and time of your meetings and the name of present pastor.

ARTICLES

*"We are saved by hope."
Romans viii. 24.*

What is the meaning of being saved by hope? It does not mean saved actually, but instrumentally; not saved as regards our eternal security, but as regards our experience of salvation. By hope we are instrumentally saved from despair, saved from turning our backs upon Christ and the gospel, saved from looking to any other Saviour, or any other salvation; and especially saved from making this world and this life our happiness and home, as "waiting patiently for what we see not," even "the redemption of our body." Now it is by hope that we hang upon and

cleave to Lord Jesus, and thus by this grace we abide in him. It is therefore spoken of as an "anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that which is within the veil." What holds the ship firm in the storm, and prevents it falling upon the rocks? The anchor. The ship abides firm as long as the anchor holds. So by hope the soul abides in Christ. He is within the veil; we are without, and it may be, tossed up and down on a sea of doubt and fear, distress and anxiety, and yet there is a bond of union between him and us firmer than the Atlantic Cable.

J.C. Philpot

LUKE XIII. 6-9.

We present some considerations concerning the words found in Luke xiii. 6-9. This Scripture narrates the parable of the fig tree, planted in a vineyard, which when the man who planted it came to it seeking fruit, and had found none, he commanded to be cut down as a thing which cumbered the ground, but the dresser of it entreated that it might be spared yet one year more, and if then it bore no fruit, it should be cut down. From many Scriptures we have no doubt that this relates to the Jewish nation and system. In the prophecy of Isaiah, fifth chapter, the Lord compares that nation to a vineyard, over which he had exercised great care, and upon which he had bestowed much labor, and in which he nevertheless found no fruit such as he had a right to expect to find. When he expected the ripe fruit he found only wild grapes. That is, he found perversity and rebellion, and all that was evil in his sight, rather than any good fruit. In Matthew xxi. 19, is recorded an incident in the life of our Savior, similar in its lessons to the parable of which we are especially speaking. The Lord found a fig tree on which was no fruit, when he and the disciples sought fruit, and the fig tree was cursed from that time. And so Jesus wept over Jerusalem, because of their rebellion and hardness of heart. And it is said that the gospel must first be preached unto the Jews, and then because they rejected it, the apostles were directed to turn unto the Gentiles. All these Scriptures do not at all imply that the Lord, who knows the end from the

beginning, is disappointed as men are disappointed, because of their insufficient knowledge of the future, but it shows forth the mercy and long-suffering of God to the unthankful and the froward. In every way the rebellion of man is set forth in the word. By all his dealings with the Jews, our God brings to light the depravity, iniquity and opposition of the human heart, to him and his will. Men could not say that the truth had not been set forth among them, or that the God of heaven had not declared his will plainly among them, or that space had not been given them for repentance, if indeed there were any possibility of repentance in them. If they continued in their wickedness, it was plainly revealed by all these things that it was because, though light had come into the world, men loved darkness rather than light. God dealt with Israel as a nation, as men would deal with the fig tree, but still they were but the degenerate plant of a strange vine, and all the outward cultivation which they had received in all their history, only made this to appear the more plainly. Grace was not in their hearts, they were not partakers of the divine life, real sorrow for sin they had never known, and therefore all that was done to them in the providence of God only served to bring out the fact that they were wholly evil, and that continually. Our God had spared Israel unto that generation, and in all their generations they had been filling up their cup of iniquity, that upon that generation might come all the righteous blood that they had shed in all the generations of their national history.

If indeed the grace of God had really been bestowed upon them, if his

Spirit had been really in their hearts, then the warnings, reproofs, admonitions, chastisements, and, on the other hand, the longsuffering and patience of the Lord would have had some effect upon them to produce repentance and a turning with confession to God, but that they were wholly a carnal people was made apparent by all the dealings of the Lord with them as a nation. According to the parable, they had been spared not one year, but many years. Read the fifth chapter of Isaiah.

The parable speaks not of the heartfelt dealings of God with his spiritual people who know him in the pardon of their sins, but of his providential dealings in judgment, with that unregenerate and stiff-necked people, which in the end culminated in their swift destruction as a nation. When the spiritual gospel came to them they had no place for it. When Jesus came as he did, an humble man of sorrows, they could not recognize him, and preferred Barabbas to the blessed Lord. The true heart that was in them spoke when they cried, Crucify! crucify him! and release unto us Barabbas. It had done no good to dig around the fig tree, and water and manure it. Had it been the right kind of a fig tree, all this would have produced good fruit. God's word does have effect upon the natural man, no matter how much religion he may profess. The Jews, with all their carnality and rebellion of heart against God, yet made great profession of being his, but their profession was as the wild vine, it never could lead to spiritual fruit which should be pleasing to God, and, as said before, all the dealings of God with them only served to make this the more manifest.

Perhaps our sister has been troubled lest she should be that barren fig tree. No doubt many of the Lord's humblest ones have often feared the same thing concerning themselves. Israel naturally never had any such fears; no outward nominal professor ever knows any such fears. The very moment that one begins to fear lest he or she be but a barren fig tree, having the profession without the fruit, that moment the evidence is plain that they are not mere nominal professors. The dead have not life enough to fear that they are dead; the living fear. The dead know not anything; the living know how weak and imperfect they are, they know how precious is the fruit of the Spirit, and so they greatly desire it, and because of this great desire arises the fear that it does not appear in them. Our sister, if she has such fears, need not fear. If indeed she has no such fears, she might well fear. This seems like a paradox, but it is only one among many Bible and spiritual paradoxes, which the people of God alone know.

Elder F.A. Chick

PSALMS LXXII. 16.

"There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth."

Sister Phoebe Horton, of Warwick, N.Y., has asked that we devote the editorial space of our family paper to an exposition of the above Scripture. It will doubtless appear to all who will read this Psalm that it has to do with Christ and the subjects of his kingdom. He is King of kings, of whom it is said, "He shall

judge the people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment." What he would do for his people and to their enemies is further enlarged upon in the Psalm. We quote a portion of what is said, as follows: "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. * * * He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust." His absolute rule over the whole earth, and the fact that he will be worshipped are further evidenced by the following: "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him."

In considering the text, we will divide it into three parts: (1) "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains." Whatever this signified, there is no question about it; it was most certain to be, for the mouth of the Lord had spoken it. Corn is known for its food properties: it is full of strength and substance. The concordance in the Bible which we have before us says there were eleven Hebrew words used for describing it in its different states. The world shall not stand long enough to exhaust the great variety that there is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Eleven of the original apostles testified of the wonderful things of Jesus, but neither they nor all who follow after shall ever

be able to tell the half. That he was the bread of life which came down from heaven, we have his own words to show: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."—John vi. 51. The text says, "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth," etc. An "handful" is not a large quantity, but rather a small portion. At the most, therefore, comparatively speaking, we actually know but little of the Christ in this life, either as to his sufferings or the glory which followed. He reminded one of the beloved disciples who could not watch one hour with him that the spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak. We do but taste the cup which he drank to the dregs. Earthen vessels are not capacitated to contain the fullness of the joy that will some day, we hope, be ours, hence it is said, "Now we see through a glass darkly." This "handful of corn" was to be "in the earth," and not on the earth. The seed which is imbedded in the earth can neither be blown away by the winds of doctrines of men nor destroyed by the fowls of the air: it will in due season come forth and bear fruit. Jesus did not come on the earth to offer salvation to all who would accept. The angel of the Lord who appeared unto Joseph said concerning Mary, "She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." We are told concerning him that he "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and

being found in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He came 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. His own words are, "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." Jesus, the blessed Son of God, was verily that corn of wheat which fell into the ground; it was he who was born of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. The fact that so-called learned men deny this truth only proves that He had hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes. Neither is this handful of corn said to be in the earth universally, as some would have us believe, but is declared to be in that part, or portion, of the earth referred to as "upon the top of the mountain." There is a definite number, known unto the Lord from before the foundation of the world, of the human race spoken of as a "chosen generation," and these are they whom God highly exalts and separates from the rest of the world by making of them a peculiar people, and they shall show forth his praise. Isaiah, by faith, saw the risen Christ coming from Edom, "with dyed garments from Bozrah," glorious in his apparel and traveling in the greatness of his strength. Bozrah means "sheepfold, which signifies that Jesus was made like unto his brethren in all things except that he was without sin. The Word verily 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, is the testimony of the inspired apostle, John. Whatever knowledge we may have of Jesus today, regardless of its limitations, is that which has been made known unto us by the workings of God's mighty power. He writes his law in the inward part, even the heart of his people, and, therefore, they cannot be moved.

(2) "The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." Lebanon, with its high and lofty snow-capped peaks, and its wonderful cedars, was full of significance. Her cedars were evergreen, implying eternal life, and they received their refreshing from the pure waters on high. True, they were accustomed to the penetrating icy winds from the north country, nevertheless they endured, being sustained and kept by the power of him who held the winds in the hollow of his fists. These were typical of the trees "upon the top of the mountains" among whom the Lord of glory dwells. Ezekiel took up that line of thought, and the Lord spoke by him, saying, "I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell." How remarkably this prefigured the coming of Christ through the house, or lineage, of David; his crucifixion, according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; his resurrection from the dead to

the pre-eminent position of being Lord of lords and King of kings. The fruits, or effects, of this have followed all down through the ages by the manifestation of his quickening power in raising sinners from their dead works to serve the true and living God. What a shaking there is when the wind of his Holy Spirit begins to blow upon the valley of dry bones. Truly, the dead are raised up, the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk and the poor have the gospel preached to them. God's children are well acquainted with the hardships and trials that are the lot of those who follow Jesus. The record is that this world was not a friend to him while here in the flesh, and neither is it to-day friendly towards those who contend for his principles, but they have the assurance that they shall be brought forth more than conquerors through him that loved them and gave himself for them.

(3) "And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." Who is it that shall flourish? They of the city. What city? Mount Zion, the city of God. The positive manner of the language employed makes it certain, both as to the fact and the extent to which they shall flourish. We can well imagine that we hear a great chorus going up all over the country, saying, We are all dried up, and there seems little or no life in us. Notwithstanding this, we are persuaded that our text speaks the truth when it says, "They of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." Many of us know how perfectly natural it is for the earth to bring forth grass. It seems to be a fixed trait of mother nature to cover her footstool with grass after the passing of winter; it comes forth abundantly almost uni-

versally, and not only without the assistance of mankind in great areas, but in spite of all that man can do to prevent it in many places. It is just as natural for the "new creature" to flourish by the rivers of the water of life, for when one is born of the Spirit, that life which is imparted unto him is as certain to hunger and thirst after righteousness as the sparks are to fly upward, or that water is to seek its own level. That which is counterfeit will not satisfy the cravings of such living souls, and they will be found fighting the good fight of faith. Such characters know how the grass flourishes in the earth and that it can bring forth nothing good. They become absolutely convinced that nature's barren soil cannot produce spiritual fruit, therefore, they cry unto the Lord. When the Lord is pleased to answer their prayers they are witnesses to the fact that the desert is made to blossom as the rose. What wonderful music there is when the barren are made to break forth into singing, when their hands are loosed and they are brought on Pisgah's top to view the wonders of God's redeeming love. One of the poets described some of the wonders of this city in the following lines:

*"Zion's a city God hath blessed
With peace and everlasting rest;
A glorious city, strong and fair,
And Jesus dwells forever there.*

*Her ancient wall appear to be
The workmanship of Deity;
Founded in grace, they still appear
Without a flaw or chasm there.*

*Oft has this city's strength been tried,
By mighty foes on every side;
But all in vain it yet has been,
She baffles Satan, hell and sin.*

*Count ye her towers, how high they rise,
Her golden spires, they pierce the skies;
Her golden streets are fair to view,
Her palaces and bulwarks, too.*

*Then round her walk, her turrets tell,
Mark all her brazen bulwarks well;
Spread far and wide her deathless fame,
Her pearly gates and walls of flame.*

*Her founder's love has ever proved,
Like Salem's mount, which ne'er was moved,
'Tis fixed on this eternal base,
The grace of God, and gift by grace."*

This city, then, shall flourish like the grass of the earth, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. If we have been given a good hope, through grace, in the mercy of God and can, by faith, behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, we are, indeed, the most wonderfully blest of all peoples on the face of the earth. Let us, therefore, lift up our voices, as much as in us is, in songs of sublime adoration and praise and extol the great Ancient of days for his rich and distinguishing grace.

Elder R. Lester Dodson

Dear Editors:—I was born in Randolph County, North Carolina, on the nineteenth day of September, 1854. Before I was two years old my parents, W.F. and Massah Trogdon, moved to Surry County, North Carolina. I will state a little occurrence that came to me while living in Surry. Father and mother carried me to Grassy Knob schoolhouse, where there was preaching. I was not more that two years of age. Since my infant days, I have never remembered anything that occurred that day except what I here relate. I

suppose mother was out of the house with me. The first that has ever been in my memory, we were walking up the aisle to our seats, I looked up in mother's face and saw the tears running down her cheeks; I thought she was crying and wondered what was the matter with her. My eyes were at once directed to Austin Cassell, who was preaching. He was standing with one hand raised and his eyes glancing upward. He had a lovely appearance to me. A pleasant solemnity of feeling came over me which I cannot express. I have thought it might be my inquiry of mind about mother was answered in this way, that my heart was pervaded with the pleasant feeling which my mother was enjoying. The above made such an impression on my heart that, as my parents said, soon after this meeting, while suffering from a bad burn, I cried for them to send for Austin Cassell. I have always remembered this little incident related, and leave it for what it is worth.

Before I was five years old father moved his family back to Randolph County, where I have spent the greater part of my life. When I was very young a heavy burden came upon me concerning death. It seemed to me if, up to this time, I had possessed any knowledge of the Supreme Ruler, or his protecting hand that saves us from the many dangers which we daily pass through, that such knowledge was entirely absent at this time. If it had been possible to have been placed in a world where everything was by chance, the reality and horrors of such a world could not have been more vivid to me than in the picture which was before me day and night when awake. All the dangerous

diseases, the bites of poisonous living creatures, the many so-called accidents, etc., seemed to be presented to me at once. Such questions as these came into my mind: Why did I, or anyone, escape one danger in the midst of so many? Why was there a world with a people liable to be taken by death any moment? Why were the people at ease while I was so miserable? Go where I might, or do what I would, the burden was with me. At morn I wished for the night, at night I wished for the morning, hoping that when I fell asleep all my burden might be lost and I awake without it. But sleepless hours must be passed in the most miserable condition, with the many dangers before me in which life might be suddenly taken, and no way of escape, except as chance might appear favorable. How little did the thread of this dependence appear, for if escape came one moment death might come the next. Instead of losing this burden in sleep, as I often hoped, as soon as I awoke all met me with the same force as before sleep came to my eyes. Deep as was this trouble, I cannot exactly tell just how or when it left me, but it seems to me the power of an unseen hand over all things could not have been more manifest that it was to me after the experience I had just passed through. When I became a sufficient reader to read my father's pocket Testament I read it more than anything else. Much of my learning to read was from reading the Testament, my mother pronouncing words for me when I failed to. I had no deep conviction of sin, yet there were struggles of mind to live a better life, which were met with disappointment in every effort. I remember one evening, while reading the

Testament, I arrived at perfection in my imagination. I thought, Yes, I am reading the Bible. I will do nothing wrong; no, not so much as to give mother a cross word. While in this muse, I was suddenly surprised to find myself grumbling and resisting her wishes. What a shock! My vow was broken before my book was laid down. I cannot give dates, but what I am stating are incidents during childhood. Of a truth the time is not in my memory when I did not have serious thoughts. One of the things sacred in my memory of childhood days is of my parents often engaging in reading, singing and prayer before they retired. When it was apparent that father was about to omit the service, I would get his books, without a word, and go softly towards him. He would look up so humbly at me, reaching out his hand for the books. That look I shall never forget. Why it was I cannot tell, but I loved the services and loved to fall on my knees with my parents. During my youthful days I had such knowledge of an all-wise, powerful One that I often stole away to some secret place to ask for deliverance from some sorrow of our family, which all, as creatures of time, are heir to. Although I often felt that it was in his power to grant or deny, and if he did I had nowhere else to go. As I grew, with all my anxieties and serious thoughts, I felt that the God that ruled must perform all the work for the sinner; I felt to be helpless and seemed as one waiting. At one time I decided to try praying once a day, thinking that would make a change in my condition. I attempted three evenings in succession. I do not remember the words I uttered, but oh the dry formality seemed unbearable.

I hungered for that I did not receive. Thus I left off. I was then twelve or thirteen years old, and can say my soul was much exercised for years, having experiences too tedious to mention. I well remember hearing my mother telling how precious the Savior was to her and of her love for him. The inquiry arose in my heart, Can you say what your mother says? Do you love him? It seemed there was the greatest darkness in me. I sighed over my wretched condition. I mention this because of the difference between then and now. Although I did not have the deep convictions of sin I afterwards had, yet I was miserable much of the time, but could not tell why. But in my early years it seemed to me there was a lesson in what I passed through, and I was being led by the unseen Hand to realize what a seat of corruption my heart was, and that I was lost without the mercy of God. I remember reading the Bible through in my eighteenth year, thinking to do this every year thereafter. I read it through again the next year, but the day I finished it I closed the book with a heavy heart, and thought, If my feelings remain as dark as now I can never read it again. The book seemed perfectly sealed to me. The fourth Sunday in May, 1873, I went to Sandy Creek Church, this being the day for communion. Elder S. J. Lackey was present, but I found nothing in his preaching. As he broke the bread and poured the wine the deep solemnity of his countenance, how can I ever forget it? I was a poor, wretched sinner, without hope or God in the world. I broke down in tears. It seemed I could not leave without speaking to Elder Lackey, but was too miserable to approach him. As we started home father turned aside to bid him fare-

well. Much as I desired to go to him I could not, and stopped some distance away, when father said, Here is my daughter, she wants to speak to you. How father knew it I could not tell, for I had not uttered a word regarding my wish. When the minister took my hand the tears ran down my cheeks and I turned hastily away, at which he said to me, Choose that good part that Mary chose. Twelve months rolled on without any manifestation of Jesus as my Savior, but oh the searchings as to whether my exercises of soul were those of a poor sinner under the special dealings of God. It seems to me I would have been willing to have suffered the most horrible tortures of grief if I could have believed it to be God's work. With all, it seemed to me my condition was altogether outside of anything else that had ever been. I felt there was more hope for the worst criminal on earth than there was for me. How well do I remember the place I resorted to during the last months of bondage and tried to pour out my soul to God. One evening when I failed to eat supper my mother seemed so worried that I left the house crying, feeling that if mother knew my condition she would not wonder at my failure to eat. Truly I could have said with one of old, There is no sorrow like my sorrow.

On Monday morning, June 6th, 1874, I started to work at some distance from the house, and as I came to a short descent into a narrow valley my burden left me. I saw no wonderful vision, neither were there words sounded to me as many have expressed, but it seemed there was a vivid manifestation of a release from fetters, and I was given hope which has never at any time since been entirely gone, but has been, and is,

more precious than anything else besides. When my burden left me I cried out in these words: "Glory to God be given, glory to God in the highest." If I said other than these words it is not in my memory, but I repeated them over and over. Had I been in the presence of many, it seems to me I could not have refrained from speaking aloud, but I was alone. I thought when I went home to dinner to tell mother my joy, but I did not. It was not from any suggestion of fear, but mother's mind was so much on her work that I thought it best to wait until some other time. I returned to my work for the afternoon, and about two o'clock a suggestion of fear that I might be mistaken came to me. It came as a cloud passing over the sun, with the exception that the day was one of joy until about sunset. The sun shone with a mildness I had never seen before, and all things seemed calm and serene. But when the evening came my heart was filled with fear that I was deceived. I sought a place and asked the Lord that if I was deceived he would make it know to me. While on my knees my attention was called to the fact of the difference in my petition now and what it had been before. I knew there had been some kind of a change, but oh was it what I so much desired? I passed some months with this load of fear, but did not feel the binding of such fetters as I had for so long felt previous to the morning of that June day. Oh such a cloud of fear hung over me for months! One day I opened to the hymn beginning, "Now begin the heavenly theme; sing aloud in Jesus' name." When I read the hymn my heart was at once filled with the sweetness of the theme which was

with me on that beautiful June day. Oh the words, "Redeeming love, redeeming love!" I read again and again the words. There was a sound in them most precious, and has been lastingly precious, and, if not deceived in the whole matter, it seems to me will ever be. He hath "delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us," for "his mercy endureth for ever." How precious are these words to the poor sinner who hopes that mercy has been once bestowed and his inward groanings are still for it.

Long before I had a hope I thought that when one was given hope in the mercy of God that one ceased to cry for mercy. How ignorant! For of a truth the saint never ceases to need his mercy, for which there will be the cry. It seems to me that no words are more expressive of inward groanings than Lord, have mercy on a vile sinner, for it is only with the realization of being a hateful sinner that one approaches the throne of holiness for mercy. "In his light," we know that God, in justice, might have banished all forever, but love embraced a remnant when as culprits all were bound in fetters. I love to linger here, but must try to return to my story.

I remained out of the church nearly four years after receiving a hope, but I much desired all the time to be there. The imperfections of the brethren never came before me as a hindrance to asking a home among them, for my own too far outweighed for that.

I must pass on to the nearing of the time of uniting with the church. I became much afflicted in the natural life. Father moved very near Old Mount Tabor Church. Only a few gathered at their meetings. The association of the

young and gay rabble had no charms for me; when I went to meeting my mind was with the little band that met. Often have I listened to the pastor, Atlas J. Gilbert, when he was engaged in the most impressive prayer, it seemed to me, and wished his prayers could embrace me among them. But I felt cut off, for I could not come forth. It seemed I must talk to mother and see what she thought of me. One night when we were alone I told her of my desire to go to the church. She said she could give me her hand without hearing me tell anything. That left me in a worse condition than ever, fearing she might be deceived. So my mouth was closed, and remained closed until I went to the church. Just one month before I went and asked a home there I was at their meeting, and as the benediction was pronounced the words "Closed forever," seemed to be spoken to me. Although I did not hear an audible voice, if I had been struck by some one the shock would not have been more clear. Weeping, I immediately left the house. That was not my habit, for I usually remained in the house after service until all went out. I loved to hear the members talk, and to get the hand of each, whether I spoke a word to them or they to me, and so I still remained. As I walked out of the house I thought to go home at once. A second thought came that it would be less noticeable if I took a seat by the side of the house until all came out, and so I did. I pondered these words all the way home, and the month following, having no thought I should ever be present again when the opportunity for membership would be given. The words were too distinctly spoken, it seemed to me. As next conference meeting was nearing my

health was better than usual, the weather was fine, and every indication was that I might go. The morning came, and more of the brethren than usual came on and joined us. All seemed cheerful and happy, but I thought that without doubt something unknown to the church would come in that day and hinder the church from giving the opportunity to join. As I have stated, I could not think I should ever witness this again, but when conference was assembled peace seemed to reign and the opportunity was given for members. I could not stay away. I wondered why it was I could be received on the little I expressed, but all seemed to welcome me. One brother as he gave me his hand said, The Lord has not hidden this thing from me. The pastor was not present at this meeting. The infirmities of age and distance of ten miles hindered him from being with us, but a deacon often went forward in holding conference, which he did at this meeting. I expressed a wish that Elder S.J. Lackey baptize me, and thus my baptism was deferred some months. Circumstances were such it was decided to wait no longer, and this was agreeable to my feelings, for I became so anxious for the day to come that choice was entirely taken away, just so it was one approved of the church. I have wondered if this choice, which is expressed by others, is not of the flesh. One thing, it seems to me, is true, that in the Spirit a perfect oneness exists in all things, and if the Spirit is not present the flesh is in exercise, which is always condemned. But He remembers that we are but dust; He remembers and pities us when we sin. When the morning came for me to be baptized I had a peculiar feeling. It seemed as if

there was to be an end in some sense, as I thought I was going to my own burial, yet feeling some kind of pleasantness in the thought I was eager for the hour to come. It was in the year 1878 that my lot was cast with the Lord's people, and though my trials, tremblings and fears have not been few, that home is still dear to me.

SARAH M. LAMBERT

This dear sister was one of the most graciously taught of the Lord that it was my sacred pleasure to be brought into spiritual intimacy with. All my remembrances of her afford me blessedness of heart, and praises to the Lord. She departed this life May 22nd, 1934, aged 79 years, 8 months and 3 days. She was married in June, 1882, to Thomas Lambert, who preceded her to the "better country, that is, an heavenly" (Heb. xi. 16) over a year ago. Six children were born to this union, two of whom died in early childhood. The youngest daughter lost her life more than twelve years ago in Washington, D. C. One daughter, Massa Esther Lambert, and two sons, M.T. and L.B. Lambert, survive their beloved mother.

FREDERICK W. KEENE

FIERY TRIALS

"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 are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."

The above Scripture may be found in the fourth chapter of first Peter, verses twelve, thirteen and fourteen. Those whom Peter was here addressing he called the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, calling them the elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. This peculiar and strange people are still scattered among all nations, tribes and tongues, and are the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, and none are called in any other way, and are still being addressed through the same kind of message now as then, but in order for them to hear and to understand this message the deaf ear must be unstopped and the blind eye must be opened and they must be given spiritual ears and spiritual eyes, as these things are not taught of men, they are spiritually discerned.

Jesus, speaking through the psalmist David, has said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." And when John saw a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, and all the angels stood

round about the throne and about the elders, and one of the elders said unto John, What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? John said unto him, Sir, thou knowest, and the elder answered, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. And again, in Isaiah xlviii. 9, 10, God in speaking to Israel, said, "For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." He spake to every child of grace which makes up the mystical body of Christ, the church of the living God. This was the multitude which John saw and which no man could number which stood before the throne arrayed in white robes. It is in the furnace of affliction that every member of this body is chosen and refined, consuming the dross of self-righteousness, and purifying their hearts and kindling that love for one another which Jesus mentioned when he said, "A new commandment I give unto thee, That ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love, one to another." It was through this love that he died upon the cross, and although he was the only begotten Son of the Father the bitterness of that suffering and death was so great that he felt forsaken of the Father, and cried out in the deepest anguish of soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is declared in Isaiah liii. 7, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so openeth he not his mouth," and if we would take up our cross and

follow him we must pass through these sore trials, and it is through these that we are all refined and brought out of great tribulation. For he saith, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." But if we are born of God we are made willing to endure all these things for his name's sake. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" And though you are chosen in the furnace of affliction, he has spoken through the poet these comforting words,

*"When through fiery trials
thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient,
shall be thy supply;
The flames will not hurt thee,
I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy
gold to refine."*

After Christ passed through that agonizing death upon the cross and was laid in Joseph's new tomb, and a great stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre and sealed and a watch was set there lest his disciples come and steal him away by night, there was a great earthquake and an angel of god descended from heaven and rolled away the stone, and the keepers did shake and became as dead men, and Jesus arose and came forth from the tomb and the tomb and the graveclothes alone were left, and the napkin which covered his face was folded and laid in a clean place. He thus triumphed over death, hell and the grave and sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high, where he ever liveth to make intercession for his people, and the glory which is his transcends all and is a recompense for all the reproach, all the anguish in the garden of Gethsemane, when his

sweat, like great drops of blood, was falling down to the ground. All the terrible decree at Pilate's bar, all the burden of the cross and of being denied by Peter and forsaken by his other disciples, all the pain and anguish of the crown of thorns, and the great nails in his hands and feet, and at last the cruel thrust of the spear in his side from which flowed the water and the blood, mentioned by the poet in that immortal hymn,

*"Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."*

That crimson flood has been and is the double cure of sin, for it was shed as a ransom to take away forever the sting of death, which in sin, and to redeem his people from its curse. His life on earth was not spent in bearing his own cross alone, but also the cross of others who were drawn unto him in the great service which he rendered. Not unto the rich and the mighty, but unto the lame and the halt and the blind, or we may truthfully say unto the sick, the spiritually sick, for the well need not a physician. Thus we also follow after him when bearing the burden or the cross of others, for in Galatians vi. 1,2, he says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." And again, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And though we are called to pass through sore trials for his name's sake let us not fear, for "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." And, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us 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." Therefore, "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 are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Dear editors, I have made a feeble attempt to write the foregoing article at the request of a very dear afflicted friend of our family, and if it has your esteemed approval and you can find space for it in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES without crowding out other writings which might redound more to the glory of God, and more to the comfort of his dear saints, I shall be glad to have you publish it at your convenience.

Very sincerely,
Alfred E. Titus

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

IT IS WELL.

(2 KINGS IV. 26.)

From many points of view, we are living in a marvelous age. Mankind has encircled the globe. He has gone both to the top and the bottom of the world. He has ascended

high up into the stratosphere and at last looked down upon the lofty peak of Mt. Everest, the highest of mountains; he has also descended into the depths of the sea. It would seem as though it could almost be truly said he has conquered the universe. Likewise, he has made a lot of wonderful discoveries and wrought out many ingenious inventions. His methods of travel over the world and communicating with its peoples, startle the imagination. He speaks and his voice is heard in the twinkling of an eye from east to west and north and south. With all of his accomplishments, it would seem that the world should become a better place in which to live. But, What are the facts and where do we find ourselves? Perhaps at no time since the human race began has the world at large been more seriously upset or more sorely tried than has been the case during the last half decade. The very foundations of governments have either been completely destroyed or mightily shaken. Kings have been both enthroned and dethroned. Rulers become bewildered and swept from their moorings. The wisdom of great statesmen has been utterly confounded. So-called peers in all walks of life have stood as wooden men, without the power to think or act. Earthly fortunes, both great and small, have either been swept away entirely or so greatly diminished that the shock and distress which have followed in their wake have made human wrecks by the millions. Suffering has been on such a wide scale throughout the earth that there is probably not a single nation in the whole world of which it can be truthfully said that "all is well." One may well ask, What is

wrong and why cannot some golden rule method be worked out whereby all of the brotherhood of mankind can share and enjoy more equitably the blessings of this life? The Master would no doubt answer this by saying, That which is born of the flesh is flesh, meaning, as we would interpret it, that it is altogether corrupt and there is no soundness in it at all. Greed and selfishness are rampant everywhere. Dishonesty has seemingly worked as leaven among those in authority, both in high and low places, in governments of all kinds, Federal, State, County, City, and throughout the rural districts, until there is little semblance of honor and uprightness left. That "the love of money is the root of all evil," is as true to-day as in any age of the world, and if one rises up with courage enough to attempt to blaze an "honest trail" he is laughed to scorn by many whose hearts are full of evil. If some measure of success is made by way of advancing decency to the fore and the powers of wickedness are compelled to recede for a short season, like the tide which goes out to sea, they will in due time return with even greater force and determination to gain their selfish ends. In our humble opinion, there is absolutely no hope of the world ever becoming better permanently. There will always be wars and rumors of wars. Nature is essentially corrupt, and though, like the slumbering volcano, it may appear to sleep for awhile, it will be found to be only accumulating its mass of putrefaction until the day of eruption, when it must be thrown off again.

Those who are taught of the Lord know that in the flesh there dwells no good thing. This world is not their home. They are only pilgrims here,

journeying to a better country. It is such characters as these whom we would like to have accompany us back to the scene in the narrative from which the words, "It is well," are taken. It may be that a view of the surroundings will enable us to find some nuggets of spiritual gold hidden beneath the surface, or letter of the word, among the things which were written aforetime for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

The fourth chapter of second Kings opens with the account of the creditor of a certain widow woman coming and taking her two sons as bondmen, and her appeal to Elisha, the man of God. He inquired of her what she had in the house, and she said, "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil." He told her to "Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel: and he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God: and he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest." There is something significant and beautiful typified in the pot of oil and the fact that the door was to be shut upon her and upon her sons while it was being poured into the empty vessels. God's work of grace in the heart of a poor sinner, empty and

void of all that is good, is carried on in secret, and the Egyptians or unregenerate who are without the house, cannot look upon what is taking place. When the vessels were all filled, the oil stayed—nothing was wasted or lost, yet there was ample to satisfy the creditor, to pay the debt in full, and still sufficient to live on ever afterward.

We are told that the above incident fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a "great woman," and that she constrained him to eat bread. "And so it was, that, as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread." Here is seen the communion and fellowship of saints. She perceived the prophet to be an holy man of God, and proposed to her husband that they make "a little chamber," and put it on the wall; and set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: "and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. She was only showing her faith by her works. She was manifesting the great love which she had for the servant of God, and he in turn when he came was mindful of her. How could he have been otherwise? He commanded his servant, Gehazi, to "call this Shunammite." And when she stood before him, she was asked what was to be done for her. Should she be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host. She replied, "I dwell among mine own people." She was of that peculiar people referred to as a chosen generation. It was she who had been sent for to comfort king David in his old age, hence Gehazi answered his master, "Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old." According to nature, she could not even hope for a son by her husband, but the prophet

said unto her, At this season, when the time cometh round, thou shalt embrace a son. It was even as the man of God told her, but when the child was grown he was taken sick and died. How distressing! Again she desired to be comforted of God by his servant, and she besought her husband to send with her one of the servants that she might go to the man of God. Her husband said to her, "Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon nor sabbath." She said, "It is well." What wonderful faith. Of a truth, she was a spiritual worshipper; not a legal one. She had no confidence in new moons nor holy days, but believed that God was a present help in trouble. She could not wait for the time set by men; her's was an urgent case, and she made haste to go, saying to her servant, "Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee. So she went, and came unto the man of God to Carmel." The man of God beheld her afar off. There was no mistaking who she was. He said to Gehazi, his servant, "Behold, yonder is that Shunammite; run now, I pray thee, to meet her; and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with thy child? He knew she was a woman of sorrows and acquainted with grief; therefore, he commanded his servant to "run," or make haste, to help her, and that right early. Even to be inquired of by the man of God was comforting to her. "Behold, yonder is that Shunammite." What did he see in the Shunammite? He saw as it were the company of two armies; he saw the flesh and the Spirit waging their warfare; yea, he saw the struggle of faith in one who was torn apart and helpless. What a great mercy that the God of all grace should call, qualify

and send his servants to feed the flock which he hath purchased with his own blood, and that they should be sent into the byways and hedges to hunt and fish them and then speak comfortably unto them. We hope we have some knowledge of what is meant by hunting and fishing the elect of God, and how wonderfully good it is to find even one. It is worth going to the very ends of the earth.

The Shunammite was spoken of in the outset as being a "great woman." She represents none other than the gospel bride, the Lamb's wife. Her first husband was old, typifying the law, and her only son, or all that she possessed under the law, was dead; therefore she could answer the question of faith, "Is It Well?"—notwithstanding her great grief—by the same faith and she could and did truthfully say, "It Is Well." As we consider this case our mind appears to enlarge itself and go out to the untold millions of God's people, each one having his or her own particular burden to bear, and yet in the realization of the fact that Christ Jesus came into the world to suffer, bleed and die in their stead, they can repeat, "It Is Well."

What an infinite variety of problems there are confronting the people of God. No doubt, many are deeply concerned to-day, and rightly so, over the condition to the churches throughout the country. In some instances things are creeping in which ought not to be allowed to disturb the peace of Zion. Differences of opinions over points of doctrine are doubtless being agitated and magnified to the detriment of the cause. On the other hand, there is a sad lack of forbearance among good brethren. There should be a provoking of one another unto love. There are also many difficult situations con-

stantly arising in all walks of life which bewilder and bring the people to their wit's end. Some may be without employment and with a scant provision for the necessities of life, possibly at poverty's door; and those who are employed or in business know of the dangers which lurk about them. The housewife and those in the home are by no means exempt from the anxieties and cares of what is going on, and sometimes they may even be bearing the very brunt of the burden. Not all of the Lord's people are blest with believing or sympathetic companions or friends, and some may even be unbearably hostile. There may be parents whose hearts are breaking on account of wayward children. Others may have bodily afflictions from which there is little hope of recovery. The cold and seemingly cruel hand of death has doubtless stalked into the home of some and taken their dearest earthly prop from beneath them. Old age may have brought you, dear reader, to the place where "father time" stands with his sharpened sythe, ready to reap you into the harvest, but regardless of all these, and more, if we can but have faith to believe that God is still in his holy temple and that the Judge of the whole earth can do no wrong, we shall still be able to say, It is well. This is only saying, in effect, what Jesus said in the garden of Gethsemane: Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done. David was enabled to say, Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. It matters not, then, what the circumstances of our own individual case may be, if God be for us, who can be against us? and, therefore, It is well.

*"It shall be well, let Zion know,
With those who love the Lord;
His saints have always found it so
When resting on his word.*

*Peace, then, ye chastened sons of God,
Why let your sorrows swell?
Wisdom directs our Father's rod—
His word says, it is well.*

*Though you may trials sharp endure,
From sin, or death, or hell;
Your heavenly Father's love is sure,
And, therefore, it is well.*

*Soon will your sorrows all be o'er,
And you shall sweetly tell,
On heaven's calm and pleasant shore,
That all at last is well."*

Elder R. Lester Dodson

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR DECEMBER 1986

Eld. David Bailey, WV.....	5.00
Eld. John C. Townley, AR.	2.00
Harry B. Cannaday, VA.....	2.00
Mrs. Vavenia Biggs, TN.....	7.00
Victor H. Laws, MD.....	32.00
Mrs. Ruth S. Wall, TX.....	2.00
Buford Thompson, VA.....	2.00
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Charles Alders, TX.....	7.00
Mrs. Mattie Underwood, VA ...	15.00
J. Cline Chandler, NC.....	5.00

 OBITUARIES

ARTHUR OSCAR PICKRAL

Brother Arthur O. Pickral was born July 23rd, 1918. He was the son of the late David Wade Pickral and Hester McClannahan Pickral. He passed from this life October 19, 1986. His gentle manner and humble character made him dear to his Brethren and friends.

Brother Arthur was a very faithful member of Springfield Primitive Baptist Church, Gretna, Virginia. He was received by experience and baptism, September 14, 1952. Brother Arthur wasn't ashamed of his love for his God, nor his love for his Brethren.

He is survived by his wife, Belle Rowland; four daughters: Elaine Gibson, Gretna; Vivian Dawson, Hurt; Brenda Rowland of Long Island, Virginia and Donna Clemmons of Los Vegas, Nevada. One brother; R. Turner Pickral, Danville, Virginia; four sisters; Mrs. Ida Hamlette, Mrs. Ola Crawley, Mrs. Laura McMinnis and Mrs. Minnie Hedrick all of Gretna, Virginia. Eight grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted at Springfield Primitive Baptist Church by his beloved pastor; Elder O.K. Tench and Elder Denver Simpson. His burial was in the Gretna Burial Park.

May we be given to feel our loss is his eternal gain.

Written in love and hope,
by Sister Carol R. Pickral

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

SISTER FRANCES MITCHELL

We again must bow in humble submission to God's will in removing from our midst Sister Frances Mitchell. I had a special admiration for this gracious lady since she taught me in the third grade, and long before either of us were members of Malmaison Church. Appropriately sung at her funeral were Amazing Grace and Father We Will Rest in Thy Love. When God has blessed one to know his amazing grace and knows His grace will be sufficient for them in life and death, it is truly a blessing. I believe Sister Mitchell had experienced this and is now indeed resting in God's love. She united with Malmaison Primitive Baptist Church June 7, 1964. She departed this life Oct. 13, 1986.

Left to mourn their loss are three children, Celia M. Branch, Charlottesville, Arthur L. Mitchell, Jr., Richmond and Clanners P. Mitchell, Pleasant Lake, Mich. One sister Ludie Hindley, Danville, eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Her funeral was conducted at Wrenn Yeatts Chapel by Elders O.K. Tench and Julian Williams. Interment was in the Boaze family cemetery.

May we be given thankful hearts that we could commune and fellowship together in this life and trust the grand promise "Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" shall be ours forever.

Submitted by one who loved her
I hope for Christ sake,
Peggy Wells

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Route 1, Box 65 Keeling, Virginia 24566

HYMN

*I LOVE to steal awhile away
From every cumbering care,
And spend the hours of setting day
In humble, grateful prayer.*

*I love in solitude to shed
The penitential tear,
And all his promises to plead
Where none but God can hear.*

*I love to think on mercies past,
And future good implore,
And all my cares and sorrows cast
On him whom I adore.*

*I love by faith to take a view
Of brighter scenes in heaven;
The prospect doth my strength renew,
While here by tempest driven.*

*Thus, when life's toilsome day is o'er,
May its departing ray
Be calm as this impressive hour,
And lead to endless day.*

Mrs. Brown

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EDITORIAL

If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Faith in God has been the basic characteristic that is manifested in the lives of the elect of God in all ages of time. It is evidenced in the writings and experiences of the prophets of old who lived in the law dispensation and is the primary factor as recorded in the lives and actions of those who

left a trail of their travels, thoughts and deeds in the early days of the gospel dispensation. Faith is the outward manifestation of the inward presence of the spirit of God in the heart of the believer in their walk, talk and manner in all of their dealings with their fellow man and especially amongst their brethren. It is a force that is stronger than the man in whom it dwells and it leads and directs him in ways and deeds that he couldn't and wouldn't do of himself. It is evident in all phases of his life and gives him convictions and understanding of God and heavenly things that he cannot explain to anyone except those who have come by the same pathway and they are all unanimous in saying that it is only by the mercy and grace of their creator. The only reason that they can give for this change and these new experiences is that it is the will of God. The above scripture states as simply, directly and to the point as only wisdom can the results produced by these sincere convictions and motivation of the three Hebrew children when they are put to the test on this occasion. They did not hesitate to answer the king in this matter even though it was something affecting their very lives and well being. They were stating the simple truth of their convictions and the scripture does not indicate that they had to consult one another for them to reach their decision. They said, "we are not careful to answer thee in this matter" which seems to indicate that they realized from whence the wisdom and courage of their answer came, as Jesus told his disciples on one occasion, "when they shall deliver you up before kings for a testimony, take no thought what ye shall say for it is not

you that speaketh but it shall be given you in the same hour what ye shall say." As the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind." It is the same spirit, power and sound mind that leads his children in this life and causes them, at the time appointed of the Father, to rise up and perform feats beyond the limits of the strength of the man or to stand in the face of dangers that they would not do of themselves and could not and would not do at any other time. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven" and when the season and the purpose are present the faith is given.

The scriptures are filled with such feats which those who were so inspired have done and the writers never leave any room for questions as to where the strength and purpose came from to accomplish them. In the first chapter of Daniel, 17vs. it is written, speaking of Daniel and the three Hebrew children, "As for these four children God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." This manifests the truth of the fact that these were prepared, of God, for a work that was to be done and therefore there was no possibility that it should fail to be performed to the glory of God. In the preparation was the ability, or power, to stand and declare the resolution that they had made with the full realization that, as far as they knew, it could result in their death, but, even this prospect did not cause them to waiver in their solemn stand on this issue. They realized that even though they die it was better

than that they worship any other god than Jehovah who created the world and everything that is therein. They could not serve any of the gods of this world because they knew full well the foolishness and the vanity that is involved there because they are nothing. They cannot walk, talk or act in anyway and actually are only the extension of the pride and vanity of man and exist only in his mind. They are subject to man and have no power other than that ascribed to them of their worshipers.

It seems that the makers of these gods would realize this lack of any wisdom or power of their own, yet, down through the ages, since the beginning of time millions of people have served them and are still doing so today. Man today will laugh at the foolishness of men in prior ages as they worshipped beasts, idols, sun, moon, etc. and yet they are just as foolish as their forefathers. The world is proclaiming long and loud, in every media available to them, that the creature must first originate the act of worship toward God, then, and only then, can God respond and bless them with his mercy and love. Of course, they maintain the idea that God loves all men alike and when one accepts him as their personal savior that he is then duty bound to respond and save them from their sins. They believe that he then assumes all their problems and blesses them continually as long as they obey him and walk according to his commandments. To my way of understanding this system does not include the grace of God toward the sinner but rather the grace of the sinner toward God in letting him come into their life. To me this is the same idol worship

that has been occupying the mind of man since time began. The Apostle Paul once wrote to Timothy, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Surely the doctrines as preached in most churches today are fulfilling this prophecy of Paul, since it bears no resemblance to the truth that is taught in the scriptures. In many services the only time the truth is present is in the reading of the text and then only if from a version of the scriptures that presents the truth as contained in the original manuscripts and scrolls. Their doctrine is of the flesh and is intended to appeal to the natural mind and senses. It is designed to encompass land and sea to make proselytes and when they do, they glory in their own works and efforts and render no praise unto God.

The faith set forth in the above declaration of the three Hebrew children is the heartfelt convictions of their heart and renders all honor and praise unto God. Their faith is that God whom they serve is able to deliver them from this or any other peril or affliction if it is his will to do so, but, if not they will still praise him by their death for his mercy and grace toward them. Their death would have been a very dramatic demonstration of this work of grace in their heart and their faith in the sovereign majesty of God and the power and wisdom of the spirit that was dwelling within their heart. This faith would fellowship Job who when he had lost all his possessions and children yet praised God and said, "What, shall we receive good at the hand of

God, and shall we not receive evil." This was said by Job in the midst of his trouble and manifested the deep seated faith in Job in the same way that the three Hebrew children's stand when facing the probability of immediate death was evidence of the depth of the same faith in their God, and their trusting his will better than their own opinion of their need and personal desire. These examples are faith in its most beautiful and inspiring light to those who are running a race that has been set before them and they do not know what all it will include. They fear that they may be called upon to stand on a certain issue and are fearful that they will not be able. Their prayer is that if required they will stand and respond as these did and knowing that of themselves they cannot. They stand in awe of the courage and stamina displayed by these saints of God and wonder if they could bear it. Yes, if called upon, and blessed with the abilities that these were in their time of trial. These could not have stood and made these precious declarations of their faith if they had not been inspired by the Holy Ghost according to the divine will and purpose of God who works all things according to his own will. His children can do all things through Christ which strengthens them, and this is the strength that shall never fail then or now.

Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. This is the motivating force in all the saints of God who have been blessed to leave on record experiences in which they were able to do things beyond the realm of fleshly wisdom and power. The hope of things not seen with the natural eye,

the evidence of which is planted in the very depths of their soul is more sure and certain to them than things that they can see and feel and yet they cannot prove their existence to their fellow man. This is the experience of Abraham who left his home and kindred and dwelt in a strange land and I am sure his friends thought this very foolish and yet because of this all future generations are blessed. Noah was thought by his peers to be crazy when he built an Ark for no apparent reason and yet he saved all of his family and provided for the future posterity of the world. Jacob used methods which to worldly standards were very unethical to secure the blessing of Isaac and yet this fulfilled the purpose of God as revealed to his mother before he was born. In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews the Apostle Paul relates how the heirs of promise have responded to this faith that hath been given them and then says that time would fail him to tell of all who down through the ages of time have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions and experienced all manner of deliverances from death and even suffered death and all types of afflictions through faith. If this has been the way of the redeemed since the beginning of time, and God changes not, then does that not mean that this is the way of salvation today. Faith is the gift of God, to a specific people, for a specific purpose and it shall not fail because of the weakness of the flesh. If it did, none of the above deed would have been done because all flesh is, was and shall ever be as grass and the goodness of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the

flower falleth away. It is the faith that is planted in the heart of man by the spirit that enables him to stand to fulfill that specific purpose for which it is given.

This precious faith which lives in the heart and soul of man who has been quickened is stronger than the one in whom it dwells and the bonds between them and others of like calling is stronger than any of the other ties and obligations of nature and will last longer than the world itself. It is ever new in the hearts of the elect and produces praise and adoration to the giver everytime that it is made manifest in their journey through this low ground of sin. It is just as inspiring and uplifting to the heart everytime they are blessed to remember these seasons in their own lives or to see it beginning to be manifested in the lives of another as they are brought into the fold. They rejoice and praise God and say as David did, "O' Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever." They are made to realize, and especially after long seasons of famine in their experience, that God is still on his throne and working all things after the counsel of his own will. They tend to forget this when left to themselves seemingly in a natural world, alien to the desires and hopes of their heart, and everything around them seems to ignore the things that are so precious to their soul, they wonder if they are possibly mistaken in their hope.

This has been the cry down through the ages, that they are alone, and the whole world is against them. Faith is not something that is proud and confident that it is right regardless of what others may say and do, but rather, a meek and lowly spirit that keeps

those that possess it in the way of righteousness in spite of their doubts and fears. Even as the kine that went lowing, looking neither to the right or the left, though their calves were tied in the barn they left all behind and proceeded to return the Ark to the land of Israel by the direction of the Lord. His saints are just as obedient to his will, whether they realize it or not, as the kine were. There is no glory or triumph for them in this life, they are but doing that which is their duty to do by inspiration, but the glory and triumph will be theirs when they reach that city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. Then they will know even as they are known and they will be made to see and realize the triumph, and from whence it came, even as they can now read the experience of the three Hebrew children and see the glory and triumph in their experience.

For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. This says it all, the individual is completely passive in the experience of faith as far as originating or controlling it. They are not passive regarding the results of it. They are anything but passive, "As an eagle stirreth up her nest" they are stirred up and their whole life is changed. They want to help but they don't know how, and couldn't anyway, but they are very active as far as emotions, desires and seeking after more evidence that this is indeed a work of grace. They read, talk, go anywhere that the subject of salvation by grace is discussed, and spend most of their time and energy following after the footsteps of the flock just yearning for assurance that they are in the way that leads to life eternal. They

will never receive the full assurance that they desire in this life but they are given an earnest expectation and this is the faith that will lead and direct them throughout their life and will keep them meek and humble among their brethren and this causes them to see their need of the fellowship and prayers of those who know, by experience lonely seasons when they feel forsaken by friends, family and especially when, at times, they wonder if they have been forsaken by their God. Through these experiences they change their lifestyles, their hopes and desires, and their brethren will see a change in their countenance and observe the new creature in Christ, and yet, their fear is that they do not have sufficient evidence to warrant a public confession of their faith or to speak to the church of their new found hope. Oh, that they could realize the extent of the great change that has occurred and know that this is the greatest evidence that they will have, in this life, that they are indeed children of the heavenly King.

This is the way of salvation, the highway where only the redeemed of the Lord are found, and it is a one-way throughfare. There are no exits, there are no accidents and the only destination is the City of New Jerusalem prepared of God for the habitation of the saints. The entire journey is by faith, the director of the journey is God, the certain assurance of a safe journey is the work of Christ, and the ones for whom all is done fearfully say, Lord is it I, and so say they all.

In bonds of love,
Richard H. Campbell

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH

Please help us by sending us a picture of your Church with a brief history, location, date and time of your meetings and the name of present pastor.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Members, Friends
and Brothers & Sisters:

Will try & write a few words on "Love" I don't feel like I am worthy to be loved or to be in the church for that matter. I'll be 77 years old this year and my husband will be 80 this year. We have been married 55 years and I know the Lord has wonderfully blessed us both with very good health and to raise four wonderful children. They are so good to us, help us every way they can and the four inlaws and grandchildren are the same way. I know the Lord has blessed them to love us and for us to love them. I certainly believe the Lord meant for all of his children to Love each other. Brother Spangler, Sister Spangler and Brother & Sister Barker visited us the summer before Brother Spangler passed away, he was sitting in our front yard and he looked at me and said Sister Smith I awoke the other night and I didn't have a ought against a sole in this world. I said Brother Spangler thats good and he started crying. I believe he meant it from the bottom of his heart. I believe it was his hearts desire for all of us church members to love each other.

He said he wanted so much to see my husband Robert Smith join the church before he passed away. Robert said the last Sunday that Brother Spangler was at Dan River that he hoped to join the church next 4th Sunday, but Brother Spangler wasn't able to be there. I believe he felt in his heart that Robert would join later, which he did. I just don't see how the Brothers & Sisters could help but love each other, my mother and daddy were members at Pleasant Grove Primitive Baptist Church. My mother used to say that she didn't hate no one, but she didn't like some peoples ways. Brother Standfield was her pastor and baptized my mother and daddy. When someone would say something about someone, Brother Standfield would say lets bear with the weak, when you have serious operations as I have had. The Lords voice speaks to you clear and loud and says fear not I am with you always even unto the end of the Earth. You will be made to love the Lord and all of his children everywhere. I don't love sin I hate it, but that doesn't mean I don't sin everyday I live. So I hope and pray that love and peace will be among us all the days of our life. I think he has well blessed us at Reidsville Church with a wonderful pastor Elder Paul Lamb and wife. We all love the other churches and hope to go and feel welcome. Sister Spangler is a lovely mother in Israel. May the Lord continue to bless us all in my prayers, for Christ sake. We love you all, thank the Lord for everything.

Love Sister Rena
and Robert Smith

Dear Elder Key,

I have a desire to write you about the good meeting we had at Long Branch over the past weekend. Long Branch was the only place that had a meeting because of the deep snow. Brother Amos Hash, my pastor, scraped the snow from the building, he also scraped it from Brother Parson's place. Lunch is prepared most every meeting and singing in the afternoon at Brother Parsons. Both places were heavenly places to be because I felt the Lord was there. Our visiting elders were Brothers Hale Terry, Larry Hollandsworth, Denver Simpson and Lane Carter. They, with Brother Amos, were wonderfully blessed to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified being the way, the life and the truth. Before I offered to the church I was shown Long Branch being my home church and Uncle Goode being my pastor and he baptized me. My mother and grandmother were members there. I was shown Brother Amos would follow Uncle Goode in the stand to preach, but I didn't tell him until after he was ordained. A while back I heard these words spoken to me "Oh Sinner Free" when Christ makes us free. We are free indeed. I could write on and on but don't want to be too lengthy.

Your little sister in
Christ Jesus I hope,
Hattie Radford

Dear Elder and Sister Key,

I have tried to write an article pertaining to my experience.

If it is found suitable, for publication in the Signs, you have my permission to do so. As you can very well see, I am not good at writing, but if there's anything, I may write, which will be comfort to any reader, I am willing to try. I have written several articles, but when I would read them, I would feel that the only place for this is the trash can. I was told by one of the associate editors to let you people decide where to put it.

We, the people of the Five Mile Creek Association, are looking forward to having you and Sister Key and others from your county to be with us during our three day union meeting. Please publish this meeting in the Signs. (See meeting notice in this issue.) Editors.

We will be looking for you lovely people on Thursday afternoon before the meeting.

A Brother and Sister
in Christ, we hope,
Bernard and Elsie

In the year of 1976, everything in my life began to change. I was in a state of deep depression and confusion. By a power beyond any control of man, I was drowning. The world seemed to have swallowed me, and I saw myself in the pit of hell. The things I once loved I now hated, there was no peace that I could find, and the things I once hated I now loved. I was in a condition where there was not anyone or anything to turn to. The world was spinning, and of all things there is, there was not anything secure. The things I saw in a dream during my sleep, is beyond words given to me to explain. If I could, I certainly would do so, for I feel, that

any person, given to see the things I saw, and to hear a voice say; "This is where you dwell, and there's no way out", that person would do as I did, and often do now. He would go down begging to the supreme power, the God of Heaven and of Earth. The experience I suffered can never be explained to another, by man, to where a person understands or believes. I certainly hope and pray to God, that there is an upper and better place prepared, for me. I know there is a Heaven and immortal glory for the children of God, chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world. The question is, am I one of those? Has God brought me to look toward thy Holy Temple and to look not to anything other for divine guidance? I cried by reason of my afflictions unto the Lord, and I pray His help and comfort remain with me. I hope, I was Baptized, by the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost and with fire in March 1977.

I do not know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the experience I suffered was the suffering of a new birth of the Spirit. I do not know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that I am a born again child of God. If I am, then it is for sure Heaven and Immortal Glory is my home.

I feel that it is good for me that the shadow remain with me. It is not good to me, but it is good for me. I feel that the shadow is a thorn in me to keep me buffeted. I hope that it is put there by the hand of God. It's a thorn which brings so much suffering within, and brings me to doubt. I sought the Lord then, and I seek Him now, to remove the thorn, but within there's a voice saying, "My Grace Is Sufficient For You". I sought God for help, I read the

Bible concerning Christ and His Kingdom, and the great miracles He performed when on this earth. The burden seemed to become heavier and more severe, until finally it became so great, I could no longer refrain from the communion with those whom God had before brought to look toward thy Holy Temple. In October 1977, my wife and I were planning to attend church service, and she said to me; "I am going to join the church at Dorsey's Creek today". You can do anything you want. This must have been the straw that broke the camel's back. I knew then I was compelled to do the same, to look toward the Holy Temple of God. My wife and I asked for a home at Dorsey's Creek, Church of Christ, Primitive faith and order. My dad, Elder H.C. Moon performed the water baptism sacrament. I hope we were baptized with water unto repentance, that Sunday afternoon. If I have ever been brought to look toward the Holy Temple of God, it was when I was put under the water. I do not know if something was left in the water or if something came out of the water with me. I do know, the first time in a year, I felt content and reconciled even though the shadow of doubt remained with me.

This caused me to search the scriptures, not knowing that when a child is baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, is when the teaching of God begins. As I would search the scriptures, the burden returned and seemed to be more severe than before. I felt that I was losing my mind, and feared that God had cast me out of his divine guidance. Yet, I believe I looked again toward the Holy Temple. There was no other place to turn or to look for help, for if God be for me, who

can be against me? Along with the burden, there was the voice inwardly saying; "I will show you what great things you must suffer for my name sake". This would bring to my mind all the years I lived in darkness, and all the terrible things I have done, dwelling in the pits of hell and enjoying it for several years. Now that the suffering had begun, and a lot of things considered, I feel that I can say from the heart, by experience, "just and right is He". Now, you must go forth proclaiming the hope and resurrection of the dead. I believe that the Spirit gave me to know, what a dreadful, and fearful place this is. I knew then, I was all alone, and there was no man that could help me. All help must be given by the Grace of God in His divine leadership.

The first thing that came to my mind was and is; I cannot perform in the ministry of God, I am in no way prepared to do so, and this is completely out of the question. I am in worse shape that the people whom I am to preach to. I don't know anything. I don't know what to say or what to do. I do not have any experience as a public speaker, but yet, I am compelled to go in the presence of the children of God, proclaiming the riches of God's free grace. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel, for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth. I know, if God does not show me what great things I must suffer for his name sake, that I cannot preach the gospel, for Christ said, in his own words, Matthew 7:14 "Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." There are

many times, I feel, if I could quit, I would do so, but I don't know how to quit anymore than I know anything about going on. I do not have a choice about any of this, and it is for sure that I do not stand a chance. The Gospel and the salvation of God's people, is not by choice or chance, but by the grace of God. Yet, I believe, I looked again toward the Holy Temple of God.

By the sovereign grace of God, those whom God has brought to look toward the Holy Temple, He brings them, by afflictions, to look time and time again, toward the Holy Temple, for there is the source of the teaching of God and peace in Christ.

The Spirit keeps me in hope, that someday, Christ will remove the shadow, then I will know if I be on his right or left. If I am on his right, then I will know I am born of the Spirit, for that which born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I may be carried into the Holy Temple of God, then shall the lord be my God and I will know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I am one of His, of which He shed his blood for.

Psalms 23:4 "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." I hope the rod of correction and the staff of support, is with me in the valley of shadows, that in Christ, I am brought to look again toward the Holy Temple, for Christ is the rock and all of His ways are judgement. Christ, the savior of His people, is the only thing secure, while sin and death stands sure. The praises are to the Honor and Glory of God of Heaven and Earth. Sin and death are not secure, but was

abolished in the flesh of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the shedding of His blood, Burial and Resurrection, for His people.

Be it unto me, not according to my will, but according to thy will. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.

A brother in Christ,
I hope.

Bernard Moon

MEETINGS

SOUTH OUACHITA UNION

The Union meeting of the South Ouachita Primitive Baptist Association is scheduled to be held with Rehobeth Church near El Dorado, Ark. on the second Sunday and Saturday before in April, 1987. According to our minutes, the meeting is to be held in May. We sincerely regret the error, and hope that it has caused no one any inconvenience. All lovers of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ are invited to come worship with us.

Anyone needing more information may call me or write.

C.C. Wilbanks
217 Bastrop Dr.
Monroe, La. 71203
Dial (318) 343-5473

FIVE MILE CREEK

The Five Mile Creek Union Meeting will convene, God willing, with Shady Grove Church in Cullman Co., Alabama. April 3, 4, and 5, 1987.

H.C. Moon - Moderator

SHEPHERD FOLD CHURCH

Shepherd Fold Primitive Baptist Church will have a meeting on the 5th Sunday in March. The church is located at 815 Little York Road, Houston Texas. We welcome all who have a desire to visit with us at that time.

Elder C.M. Haygood

ST. JOHN, 3:34

For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 4/87
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.

ARTICLES

2 JOHN 10.

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."

What is this doctrine without which one cannot be received into the houses of the church and without one cannot be bade God-speed? Doctrine is here declared by the inspired apostle to be the essential thing, the real test of one's being a true follower of Jesus. Without this

doctrine, one lacks the necessary qualification for the fellowship of the saints. Since, then, this doctrine is so important, let us inquire what it is. In doing this, we shall not do better than to consider other expressions in this second epistle of John. For instance, in the seventh verse: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." Here it is plainly stated that not to confess the coming of Christ stamps one as being a deceiver; that is, not to confess Christ's coming in the flesh. The Scriptures plainly teach that Jesus Christ, the eternal son of God, was born of a woman, that he took not on him angelic nature, but the seed of Abraham. Now, the seed of Abraham comprises the elect family of God, chosen before the world began. This chosen seed was not elect angels, but elect human beings. So Christ was made a little lower than the angels, and came in the flesh for the suffering of death. To deny this coming in the flesh, to deny that Christ was as truly man as he was truly God, is antichrist and a deceiver and such is not to be countenanced by the house of God. However, it is not enough that we confess the coming of Christ as a historical fact. That, anyone could do, just as easily as he could say that George Washington or some other man lived years ago. There must be a confession that Jesus Christ has come in one's own flesh, that he has come in the individual experience of the believer himself. In other words, a living experience of Christ is the real test of genuineness. This doctrine or teaching of Jesus, more than any other one thing, was the test of disci-

pleship when Jesus was here in the world as a man among men, and this teaching of his caused many who had been following him to withdraw from him. For proof of this, turn to the sixth chapter of John and read the wonderful discourse on the bread of life, from the thirty-second to the fifty-eighth verses. In these words Jesus taught that himself is the bread of life and that the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood are an essential test of whether one has eternal life, that "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." In the sixty-sixth verse, we are told, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Jesus was not here referring to the gospel ordinance of the Lord's supper, but was plainly stating that unless one is brought into a living fellowship with Jesus in his sufferings on account of sin and into a living knowledge of the cleansing power of his blood, there can be no such thing as one's possessing eternal life. Life is knowledge, and there is always a certain amount of knowledge accompanying a certain amount of life. Eternal life is always accompanied with a certain quality of knowledge. Wherever eternal life dwells, there cannot help but also dwell the knowledge that one is a sinner and that his condemnation on account of sin is just. But spiritual knowledge does not stop there. It teaches that human nature is altogether unprofitable in the way of righteousness, that it is wholly incapable of any good thing in the sight of God. In a living way, and not our of books nor by tradition, the sinner continues to be instructed by the Spirit of the great Teacher until he fully realizes

his utterly lost condition and is made to throw himself entirely upon the mercy of God, without one jot of anything to merit that mercy. He becomes a beggar, but being really a beggar in heart and not merely by word of mouth, he is not turned empty away from Mercy's door. Christ Jesus appears for his relief and reveals himself to and within this beggar's soul as the Savior, the only name under heaven among men whereby that beggar must be saved. By the grace of God now appearing through Jesus to this beggar, the beggar is lifted from the dunghill of total depravity and is set among princes, is manifested as the son of the King; that is, as a child of God. From now on the believer finds his struggle but begun. The burden of condemnation lifted from him and his heart singing for joy because of the new hope springing within him, he finds himself in the company of all the people of God from Abel to the present time; but finds himself, like them, engaged in a warfare, one from which at times he would fain be free, but which cannot end until natural life ends: the warfare of flesh against Spirit and Spirit against flesh. He finds a dying daily going on within him, a continual being delivered unto death, a ceaseless rendering of his body a living sacrifice. In some such way as this there is a continual confession in heart and life that Christ Jesus has come in the flesh. It need not be that one is all the time confessing this by word of mouth, but the confession nevertheless will show itself in the outward life, in the actions of the individual; it will manifest itself in the conduct of the one having this living experience, shining out through the hands and the feet, bringing forth the

fruits appropriate to repentance. Without this manifestation of Christ in the flesh one is a deceiver and an antichrist and cannot be in the fellowship of the house of God. When Christ came in the flesh it was not in order to reinstate or to reinforce the covenant of Moses. That covenant could never bring in salvation to the children of God, but Jesus came to make an end of the old effectual covenant and to establish a new and successful covenant. The new covenant became a vital reality to the children of God through the death and resurrection of Christ. This new covenant was promised to be put in the new heart of the child of God and to be imprinted in his mind. In other words, the new covenant or new law was not to be something abstract from the child of God, but was to be part and parcel of the new creature in Christ Jesus. It was not to be a covenant conditioned upon the volition of the believer, but was to be enforced in the life of the believer by the "wills" and "shalls" of God. Christ, after his resurrection, said "go" and they went, he said "come" and they came. All gospel obedience is this way, and no other. It is obedience springing from the manifestation of Christ in the life of the believer. He said to his disciples, A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another. This loving one another is not something we can bring about ourselves. Might just as well try to make the sun shine as to try to make one's self love the church of God. It cannot be done by one's own effort. But how easily one loves the brethren when this commandment is written in the heart by the finger of the Holy Spirit. This love is Christ manifest in the flesh. God is love, and love is God, and whosoever loveth is born

of God. If we love God we love those who are begotten of God. If we love not our brother whom we have seen, it is vain to say we love God whom we have not seen. Not having this love, we are deceivers and an antichrist. No wonder, then, Paul says in the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians that charity (love) is the one thing without which we are unprofitable to the house of God. Having not love, no matter what else we have or think we have, we are nothing. We might be able to speak ever so angelically, might be able to dive down into the deep mysteries of God, might be able to expound all prophecies, make great sacrifices or expend ourselves and our substance bountifully, but if it be not prompted by love, have not love in it, what does it all amount to? Nothing. It seems to us that this is the doctrine without which John said a man was not to be received into the house or church. In order to gain admittance there, one must have a vital knowledge of the coming of Jesus in the flesh, and the essence of this living experience is love. Having not this love, one is classed a deceiver. In another place the inspired writer tells us to mark them that cause divisions, and have nothing to do with them. One who would divide asunder brethren in order to establish his own cause has not the love of God, therefore he does not confess that Christ is come in the flesh. From such, turn away. It is like those two women who brought a child to King Solomon, each woman claiming to be the mother of the child, and asking Solomon to decide the matter. Solomon called for a sword, and was about to divide the child when the woman, who was really the child's mother, called out to the king to let the other woman have it. Thus the woman

who really and rightfully loved the child was willing to relinquish her right to it rather than see the child killed. True love in the church of God will always seek the good and welfare of the church itself before the personal good and advantage of one's own self. This is the living teaching or doctrine that Christ is come in the flesh, this doctrine gives one an open door into the houses of the saints; without this doctrine or teaching of love in one's own life one fails to possess that secret of God which gives access to the holy of holies. There is no sight on this earth more pleasant than a church of the saints where all love each other, where each esteems the others better than himself, where all are imbued with the desire to spend and be spent for one another, and any individual who would mar that peace to serve himself would most assuredly not have within him that doctrine of the Master, Love one another. Not having this love he could not confess that Christ is come in the flesh, therefore must be a deceiver and an antichrist. From all such may the Lord deliver his people.

Elder Leferts

A FEW THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO THE SHEEP

We oftentimes look back, not rejoicing in our sinful nature, but searching for a little oasis, which is a green spot in a desert land.

I remember when I was baptized in the waters of Haw River, one cold rainy fifth Sunday in November 1949. It was a solemn ordinance with me. If not deceived of myself, I felt a joy in

the Lord, and yet a fear. Fear that I had deceived the brethren, fear that I had not been baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire that cleanse the heart, which is the one baptism.

Ephesians 4-5: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Baptism of water is a testimony of a clear conscience toward God for salvation is of the Lord.

I have witnessed many divisions among the churches. St. Matthew 18: 7, "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must need be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offenses cometh!"

I have seen men choose to serve this preacher or that preacher saying he is the lesser evil. How foolish can we poor mortals be.

As weak as I am, I never felt I had a choice. I know the land is full of idol gods. Joshua said: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

I have had many heartaches and sorrows along life's way, feeling to be accounted as a sheep for the slaughter, and God made a way when it seemed there was no way.

Romans 8:36, "As it is written, for thy sake, we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

Jesus told Peter, "Feed my sheep." I believe the food for the sheep is the manna from heaven that Israel did eat for 40 years in the wilderness.

St. John 10:4, "And when he putteth forth his won sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him for they know his voice."

II Corinthian 6:14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and

what communion hath light with darkness?"

We are told to beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.

St. Matthew 10:16, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

I believe the sheep of his pasture, as the natural sheep, will bound together in the storms, endeavouring to comfort and protect one another, forbearing one another in love and endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse deceiving and being deceived; and because inequity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

The Lord said, I will sift the house of Israel among all nations as corn is sifted in a sieve, and I believe that the powerful wind of God's spirit will blow away the chaff.

II Thessalonians 2:3, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

II Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Evil doers cannot sow discord among the brethren and lay the charge to God's elect.

Galatians 6:7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

"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.”

Ecclesiastes 3:14, “I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.”

Jesus said the scripture cannot be broken. We cannot see God for he is a spirit and a spirit has no flesh and blood, but the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith.

The father of Jesus is a spirit and he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

I hope to witness with John, who said, “I write to you not because you know not the truth, but because you know it.” I Thessalonians 4:9, “But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.”

It has been a precious blessing to visit the brethren from the mountains to the sea shore, and in other states and find them in peace at home, for which I hope I am thankful.

I have no desire to travel over the country seeking confusion and disorder and cause confusion at home, for love worketh no ill. The sheep will not swallow anything bitter to their taste.

I have experienced the suffering that trouble and confusion can cause. I have seen the precious old brethren offended whose conscience is void of offense toward their brethren and they walk as sheep before the shearers. We hear the bleating as the tears pour from their eyes. Thanks be unto God that they belong to the great Shepherd and not one shall be eternally lost.

If I know my heart, my desire is peace, love, and fellowship at home as well as wherever the sheepfold may be. There is but one fold and one shepherd. If these precious things abound, then all things will be done in decency and in order.

May the Lord keep us that we be not tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.

Let us therefore follow after the things which made for peace and things wherewith one may edify another.

The sheep are oftentimes scattered into the hills and a hireling will search not for them. He is not the shepherd. A hireling looketh for the reward of his work.

Hebrews 13:20-21, “Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.”

God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.

Clifton Robertson
Route 1
Reidsville, NC

VOICES OF THE PAST

“he being dead yet speaketh”

ACTS II. 42.

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship.”

A dear brother, who wishes his name withheld, has asked that we write something for the SIGNS upon the subject embraced in these

words. The special question presented by him was the connection between the doctrine of the apostles and the fellowship of the apostles. While we feel incompetent, yet we feel willing to comply as best we may with this request. We are willing, both because of the regard in which we hold this brother, and because the subject itself seems most important, especially in these times when there is so much unrest and so much tendency in some places to disregard the doctrine of the apostles, and to count it of small concern. It has become a very common thing to hear it said that it does not matter so much what a man believes, so that he lives right. On the contrary, it does matter what a man believes more than anything else, because all a man's living, whether for good or ill, depends entirely upon what he believes. One of the evil signs of the present time is this tendency to believe nothing with any certainty; not only is it true that men do not know what they believe, but they believe nothing. Professions of religion are made, people unite with religious sects, attend upon the public services which are provided, and yet have not the faintest ideas as to what the faith of those with whom they are united may be. This is the general state of affairs everywhere, and more than this, professed ministers of the word encourage this very thing. Instead of insisting upon the doctrine which they claim to be taught in the word, it is ignored as a thing of small consequence; this is not the way of the Bible. The deep doctrines of the depravity of man, of his death in sin, of the redemption which is and can be only through Christ, of the incarnation of the Son of God, of his righteous life

in the flesh, of his death in atonement for sin upon Calvary, of the resurrection of his crucified body on the third, the appointed day, the ascension into heaven, and the intercession of the blessed High Priest for his people at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, the new birth, including the quickening of the sinner dead in sins, to divine life, and the communion with God through Christ, and the fellowship of saints with one another, as partakers of all this grace, are the constant and prominent themes of the Bible. Admonitions are there also in abundance, but still the most prominent themes are these named above. Beside all these, that which lies underneath them all, the everlasting, unchangeable love and purpose of God, is always kept in view. It is because these themes are so constantly set forth in the word, and because through the perversity of fallen nature in us there is such indifference to them almost everywhere, that it is needful that all who love the word of God, and reverence the Author of it, should constantly affirm and set forth these things in their ministry. Also, because the admonitions and exhortations of the word can have no force at all unless first of all the doctrine of redemption with all that it involves be written in the heart of him who hears, these principles of the doctrine of the apostles ought to be always kept in view. It is all-important to believe that doctrine which exalts the grace of God, because there can be no right thinking, speaking or living without this. All the difference between doing for our own advantage and glory, and doing for the glory of God, is involved in a right understanding of the doctrine of the apostles. Doing for our

own glory, or doing for the glory of God, marks the difference between him who serves God and him who serves him not.

In the text suggested, two things are set forth, the doctrine and the fellowship of the apostles. First, it must not be forgotten that the fellowship of the apostles was in those days inseparably connected with the doctrine of the apostles. It was not without design that the Holy Ghost, who inspired Luke when he wrote these words, placed the doctrine first. These words come up in our mind in connection with these other words of John: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us." And these other words of James: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable." Fellowship then must be based upon the pure word of truth if it be real Bible fellowship. Of this we desire to say more after a little further consideration of the word fellowship itself.

What is fellowship in the Bible sense of the word? Perhaps it will help us to see first what it is not. It is not such union as may exist between members of political parties, where after all selfishness reigns supreme, though there is perhaps an appearance of oneness of purpose and sentiment. It is not the union of men in some society, secret or otherwise, which yet at the bottom is purely selfish; it is not that kindly good feeling which may exist among neighbors who are mutually neighborly and helpful to each other; it is not the good will which kindly, pleasant-mannered people always will produce wherever they may be among men; it is not a mere love which may spring out of the fact that

people are themselves loving and affectionate in feeling and manner; and it is not merely an agreement in sentiment upon even Bible teachings, for we all have known some men who believed in the very doctrine which we believe to be taught in the word, but whose life showed that all the knowledge and belief they had was in the head, and not in the heart; that they had never felt the power of the truth, or their own great need of it, and that it was not precious to them, except as any notion may be precious to any man who may believe in it.

All this is not fellowship. But on the other hand, perhaps it is enough to say that fellowship, Bible fellowship, must be in Christ, and that it is fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, and that it consists among the people of God in a belief and heart-felt experience of the truth. True fellowship means equality, oneness in all that makes up that fellowship. All they who by the inward teaching of the Spirit of truth have come to a personal knowledge of the truth, are in this fellowship. No child of God can have this fellowship for anyone in whom contriteness of heart, and a broken spirit, and humble trust in Christ, do not appear. These things are not taught in the schools of men, but in the experimental school of Christ. He who denies the truth as it is in Jesus, cannot be in fellowship with him who believes the truth; the child of God may pity such a one. As his child, father, brother, sister or mother, he may love him dearly, and desire his welfare; he may even long to see in that one some evidence of the work of the Lord, but he cannot hold that one in fellowship until he can see manifest in him the same work which he has felt in his own heart; and

he who has this work of the Spirit wrought in his heart will know and love the doctrine which is called the doctrine of the apostles. Thus in that early day they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship.

The word doctrine, as used in the Scriptures, sometimes means the teaching of the apostles, or of Christ, and sometimes that which is taught. Perhaps both shades of meaning are in the word wherever it is used. Here evidently the word signifies what the apostles taught, and it is the necessary conclusion that to continue in the apostles' fellowship it was needful that they should continue in their teaching, or rather, the things that they taught. Now in this very chapter we have the substance of that which they taught, and which the children of God gladly believed or received. Perhaps it will be well to give a synopsis of what Peter had been preaching to them. First, that Jesus of Nazareth, a man, had appeared among them, and had been approved of God by signs and wonders and miracles. Second, that by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God he had been taken and slain. Third, that they did it with wicked hands. Fourth, that God had raised him up according to prophecy, which Peter proceeds to quote. Fifth, that now Christ is not only raised up, but sits on the throne of David, and is exalted by the right hand of God, and has received the promise of the Father, and now has shed forth the Holy Ghost, as they did see and hear. This is the substance of the preaching of Peter as recorded in this sermon, but the doctrine of the apostles, or their teaching, is intended to include all that they afterwards proclaimed as to the doctrine or order of the house of God, and all

those that believed upon that day continued in all that they taught. These same apostles are still the only judges in Israel, and in the Acts and in the epistles we have their infallible judgment in all that ever will call for judgment in the house of God.

Now let us call to mind how important it is that we to-day continue in the doctrine of the apostles; if indeed we wish to continue in their fellowship. Let us also remember that the beloved John said that their fellowship was with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. If then we find ourselves believing the doctrine of the apostles, we are in fellowship with all who also believe, and with the Father and the Son. On the other hand, if we are not in fellowship with the doctrine of the apostles, neither are we in fellowship with them, nor with the Father, nor with the Son. If the holy Spirit dwells within us it will surely teach us the truth, for it is called the Spirit of truth. It never takes of the things of men and shows them to us, but always of the things of Jesus; this is according to the words of the Master himself. If then any thought of our hearts is to the exaltation of anyone or anything save Christ in all our salvation, it is not the revelation of the Holy Ghost; he always testifies of Jesus. The fellowship is in the doctrine, first of all; this should never be forgotten. May not some of us at times mistake a feeling of good will, of sympathy, of pity, or of admiration for some man, for this fellowship? Because of this danger we are told not to have men's persons in admiration. One may be lovable, kindly, full of feeling, and seem at times to be deeply moved with feeling, and our hearts may go out to them with similar warmth, but all this is not in itself true fellowship. One may possess all

these things in large measure, but if he denies the doctrine of Christ he cannot be in the apostles' fellowship. He that is weak in the faith indeed must be received, but not to doubtful disputation. If he denies the doctrine and fights against it he must not be received. Very many of the Lord's dear children have not been led deeply into the principles of the doctrine of Christ, but if any have had heart-felt knowledge of themselves they will not deny the grace of God, but will be found ascribing all their salvation to him.

What will arouse and excite this fellowship? We answer, the doctrine of the apostles. Why will this produce fellowship? Because the doctrine is the experience of the apostles, recorded by them, and it will meet all similar experience in all the children of God. This John taught when he said, We declare to you the things which we have seen and heard, that ye may have fellowship with us. Thus it was upon this day of Pentecost: "They that gladly received his word were baptized." Thus it was with the eunuch when Philip had preached Christ to him; thus it was with Lydia when the Lord had opened her heart so that she attended to the things spoken by Paul; thus it has been in all ages of the gospel day. It is the doctrine that binds together, and it binds together because it is the doctrine of Christ the Savior preached to poor sinners who have felt their need of him, and have found him in their need. How many have heard this preaching for the first time, and have said, You have been preaching just what I have felt and seen. One said in our hearing, "If that man is a christian then I am one, and if I am one, then he is." The

preacher had been preaching just what that man had felt. His words were words of fellowship. There can be no fellowship outside of the doctrine of Christ. He that denies Christ cannot be in fellowship with him who confesses Christ. He that says, "I thank thee, that I am not as other men," cannot be in fellowship with him who says, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He that counts his blessedness as the result of his own worth, or worthy deeds, cannot be in fellowship with him who says, "By the grace of God I am what I am," and after having labored much says, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." There may be, and there are, often misunderstandings of portions of the word, and brethren may not all see clearly the truth, and there may be differences about some of the principles of the doctrine of Christ, or concerning some of the order of the church, which do not and ought not to lead to withdrawal from each other, but yet just so far as oneness of doctrine is found, just so far is there union and oneness of fellowship one with another, and just so far as it is wanting will there be a weakness of fellowship. To abide in this fellowship then it is needful that the doctrine of Christ be held forth in simplicity and experimentally. In no other way can fellowship abound, than by confession of the truth. He that preaches Christ as all and in all in a poor sinner's salvation, will at once be in the fellowship of all who love the Lord and confess him as their Savior. If some poor sinner comes to the assemblies of the church asking a home with them, if his daily life be correct, all that is needed is that he bear witness that he is nothing and that Christ is all in all.

We say this is all that is needed, and this we repeat with emphasis, because in just this confession is the confession of election, predestination, the everlasting love and purpose of God, the atonement of Christ, and justification through that atonement, the effectual call of the Spirit, and the confession in short of the whole doctrine of salvation from first to last, and in this is the fellowship of those who receive this testimony. The doctrine of God our Savior will appeal to all true experience, because it is the narrative and explanation of all true experience. If one tells our travel of mind and heart, we must be drawn to that one, we must be one with that person, and this travel is the doctrine of God our Savior, given to us as our own. So Paul could call the gospel "our gospel," and even "my gospel." It is ours, our very own, when we have come to hear it and know it and live it.

If then we would strive for increase of fellowship and love among the people of God, continue to hold forth the truth, the doctrine of the apostles, there is no other way. It is in vain to urge fellowship, and union, and peace, unless the ground of all true union is presented. If Christ be lifted up, all will be drawn to him; there is no other way. All, we mean, who know him indeed and in truth. To preach Christ is to hold him up, and to preach Christ is to preach all that doctrine which is God-honoring and man-abasing.

Elder F.A. Chick

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JANUARY 1987

Mrs. Elizabeth T. Adkins, VA....	2.00
Mrs. Garlan Vick, NC	5.00
Reed Harper, TX.....	2.00
Mrs. Odell D. Dove, VA	5.00
Mrs. Virginia Apple, NC.....	2.00
Mrs. Del Hendrix, TN	10.00
Miss Laro Smith, NC.....	2.00
Mrs. Betty W. Kunkle, DE.....	2.00
Mrs. Frank D. Thornton, VA.....	2.00
Mrs. B.J. McLaughlin, TX	7.00
Mrs. Bruce McKinney, VA.....	7.00
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Hester Dawson, CA.....	4.00
C.G. Jacks, AL	7.00
Horace E. Walker, VA.....	3.00
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Mrs. Frank S. Sizemore, WV....	2.00
Mrs. Frances S. Smith, VA.....	5.00
Mrs. Verta Haning, WV	10.00
Mrs. Harry Payne, VA.....	5.00

OBITUARIES

GEORGE EDGAR FOLEY

With sorrow for our loss but joy for his great gain, we note the passing from this life of a highly esteemed brother in Christ, George Edgar Foley. Brother Foley was born in rural Patrick County, Virginia on July 4, 1912, as son of the late Richard Lee and Sara Hundley Foley. Throughout his life he never lived more than five miles from his birthplace.

On August 20, 1934 he was united in marriage to Miss Annie Hestell Turner, also of Patrick County, by the late Elder Samuel Koger. To their

union were born five children, all of whom survive him. They are as follows: one son, George Herman Foley of the home; and four daughters, Ruby Jane and Martha Rachel Foley of the home, Mrs. John (Ruth Annie) Wingfield and Mrs. L. B. (Dorothy Ellen) Stone of Patrick Springs, Va.

For many years Brother Foley attended Liberty Church, to which he was carried by his mother from childhood. He united with the church by experience in July 1961, and was baptized the first Sunday in August 1961 by Elder W. J. Puckett. He faithfully attended the meetings and was very diligent in his care for the church until failing health confined him at home.

For about the last three years of his life Brother Foley was afflicted with a disease that gradually destroyed his mind. He was lovingly and patiently cared for by each member of his family, who exhibited toward him a ministration of that spirit which enables one to "Honor thy father and thy mother." After a stay in the hospital of some three weeks and three final days at home, Brother Foley died in the Reynolds-Patrick County Hospital at Stuart, Va., on July 9, 1986. His funeral service was conducted at the Moody Funeral Home Chapel by Elder Paul Hopkins, a close friend of the family. He was laid to rest in the Adams Family Cemetery near his home.

In addition to his wife and children Brother Foley was survived by two brothers, Clyde and Roy Foley, both of Stuart, Virginia, and four sisters: Mrs. Clarence (Rosa) Brewer of Graham, N.C., Mrs. Bill (Josie) McCuiston of Greensboro, N.C., Mrs. Herschel (Pearl) Edwards and Mrs. Gerald (Ethel) Rakes of Bassett, Virginia.

Brother Foley was blessed by the grace of God to live a quiet and peaceable life but he was known and well respected by many, both in and out of the church. While we miss his presence among us we rest assured that his soul and spirit are peacefully at rest, awaiting that summons that shall one day come for the Throne in glory.

We of Liberty Church resolved to prepare three copies of this memorial: one to be retained for our church records, one to be given to his family and one to be submitted to the Signs of the Times for publication.

Done by order of Liberty Church in conference, the first Saturday in November 1986.

Elder John Wingfield, Moderator
Deacon Paul Puckett, Clerk

CARPER ALEX HARBOUR

We note with deep regret the passage from among us of a dear friend and brother in Christ, Carper Alex Harbour. He was born in rural Patrick County, Virginia on May 14, 1893, one of several children born to James Thomas and Sarah Wood Harbour.

In the year 1913, Brother Harbour was united in marriage to Miss Hattie Mae Eanes. To this union were born two sons and one daughter: Carper Elwood and William Henry Harbour, and Mrs James (Eva) Wagoner. Following the death of his first wife Brother Carper was married to Miss Florence Martin in December 1926. The three children the Lord added to their household were Robert T.

Harbour and Mrs. Floyd (Mary) Flippen and Mrs. Jessie (Sadie) Koger. Sister Florence, who joined the church about a year before Brother Harbour, died in November 1985.

Along the journey of his long and fruitful life Brother Harbour was called out of nature's darkness into the marvelous light of the Lord. He related his hope and experience to Liberty Church in September 1970, was received and baptized by Elder Bennie Clifton. Thereafter, he was a humble, peaceable, and faithful member for the balance of his life.

After the death of Sister Harbour, Brother Carper had little desire to remain in this world. His earthly house of clay declined rapidly until the Lord called him home on June 19, 1986, at the ripe old age of 93. His survivors, in addition to the six children, were nine grandchildren, two great-grandchildren; one brother Druie T. Harbour of Ridgeway, Va., and two half-brothers, Calvin Harbour of Patrick Springs and Wilbur Harbour of Bassett, Va., and two sisters, Mrs. Tony (Bessie) Shively of Bassett, Va. and Mrs. Clyde (Nannie) Warren of Eden, N.C.

Funeral services were conducted at Liberty Church by his pastor, after which Brother Harbour was laid to rest in the church cemetery by the side of his beloved Sister Harbour. There, he peacefully sleeps, waiting that final summons to come from On High.

Be it resolved, therefore, that three copies of this memorial be prepared: one for our church records, one to be given to his family, and one submitted to the Signs of the Times for publication.

Done by order of Liberty Church in conference, the 1st Saturday in

November, 1986.

Elder John Wingfield, Moderator
Deacon Paul Puckett, Clerk

DELLA ODELL MARTIN

At the divinely appointed hour, God removed from this troubled world our precious sister in Christ, Della Odell Martin. Sister Martin was born in Patrick County, Virginia on May 29, 1908 and died at Memorial Hospital of Martinsville on August 28, 1986, making her earthly pilgrimage three months past 78 years. She was a daughter of the late George William and Susan Spencer Odell.

Sister Martin was the wife of Brother Thomas Green Martin, a long-time member of Liberty Church, who died in 1982. Their union was blessed with two daughters: Mrs. Frank (Evelyn) Gard of Bassett, Va., and Mrs. Doris Little, who preceded her parents in death.

Sister Martin united with Liberty Church by experience the first weekend in September 1967, and was baptized by Elder Bennie Clifton. She was blessed by the grace of God to adorn the profession she had made of a hope of life in Christ. She faithfully attended her church meetings until bodily afflictions confined her at home.

When Sister Martin passed away she was survived by one daughter, Mrs. Gard; one brother, George W. Odell, Jr. of High Point, N.C.; three sisters, Mrs Perry (Majie) Stone and Mrs. Joseph (Lucy) CaHill of Bassett, and Mrs. Josephine Nobles of

Orlando, Florida; five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

A graveside service was conducted by her pastor, Elder John Wingfield, after which her mortal remains were laid to rest in the Liberty Church Cemetery, by the side of Brother Martin. We feel assured that she is peacefully asleep, awaiting the appearing of her Savior in the Morning of the Resurrection.

Be it resolved, therefore, that three copies of this memorial be prepared: one for our church records, one for the family, and one to be submitted to the Signs of the Times for publication.

Done by order of Liberty Church in conference, the first Saturday in November 1986.

Elder John Wingfield, Moderator
Deacon Paul Puckett, Clerk

NANNIE T. NEWMAN

The spirit of our dear sister in the Lord, Nannie T. Newman, has gone from the land of the dying to the land of the living. Sister Newman was born on October 3, 1889, a daughter of the late Peter Frank and Lucy Law Turner, and was reared in Patrick County, Virginia.

Sister Newman was married to the late Mr. Emmett Green (Brud) Newman, also of Patrick County, and to their union were born fifteen children, three of whom died in infancy. Mr. Newman passed away on July 4, 1969. Sister Newman was also preceded in death by four of her sons: Clyde, Frank, Eugene and Calvin Newman.

Sister Newman joined Liberty Church by experience in July, 1919, and was a member for 67 years. Although poor health and lack of conveyance prevented her presence much of the time in recent years, she was faithful to the church and was kind to both her brethren and her neighbors and friends.

Sister Newman departed this life August 19, 1986. She is survived by five sons: Elwood, Ralph, Charlie, Curtis and Cecil Newman, all of Bassett, Virginia; and three daughters, Mrs. Essie Wright of Stuart, Mrs. Irene Simmons of Axton, and Mrs. Clara Smith of Collinsville, Virginia. She also leaves 26 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren, 11 great-great-grandchildren; two half-brothers, Mr. Tom Turner of Stuart and Mr. Crawford Turner of Collinsville; and two half-sisters, Mrs. Mary T. Hylton of Roanoke and Mrs. Alice T. Thomas of Rocky Mount, Virginia.

Her funeral service was conducted at Moody Funeral Home Chapel by her pastor, Elder John Wingfield, and a close family friend, Pastor T. E. Levinger. She was laid to rest in the Foley Cemetery at Route 2, Stuart, Virginia.

Be it resolved, that we at Liberty Church extend to her family our heartfelt sympathy. Be it further resolved, that three copies of this obituary be prepared: one for our church records, one to be given to her family and one submitted to the Signs of the Times for publication.

Done by order of Liberty Primitive Baptist Church in conference, the first Saturday in November 1986.

Elder John T. Wingfield, Moderator
Deacon Paul Puckett, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

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Route 1, Box 65 Keeling, Virginia 24566

"Walking with the Angels"

*Today we were blessed to walk with Angels
These meetings are so precious to our hearts
The very thought of our blessed Jesus
Has caused all doubt and fears to depart—
As we walked with the Angels*

*We love to meet the Saints so dear
and rejoice together as praises we sing
Rejoicing in the hope of eternal life
There forever we may praise our Heavenly King—
While walking with the Angels*

*What a blessed thought—such a happy thought
When we will all meet in that glorious time
Our voices will blend together in perfect praise
Oh the rest and peace will be most sublime
There walking with the Angels*

*How precious to meet with them here below
and bow to join with them in prayer
There with God in communion so sweet
The blessed fellowship and love to share—
While walking with the Angels*

*Indeed it is a most cherished blessing
To be blessed the gospel sound to hear
The Saints proclaiming Christ the only way
How the message doth our drooping spirits
cheer—*

As we walk with the Angels

*Our hearts are filled with love untold
Love and goodness so divine
The doubts are removed—the fears flee
Oh how bright His spirit doth shine—
While walking with the Angels*

*Oh precious Jesus, never leave or forsake us
Through every season keep us near thy throne
That after death in that eternal city
You may own us as thine own
Then forever we will walk with the Angels*

*(These Angels are none other than the dear
Saints of God)*

*Rlee B. Houchins
Roanoke, Va. 24015*

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EDITORIAL

“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.”

John 10: 27,28.

Sheep are peculiar creatures, being very dependent and unable to provide for themselves. Except for the shepherd’s care the sheep would soon perish. Is this not our case? Our spiritual needs are numerous and pressing, yet we cannot supply any of them. We are traveling through a wilderness that

yields us neither spiritual food nor water. Unless our spiritual bread drops down from heaven and our water flows out of the rock, we would soon be consumed. If Christ were not our Shepherd, we would fall prey to Satan. We are sinful creatures and if we are his sheep, we shall feel it to be a great display of Christ’s love and mercy toward us in coming down to this sin cursed world to bleed, suffer, and die for poor unworthy sinners.

“My sheep,” says Christ. How come the sheep to be Christ’s? They are his because the Father chose them in Christ out of the rest of mankind before the world was. They were given to Christ Jesus as his bride. He, according to the council of His own free will, and according to His own good pleasure, made choice individually of certain persons. For to Him belonged the sovereign prerogative that he might have mercy on whom he would have mercy. “My sheep.” Their names were written in his book of life, so they became his portion and heritage. Christ often speaks of them in this way: “As many as thou hast given me” “Thou hast given them me.” As a gift, the Father committed them into Christ’s hands. Thus they became a token of the Father’s love to his only begotten Son, separating them from among all mankind as a love gift to his Son.

“My sheep,” says Christ. They are his for in addition to the gift, he has bought them with a price. They had sold themselves for nought; but he has redeemed them, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with his precious blood. There is not one sheep of all his flocks but what he can see the mark of his blood on him. In

the face of every saint the Saviour sees, as in a glass, the memorial of his bloody sweat in Gethsemane, and his agonies on the cross. So you see, "You are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." Will Christ suffer those whom he has shed his precious blood for, to perish? If Christ has suffered for us, bought us with his blood, will he suffer our souls to be cast into the pit? If so, where has justice gone that the substitute should bear our guilt, and we should bear it too? And where is mercy that God should execute twice the punishment for one offense? No, my dear beloved ones, He will not suffer any, no not one to perish for whom he died. He will keep them "and they shall never perish." Oh, it is a great feeling when a poor hell deserving wretched sinner finds in his heart a hope that he is numbered with those given by God the Father into the hands of the Redeemer, the Mediator and King of grace; and once placed there, it is an unalterable act. No power can change or undo the purpose of the great God of heaven.

"I am the good shepherd." How good? Sufficiently good to draw a former sinful rebel into the enjoyment of His love and mercy, to supply our ever needs, to stoop down and gather up a weak lamb to His bosom, and to protect his from the hands of Satan. "Our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep." Heb. 13:20. So great as to present to His heavenly Father every member of His flock in a spotless condition, having atoned for them, and having cleansed them from sins, in His own precious blood.

"And he said: Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto

me, except it were given unto him of my Father." John 6:65. God's sheep are not only made conscious of their fallen state, but are made willing to return. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Ps 110:3. Are we so stubborn that we need grace to make us willing to return to the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls? Yes, dear ones, we are. We cannot of ourselves return. "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls." I Peter 2:25.

What a mercy it is when the sheep are manifestly brought up out of the ruins of the Adam fall. What a great death that fall was: it was not as many seem to think, losing the sight of one eye, the hearing of one ear, the heart becoming a little hard, a little stumble or slip; but my friends, it was a complete fall, complete blindness, a complete hardness of the heart, it was a complete, total death in trespasses and sins, a complete separation from all spiritual life. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." Rom. 5:12. But what a mercy it is to have and feel the life giving operation of the Holy Spirit, to have our eyes opened, to have our ears circumcised, to be given a heart of flesh, so as to hear the voice of the Son of God in His sweet gospel. Yea, though we are "wandering sheep" wandering is the outcome of our fallen state; but to know it, to feel it, to grieve over it, and looking up to Jesus and crying with a loud voice, "Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner" is a great favor in disguise.

The Lord makes manifest what

His power can do, when he brings forth His own sheep from an ungodly world, when they are called out of the spots and places in which they have been scattered in their unregeneracy. He will then display the power of His divine grace in separating them from an ungodly world. He separates his sheep for himself. The Lord leads His people in paths that they have not known. He leads them into His own fold; therefore they become a separate people. Separate in their desires, in their needs, in their pursuits. "Therefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean things; and I will receive you." II Cor. 6:27. It is indeed a great blessing when the sheep are drawn to follow Him. They will not be deceived in following a stranger very far, for they know not the voice of strangers.

"They hear my voice." The Lord makes a contrast between the elect and the unelect. The Lord's elect will hear the voice of the Son of God. His sheep know His voice because a sovereign God imparts to them the capacity to hear, because "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made both of them." Prov. 20:11. Oh, what peace and joy there is in our hearts when the Lord speaks to us in His word. How sweet His voice sounds to a law convicted sinner as we know ourselves to be, when He speaks peace and forgiveness to our souls. How comforting when we are blessed with an inward feeling, a divine testimony in our hearts, when we hear Him say, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Matt. 5:6. To hear and feel the voice of

Christ proclaiming mercy and pardon to our souls is a taste of heaven here upon earth. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they be as wool." Isa. 1:18, Each of the sheep belonging to the great Shepherd will hear when the irresistible call comes to them just as Lazarus heard while in the grave when Christ called to him to come forth.

"And they follow me." When many that were walking with Jesus turned back, Jesus asked the twelve "will ye also go away?" They said, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Feeling our own inabilities and barrenness, where is there to go? The world cannot help us, man cannot help us. The Lord alone is our refuge. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. Let us go to Him in prayer. May He give us faith to lay hold of His precious promises, and feel them in our hearts and souls to be ours. May God bless us by His grace to follow Him, for He says, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." II Cor. 12:9. "Faith which worketh by love." Gal. 5:6. is the mark of Christ's sheep, and it is of true believers that He speaks when He says, "I give unto them eternal life."

"I give unto them eternal life." There is an implication, therefore that they had lost eternal life, not in the mind and purpose of God; but by their fall in Adam and also by actual sin. This eternal life comes to every elect as a matter of gift. He did not possess it when he first entered into the world. Being born of a corrupt tree, they were born to die. Eternal life is not a product of the soil of humanity: it is a gift. Nor

is it bestowed as a reward of service done. The term "gift" shuts out all idea of debt or of reward. We were spiritually dead; therefore, Jesus imparted to us a life which we had not before enjoyed. The Apostle Paul says, "You were dead, dead in trespasses and sins." "Eternal life" cannot be earned as a wage for good works, it cannot be merited in any way, because it is a free gift. He does not sell but gives. "Ye must be born again." What He gives, He gives freely and it is forever. "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. 2: 1. When He bestowed eternal life upon His elect who has it, He knew quite well every imperfection and failing that would occur in that man. Therefore what He saw in man would be a cause for not giving, rather than for giving, so it would be inconsistent with the gift of God for the gift to be disannulled. "The gift and calling of God are without repentance." Rom. 12:29. May we always be reminded of what we were by nature. Do we see the hole of the pit from whence we were drawn? for "The wages of sin is death." Rom. 6:23. Man merits nothing but death, so life is the free gift of God. Now, to some this is a very humiliating doctrine, but to those who have been made alive to their terrible, fallen condition, it should be a precious doctrine. So may we remember the dunghill where we once grew.

Jesus says, "And they shall never perish." His sheep are said to be born again, so this new life within us is a divine life, so it can no more die than the life of God himself. We live because we are one with Christ. The elect sheep are referred to as the

body of Christ. Shall Christ's body be dismembered? Shall He every now and then be losing one limb or another? No! It cannot be. The members of His body shall continue to live because He lives. The power that brought His sheep into this precious state is also the power that keeps them there: for "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:6. The spiritual life in them shall never be starved out, beaten out, nor driven out. The elect himself shall never perish. You may feel at times you might; the devil may tell you that you shall. The Lord will seem to withdraw until we lose many joys and comforts; but "You shall never perish." My dear ones, "They shall never perish," takes in all the elect flesh of Christ. If we consider how this doctrine harmonizes with other doctrines of the precious words of God, we will find that these sheep were made "unto honor." "That He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory." Rom. 9:23. If the saints of God, just one, should perish will Christ have kept His promise? He is not a man that He should lie. Jesus Christ paid the debt charged to His sheep; therefore, they have no debt to pay. If He has borne their punishment, they have no penalty to suffer. If He has stood in their stead, even justice as well as grace will demand that they be saved. "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" Rom. 8:34.

"Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." All His sheep are in Jesus' hands. Can you think of a safer

place to be? An acquaintance once said to me, "they cannot be plucked out, but they can slip out and perish." Does not Jesus say, "they can never perish?" Therefore they cannot be plucked out, slip out, fall out, jump out or any other out, they are definitely secure. There are those who, with false doctrine, would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. "Neither shall any." Not only any man, but the devil, fallen spirits, none will be able to pluck them out of His hands. Oh, what a blessed promise! "Because I live," says Christ, "Ye shall live also." John 14:19. May God bless you to live and rejoice in His precious doctrine and to feast upon His sweet promises is my prayer.

In hope of mercy,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

We need pictures and information of your Church if we are to continue "The Church of Our Faith".

If you know anyone you think would enjoy reading the Signs and are unable to pay, please let us know. Send their names & address and we will be glad to send it to them free of charge.

Our readers love to read the experience of others. Share with them the dealings of the Lord with you and give us the reason for your hope.

Have you any questions concerning certain scriptures? Maybe there is someone who has had some light on that subject.

We would love to hear from more of the Elders. Share with us your call

to the ministry, and maybe some of the Bethel spots along your way. Write to us about any subject that might be on your mind.

How would you suggest to improve the Signs. We welcome your comments. So many shut-ins look forward to it each month. We want it to be edifying and as comforting as possible. May God bless us to do this.

Thanks for the donations we receive each month. This is what has kept the Signs of the Times financially strong. We thank God for giving you a mind to do this and may His grace continue.

The Editors

PSALM 5: 1-3

Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation.

Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editors of the Signs;

It has been requested that I write again to the Signs. I know I cannot write anything that would be comfort to the Lords beloved people unless he blesses me with a spiritual mind. I am poor in spirit, weak, helpless and wholly dependent upon the Lord to direct, lead and guide, my pen to write and make a few remarks concerning spiritual things. For without Him I can do nothing. I have no confidence in my flesh to do any good thing. I am so vile, sinful, and wretched.

(II Corinthians 4 vs. 8-11) We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. I believe the Lords people are made willing like Moses to suffer afflictions with the righteous, than to enjoy sin for a season. As Paul said the body is dead because of sin. The spirit is life because of righteousness. The Lord is our righteousness, He is the way of the truth and the life. Jesus says unless you suffer with me, you have no part with me. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. What precious words! Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. I surely believe the Lord is

with his people in all their troubles, sorrows, and afflictions, also their joys in him.

*Poor and afflicted, Lord, are thine,
Among the great unfit to shine;
But though the world may think it
strange,*

*They would not with the world
exchange,*

*Poor and afflicted, yet they trust in
God,*

*The gracious wise and just,
For them he deigns this lot to
chose,*

Nor would they dare his will refuse.

The scriptures were written for our learning, that we through patience, and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Titus 3, 4-6 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; Comfort ye Comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak Comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lords hand double for all her sin." When the Lord blesses his dear precious ones, with the comfort that her warfare is accomplished; that her iniquity is pardoned, she has rejoicing in her Dear Saviour and her God. I Peter 2:9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of dark-

ness into his marvelous light: The Lord our Saviour and our God, who is worthy only to be praised. There is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. Isa. 9, 6-7 For unto us a child is born, unto us a child is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. I believe these scriptures have been fulfilled from the birth of Jesus unto his people. That he is at the right hand of God, sitting on the throne of David and upon his kingdom and that his government is now upon his shoulder. That the Prince of Peace is ruling his people, in his kingdom. Luke 1, 30-33 And the angel said unto her fear not Mary: for thou hast found favour with God, and behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no end. Jesus said my Kingdom is not of this world; It was the Spiritual world that he prayed for while here in person. I believe it included all his called and chosen ones, in Christ. Jesus said; 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. Marvel not that I said unto thee; ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth; and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh; and whether it goeth: So is everyone that is born of the spirit. I believe when the Lord blesses his dear ones; to hear his voice in that still small voice, and to hear the joyful news of the Gospel; they are indeed blessed of the Lord with ears to hear what the spirit sayeth unto the Churches: In thy presence is fullness of joy. At thy right hand are pleasures forevermore. There are times when they cannot feel his presence with them. They mourn for his return. The spirit is liken unto the wind; you hear the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whether it goeth. So is everyone that is born of the spirit.

Ps. 145, 10-13 All thy works shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy power; To make known unto the Sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious Majesty of his Kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. John 5, 22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all Judgment unto the Son. The Lord hath been our dwelling place in all generations. Out of Zion the perfection of beauty God hath shined. Ps. 132: 13-18 For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will clothe her priests with

salvation: and her saints shall shout for joy. There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame; but upon himself shall his crown flourish. This is so precious to me, this psalm concerning the Lord, and his Church. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift to the children of men. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: all things are yours that pertain unto life and Godliness. I believe the Kingdom that the Lord set up in the days of these King's prophesied by Daniel the prophet; which the spirit of God reveals unto his dear born again children, that the Kingdom of God is within you, Christ in you the hope of glory. We have a taste of this heavenly Kingdom, when the Lord blesses us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. He must reign in his Kingdom, until the last enemy death is put down, read about it in the I Cor. 15, 20-26.

Written with Love,
Lula Fox
Rt. 2, Box 75
Strong, Ark. 71765

THE KINGS OF KINGS WE CANNOT SEE

The king of kings we cannot see, for he is God. We are comforted by his staff and also his rod. Our faith is oftentimes tried by questions that are hard. Without the spirit,

man's interpretations we do not regard. His spirit is like the wind; we hear the sound thereof, when it blows. We cannot see from whence it cometh nor whither it goes. In the spirit of His great love, he chastens his own. In kindness, he makes the effectual working of his power known. We are taught by His grace we are not our own keeper. The Lord said, "the plowman shall overtake the reaper." In our heart, we have a desire our precious brethren to greet. In this world, foolishness, lust, and greed are not our meat. In this low ground of sin and sorrow, we wander and roam. We are made sick of sin, desiring that heavenly home. There is a precious home awaiting by Jesus we are told. St. John was blessed to see that city whose streets were pure gold. There, for the precious Saviour, praise will know no end. He proved the sincerity of His love and we hope, washed away our every sin. Lord keep us in thy perfect peace and in man let us not trust. Receive our spirit home when our vile bodies return to the dust. In that city we shall not see wife, friend, or brother. We shall see the King of kings for ourself and not for another. Man shall not destroy all flesh upon this low ground. When the son of man cometh there will be faith found. Let brotherly love continue and peace abound.

Clifton Robertson
Route 1
Reidsville, NC

Dear Elder Tench,

As you have been on my mind a lot lately, I feel a great need to

share a beautiful experience with you that I had three or four years ago.

After attending Church for awhile, I had this strong desire to join, but for reasons unknown to me, I couldn't. It bothered me alot.

On this certain spring morning, I was sitting alone in the kitchen at the table. I was listening to you speak over the radio. As I listened to that beautiful doctrine, I was completely removed from everything that was natural around me. Not with the natural eyes, but with my mind eyes. I could see this hand reach into my breast and hold my heart in the palm. There was no pain, no quickening of the heartbeat. There was such a perfect stillness and such a perfect peace. The touch was so gentle, it was like the gentlest breeze touch. My heart, I could just barely feel it, but I could feel such a great strength there.

When I returned to my natural state, I was about to rise up out of my chair with my arms lifted as a child does when he reaches to be picked up.

Words could never describe the beautiful things I felt that day. On two other occasions, I have felt this beautiful separation.

All my life, I have always been different. I never fit-in, I never felt a part of anything.

Since I have been blessed to come to Church, I feel I have come home, this is where I really belong.

I am not very good with words, so I hope you won't be offended when you read this in my poor way of trying to explain this beautiful experience.

There is nothing in this world that could begin to compare with that beautiful and perfect peace I felt.

Doris Giles
Altavista, Va.

Dear Brother Key;

Hope you both are well— seems a long time we have not had the privilege of being with you—but feel the Lord has richly blessed us to attend some sweet meetings this winter and be with the Brethren.

Brother Key we received this beautiful letter from Brother Harry Connoday in September 1967. Words cannot express how the Lord has richly blessed us with many times together and hearing Brother Harry speak of the blessings God has bestowed to him—how (He the Lord) has dealt with him in such tenderness. Feeling His presence through all his afflictions not once complaining: His desires are to be with his Brethren: So with his permission we would like to share with others. Would you please print this in the Signs. He is surely an inspiration to all. We feel God has blessed us far beyond our greatest expectations, to have known one so highly favored with God's love. Please remember us in your prayers.

Posey and Elsie Poindexter

Dear Brother & Sister Poindexter,

If one such as I feel to be should address you as such. I have a desire to write you dear ones, who we feel to be the children of God. Not having written, but very little in my life I know not how to begin. I truly hope your loved ones that are sick are getting along alright. And that the Lord will

bless them with a speedy recovery.

We enjoyed our visit with you all so very much Sunday, as we have been blessed to enjoy the many visits we have had together in the past.

Dear ones words from this unworthy sinners lips will never be able to express to you the comfort, joy and peaceful seasons we have been blessed to enjoy with your presence. I hope I am thankful to the Lord for such wonderful blessings. So much of my time this question is on my mind. Is this the way a child of God travels, feeling cast down, and so heavy and a stranger. Yet by Gods grace he is lifted up again, and again. I know if he dealt with me. According to my works, for I have never done anything, nor can't do anything that he would ever remember me. When I am so low I know God is able to deliver me, but can't see how he could remember such a being as I. So much of my time I am tempted on every side, evil thoughts, hatred, and sin is mixed in all I do. I cry out in my soul. O wretched man that I am who will deliver me from the body of this death. I know that in me "that is my flesh" dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. In 1960 I had a dream I was sealed inside a large glass ball, and was rolling down a wide road. I could see the enemies on the outside were trying to destroy me, but they couldn't get to me.

I was then blessed to feel, I hope, the presence of Jesus that he was inside with me and the enemies couldn't harm me. Many times since have I felt surely I will be destroyed. I

can't see any way of escape, but in some wonderful way I have been kept by the grace and mercy of God. By the grace of God I am what I am. How wonderful if he is ours, then we are his, purchased by his own precious blood and men, nor devils, can't change it. Nor take away this hope for eternal life, that he gives to his children. For we are saved by hope, 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, there do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the spirit helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit itself maketh intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Jesus told his disciples John 16 vs. 17. It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you. If not deceived I hope I have felt his peaceful presence many times, and heard that still small voice speak to me "Peace be Still" when I was so heavy it seemed as though I couldn't live. All my burden was gone. I was it seemed as light as a feather, rejoicing and singing the hymn I know that my Redeemer lives. Brother and Sister Poindexter this I hope was Jesus that spoke these words to me. I wouldn't exchange for the world if it were possible a thousand times. I know I was helpless, and there was none to help. I feel it was by the grace and mercy of God. I wonder sometimes if I am alone, if others get along the way I do cast down and burdened while others around seem to be full of laughter, without any trouble and

enjoying the things of the world. I hope I have suffered at least a small measure for Christ's sake. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. Now I desire not to burden you I hope if I have written anything that would cause you all any grief that you will forgive me. Or if any comfort, give all the glory to him to whom all glory is due. I believe you all know and have experienced some things I have tried to write. I have felt a love I can't describe for you all. I believe this is that love that flows from heart to heart and from breast to breast.

We received you letter today. Marie came home at 12:00 to get it. We appreciate it so very much. It is most comforting, indeed.

Come to see us everytime you can and ask to be remembered in your groanings to him.

Your unworthy Brother and Sister in hope,
Harry and Marie Cannoday

Dear Editors of the Signs;

Please renew our subscription for another year. The remainder, please use in anyway to benefit the cause of the Old Baptist.

If there is anyone who knows anyone who is not taking the Signs and would like to have it, but is not able, if they will let me know. I will see that they get a subscription. Please, please, please understand I am not trying to be a hero or receive any glory. All I would like to do is to share with anyone who is a lover of the truth, enjoy the blessings, that are poured forth through the articles in the Signs.

Elder Key I sure did enjoy, your

sermons in October, at Hopewell Church, Winnsboro, Texas. The world (Churches) cannot understand why our ministers and brethren would travel such great distances to Church. Especially without a guaranteed set fee. If they could only see, or better yet, feel the love of God that is felt in those meetings, then they would understand.

On three occasions, Jesus told Peter to feed his sheep, lands and flock; John 21: 15-17. I truly feel the sheep are well fed, when we are blessed to attend an association or one of the three day meetings. But, when we are blessed to attend one of these meetings and hear the ministers from the different parts of the country, it seems we are fed with special Heavenly Manna.

I would like to request some of the brethren, (if they are so blessed) to give their views on Ezekiel 16: 4-6. I see this scripture signifying how helpless each and every child of God is to help themselves, when they are brought to see themselves polluted in their own sins. Just as a newborn baby is helpless and cries for help; so must a child of God be made to cry unto God, "Heal me O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me and I shall be saved; for thou art my praise, Jer. 17: 14 and John 5: 2-9. We again have an illustration of how helpless we are to help ourselves. The man beside the pool at Bethesda said, there was no man to help him into the water when it was troubled. The water is signifying the cleansing or washing away of the sins or infirmities.

A brother in hope,
Frank Richards

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



DAN RIVER PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

The Dan River Primitive Baptist Church was constituted in 1884. The Anniversary Building, built with donations from members and friends, was completed and first used on August 26, 1984. Dan River Church is located on N.C. Highway No. 700 at Mayfield, N.C. Scheduled services is as follows:

2nd Sunday evening, song service 7:00 P.M.

4th Saturday evening 7:00 P.M.

4th Sunday morning 10:30 A.M.

5th Sunday (with West County Line Union Churches)

Elder Kenneth R. Key is present pastor.

MEETINGS

THE WEST COUNTY LINE UNION

The West County Line Union meeting will be held, the Lord willing, the fifth Sunday in May at Moon Creek Church. We appreciate the presence of all who desire to meet with us. Elders of our faith and order

are especially invited.

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Pastor
Sister Ema Sartin, Clerk

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The Lord willing, the Staunton River Primitive Baptist Union meeting will be held at Canaan Church the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in May 1987. We invite all who have a mind to come, and meet with us. All ministers of our faith and order are invited.

Elder J.R. Williams, Pastor
Mozelle Lacey, Clerk

ARTICLES

"Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction?"

—Psalm lxxxvii. 10, 11.

This is not the language of a soul dead in trespasses and sins, but it is the breathing of a living soul struggling and grappling with death. What a difference there is, where there is life working in and under death, and where death reigns absolutely! Between the quickened soul and that in which there is nothing but death, death without one spark of spiritual life, death without one ray of heavenly teaching. There

is no groan, no sigh, no lamentation, no piteous inquiry, no pouring out of the heart before God, where the soul is utterly dead, any more than there is life and breath in a corpse in the tomb. But wherever life is implanted in the soul from the Fountain of life, that life groans under death. It sighs from out of the grave; it gasps for breath, under the corpse which overlies it; and seeks to heave itself up from that dead weight, from that superincumbent mass of carnality which clasps it in its rigid and chilling embrace; it endeavours to uplift and extricate itself from that body of sin and death which spreads its cold and torpid mass all round it so that it is unable to arise. Do you know the workings of life in this way? the heavings, the gaspings, and uprisings of the life of God in your soul, pressed, overlain, overwhelmed, and all but suffocated by that carnal, dead, barren, earthly, devilish nature, which lies as a weight upon you? Depend upon it if you have never known what it is to gasp and pant and groan and sigh under the weight of a body of sin and death, you know nothing of the vital operations of the Holy Ghost in your conscience.

J.C. Philpot

KEHUKEE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION CIRCULAR LETTER

The Elders and Messengers of the several Baptist churches belonging to the Kehukee Association, met at the meetinghouse near the Falls of Tar River, Nash County, North Carolina, October, 1800--- To the churches in union with this Association send their

Christian salutation:

Beloved Brethren,

Called of God to the fellowship of his dear Son, and to an inheritance amongst those who are sanctified, and beloved by us, who hope we have obtained like precious grace with you. The great satisfaction which you have expressed in, and the willingness with which you have received our former epistles; together with a desire for your good, and the glory of the great Redeemer, are motives which induce us to address you once more in an epistolary way, which we send this year on the subject of GOOD WORKS, which is highly recommended by our Lord and Saviour, together with his prophets and apostles, and ought to be carefully observed by all who profess to be followers of the blessed Jesus. Witness the following Scriptures. Ecl. iii. 17; chap. ix. 10., and xii. 14. Isa. xxiii. 17. James i. 25. Gal. vi. 4., 1 Thes. i. 3., Heb. vi. 10., Titus i. 10., James ii, 11, 21., Jonah iii. 10., Mat. xxiii. 10., 2 Cor. 11, 15., Rev. 14, 13 and xx. 12 and 32., Acts x. 35., Rom. ii. 10. These and many others abundantly testify that we were created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which the Lord before ordained that we should walk in them. And as the contracted limits of a circular letter will not admit of a full investigation of our subject, we shall in a few particulars show what we understand to be intended by the term good works. And, first, it might not be amiss to observe that before works can be called, or really deemed good works, it is necessary that they be the product of a true and genuine faith in Christ; for as "Faith without works in dead." so

works without faith is dead also. Heb. ix. 14. The source or fountain, then, whence good works flow is not from any expectation of merit, but purely from a principle of love to God.

By good works, we understand works of various kinds, as, 1. Our duty to God. 2. Our duty to the Church and people of God. 3. Our duty to our neighbors. 4. Our duty to magistrates, or earthly rulers. 5. Our duty to our family; and lastly, to ourselves. 1. Our duty to God is, to consider him as the cause of our existence, our great benefactor, and sole author of all our happiness in time and eternity. To love him above any earthly enjoyment; yea, with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We should use our utmost endeavor to keep his commandments, and have respect to all his precepts. But, as our duty to God is inseparably connected with our duty in other particulars, we pass on. 2. To our duty to the Church and people of God. As our Lord and Saviour has loved us and given himself for us, that he might deliver us from the curse of the law and the flames of devouring fire, and hath taken us from the wild stock of nature, made us all to drink of the same fountain of his everlasting love, and so tempered our spirits as to unite us together, not by tyrannical chains, but by the sweetest bands of love and fellowship, and declared us to be a select body of him chosen, and set apart from the world, it becomes our duty then to walk as people who are not of the world, but chosen of God, and bound for the heavenly Canaan, having given our hands and hearts to each other, to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,

to strengthen, comfort, uphold, encourage, watch over, and to pray with and for one another, to bear one another's burdens, and "so fulfill the royal law of Christ." Our Lord has compared his church to a company of horse in Pharaoh's chariot--hence it appears that all have something to do in the church of Christ, that none should be barren or unfruitful. The Lord has made it our duty often to assemble ourselves together, and we are exhorted by an apostle not to forsake it as the manner of some was. We hope you will, therefore, endeavor as oft as possible to attend your church meetings and places of public worship. We hear of coldness among some of you-- what else can be expected? When the church members so seldom see each other, they become in a manner strange and useless to one another, while some perhaps seldom, and others scarcely ever attend Conference at all. Dear brethren, pray consider the worthy name by which you are called, and the honor of that cause in which you are enlisted; you are called the light of the world; but how can you light be useful when many, even of the people of the world, are more careful to attend worship, yea even conferences too, than many who profess to be followers of the blessed Jesus. While thus backward or careless in attending your conferences and places of public worship, you would and grieve your brethren, and weaken the hands of your ministers, who, after coming perhaps many miles to endeavor to comfort you, find themselves oft-times under the disagreeable necessity of preaching almost to the naked walls, or not at all. The few hearers

may have been chiefly those who make no profession of religion, whilst the members of the church are busily engaged at home, and cannot take time to attend on the worship of God, and many times kept back for a small excuse even on the Lord's day.

Thirdly, our duty to love our neighbor is to him as ourself, to be kind and charitable to all whose needs may require it, be they strangers or acquaintances, without respect of persons; to visit the sick, the fatherless, and the widow in their afflictions, endeavoring to nourish and comfort them as far as in us lies; also to receive strangers, use them kindly, clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and to be careful to consider the poor and needy, and grant them relief according to our ability. Beware of covetousness, remember the kingdom of God is not in meat and drink, but love, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; therefore glorify God, and comfort your fellow creatures with what you possess.

Fourthly, we should obey magistrates, and all those who are put in authority to rule over us in our temporal affairs. We should not speak evil, nor reproachfully of them, but acknowledge their authority, and honor them as ministers of God, by him appointed for the punishment of evil doers, and the protection of those who wish to do well; we should therefore show all good fidelity as patrons of good works and a light to the world, that we bring not reproach on the church of Christ, nor cause to be blamed that holy name by which we are called.

Fifthly, our duty to our family, which appears very extensive when we con-

sider ourselves, in respect to them, not only as stewards, who have to give an account of our stewardship to God, but as it were, as prophets, priests, and kings. As a prophet, we should teach and instruct them; as a priest we should pray with and for them, and should be careful in the order of their government. Each one to whom God has committed the care of souls, or a family, which is the same thing, should consider himself as their teacher, to whom all the family look, and from whom they all expect to receive their instruction, as it is well known that children in their tender years are naturally led to think the judgment, counsel, ways, and behavior of their parents to be superior to all others, especially when parents or rulers exercise a proper authority. Every family should have one, and only one proper head, who should take the government thereof, and in all cases endeavor to rule with justice, having a particular regard for all about him, setting forth good examples, walking in the ways of godliness and true piety, praying with and for them oft; yea, we are exhorted to "pray without ceasing", and in everything to give thanks. If we neglect public prayer, praise, and thanksgiving in our families, do we not leave them all to walk in the dark, as it were, while we suffer our light to be hidden under the bushel of worldly cares, or under the bed of sloth, while we ourselves walk unworthy the Christian name. A family should not be governed by passion; justice should be tempered with judgment and mercy. In vain does the passionate, fractious, turbulent, and inconsiderate person, after being the

cause of a whole day's unhappiness and discontent in his family, at night, call on all, or any of them to join him in the worship of God, while every mind is filled with prejudice, every eye with evil, and every tongue ready to say, "Physician, heal thyself," or otherwise, "thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye." Therefore every ruler of a family should always remember that example has the most powerful influence, without which all our admonition will, in all probability, prove ineffectual. Parents should be careful to preserve and cultivate the morals of their children, they should use their authority and not gratify them in their own wicked desires, such as frolicking, vain company keeping, gaming, idle visits on the Lord's day, etc., but should on that day carry them to places of public worship, and after they return endeavor to impress upon their minds the things they heard; for, after giving too great a loose to the reins of our children's lusts, we shall find our reproofs to be in vain. Witness the sons of Eli. 1 Sam. ii, 23,24,25. And Solomon says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." Prov. xix. 18. If we cannot command the hearts of our children and family to make them pray, and love God, we may teach and admonish them; and should all our endeavors fail, we may lastly have recourse to the example of Job. Job i.5.

And, further, with respect to the observation of good works relative to family duty, it becomes every member of a family to practice the particular duties in the respective places our divine Lord and Master has placed us

in, as husbands to love their wives, and be not bitter against them. Wives to submit themselves to their own husbands. Servants to be obedient to their masters, and please them well in all things. Masters to give unto their servants that which is just and equal. Parents not to provoke their children to anger lest they be discouraged; as well as for children to obey their parents. Col.iii.

Lastly, we should look to our own souls, strive to walk humbly with God, and study to show ourselves approved of him in all things, patrons of good works, and endeavor to keep a conscience void of offence, to check and keep under as much as possible all our unruly passions; to watch and pray, and avoid as far as in us lied, giving any cause whereby the enemies of the Lord may speak evil of us, or blaspheme that worthy name by which we are called. Ready at all times to reprove vice, striving to confirm all our reproofs, counsels, or admonitions by a regular life, pious walk, and godly conversation. We should be careful to read and study the Scriptures, and often to withdraw from the hurries of life to secret prayer and meditation; for where these duties are neglected, our case becomes very alarming, we then grow cold, backslide, and in a particular manner may give the enemy of souls great advantage over us.

And now may the kind and good Lord strengthen, uphold, and enable you to watch and pray, fill you with every good word and work, comfort you abundantly, and preserve you blameless until his second appearance to visit his sleeping saints, and

to be admired by all who love him, and long for his glorious appearance. Amen.

Signed by order,

Nathan Mayo, Moderator
Lemuel Burkitt, Clerk

VOICES OF THE PAST

“he being dead yet speaketh”

CORRESPONDING CIRCULAR LETTER

The Delaware Association, in session with the Rock Springs Church, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, May 20th, 21st and 22nd, 1938, to the sister churches composing the same, and to the churches, associations and meetings with which we correspond, sends greetings in christian love and fellowship.

Dear Brethren:—Directly on the threshold of Holy Writ, immediately on the opening of Genesis i., we are greeted with the wondrous, profound doctrine of the Trinity. The whole of the Godhead was concerned in the stupendous work of creation. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” And then spake the Word: “God said, Let there be light.” Thus, God the Father, God the Word (or Son), and God the Spirit conjoined in projecting forth the grand work of creation. Farther on in Genesis i., in verse twenty-six, the Trinity meets us again. “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Thus, the fullness of the Godhead covenanted with the

three divine Persons thereof to bring about the formation of man out of the dust of the ground. Passing on to Genesis iii. 22, the doctrine of the Three-One God is seen here: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." Such pronouns as used in above passages, "us" and "our" do not occur except where more than one person is concerned, thus going far to establish conclusively and scripturally the reality of the uncontrovertible truth that the Godhead subsists in more than one Person. Now, as to how many, the truth is decidedly more unveiled when we come to the New Testament. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word [or Son], and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."—1 John v. 7. In Matthew iii. 16, 17, we have it attested by divine authority that both the Father and the Holy Spirit were present at the baptism of the Son. Again, the Three-One God is declared to be the divine Initiator of the gospel commission, Matthew xxviii. 19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Again, this doctrine comes into prominence in the concluding benediction of the second epistle to the Corinthians. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." Consistently with this doctrine of the trinity of Persons in the Godhead, the testimony of inspiration is emphatic and conclusive that there are not three gods, but one and one only. "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me."—

Isaiah xlv. 5. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."—vi. 4. Space will not admit of our citing all the passages which bear upon this teaching of the Trinity, of the Three in Unity and of the One in Three. Over and over, the Scriptures reiterate that there are three distinct Persons in the Godhead in one God only. Nor is it wrong to speak of God as being a Person, for so does the inspired word itself in Hebrews i. 3, where it is declared that Jesus Christ is the express image of his person," that is, of the Person of God. Nor are we to understand from this that God is possessed of body, parts or passions such as characterize the finite creature man, yet is God immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, everyway infinite, most holy, most wise, most free, most absolute in his divine and glorious Person. We do not understand that the Trinity is merely designating the office-work of the Godhead, as some teach. For instance, it is sometimes said that the title "Father" applies to God in his office-work of creation, that the title "Son" applies to God in the office-work of redemption, that the "Holy Spirit" is God in the office-work of sanctification. We refuse to limit the Trinity of the Godhead to this realm of mere officialdom. Aside from all the various offices which the Godhead administers, there were three distinct Persons in the Godhead from eternity irrespective of any office-work which God has accomplished, is accomplishing, or will yet accomplish. These are not three different Persons, but distinct Persons. There is a distinction which Holy Writ reveals as subsisting be-

tween the Persons in the Godhead, but no difference between them. On this subject, we cannot forbear from quoting from that eminently spiritual servant of God, John Bunyan: "The Godhead is but One, yet in the Godhead there are Three. These Three are called the Father, the Son, (Word), and the Holy Spirit, each of which is really, naturally and eternally God; yet there is but one God. The Father is true God, the Son is true God, the Spirit is true God. Yet the Father is one, the Son is one, the Spirit is one. The Father is one of himself, the Son is one by the Father the Spirit is one from them both. Yet the Father is not above the Son, nor the Spirit inferior to either. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God. Among the Three, there is not superiority. As to time, the Father is from everlasting, so is the Son, so is the Spirit. As to nature, the Son is of the substance of the Father, and the Spirit is of the substance of them both. The fullness of the Godhead is in the Father, is in the Son and is in the Holy Ghost. Each of these is God over all, yet no Trinity of Gods, but one God in the Trinity." This principle of doctrine is fundamental to our salvation. It cannot be grasped by human intelligence nor plumbed by finite reason, yet it is plainly taught throughout the Scriptures of divine revelation. In whatsoever measure we are led into it, it is by faith alone, not by natural faith, but by that God-given faith which is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for. Lord, evermore give us this faith!

It is a blessed privilege to again be assembled together in associate capacity, to again greet brethren and

friends whom we seldom see, and to have preaching by ministers we seldom hear. May peace and prosperity from the Lord abound throughout our beloved Zion. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." The cooperation of interested friends in aiding to entertain this meeting is delightful to behold. Thank the Lord for such friendship which springs from heart interest in the truth. The hospitality of the homes which have been opened to us for entertainment over night is soul-cheering and heart-warming. We have come together in this meeting for the worship of God, that the sheep of his pasture may be fed with knowledge and understanding. It is not that we may put ourselves forward so as to be seen and heard of ourselves, but that Christ and him crucified may alone be adored and honored and glorified.

The next session of this associational meeting is appointed to be held, the Lord willing, in Philadelphia, Pa., in May, 1939, with the Salem Church.

Douglass L. Topping, Mod.

John B. Miller, Clerk

Elder H.H. Leferts

OBITUARIES

BRUCE SIDNEY COLEMAN

Bruce Sidney Bunn Coleman was born in Nash County on November 13, 1903, to Allison Ruffin and Fannie Flowers Bunn. She died September 21, 1986, survived by four

children: Mrs. Fannie Mae Marlowe, A. Carroll Coleman, Mrs. Esther C. Bissette and Mrs. Vanice C. Mercer; six step-children: Cleveland Coleman, William Coleman, Garland Coleman, Mrs. Dixie C. Page, Durand Coleman and Mrs. Pearl C. Lamm; 21 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

She united with Sandy Grove Primitive Baptist Church and was baptized on July 2, 1927, by Elder George W. Boswell. In November, 1946, she moved her membership to Healthy Plains Church where her husband was a member.

One June 2, 1934, she married Grover Cleveland Coleman, widowed father of seven young children. She made many prayerful petitions to the Lord concerning this union and her prayers were answered as evidenced by a happy and close-knit family. The children received her thankfully and graciously and have shown their love and devotion to her until her death.

God was most important in her life and she strove continually to live righteously and pleasing to Him and worshipped Him unashamedly before her family and the world. She guided her children with the Word of God, talking to them and admonishing them daily to walk in the fear of the Lord.

Her church was precious to her and many brethren, sisters and friends were graciously welcomed and cared for in her home until failing health. She had many sweet and comforting experiences of grace and was always ready to give an answer to every man that asked a reason of hope that was in her with meekness and fear.

After her husband's death March 23, 1968, her daughter, Vanice Mercer, came to live with her. She was paralyzed with a stroke on June 18, 1984, and though she suffered much, was a perfect example of patience, humbleness and resignation to the will of God. She spoke often of His great goodness and loved to talk of Him with others. While in the hospital, she once told her children she wanted her epitah to read, "Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God, He to rescue me from danger, interposed His precious blood." She was an inspiration to many at the Wilson Convalescent Center and the hospital and was shown much love and kindness.

When she passed quickly away on her church meeting day, her children can hope that "when her change came, angels hovered round her bed and wafted her spirit home." (From her favorite hymn, "Sweet to Rejoice in Lively Hope").

Her life of unselfish love and kindness was rewarded by the presence of so many friends and gifts of flowers, food and church donations during the funeral.

Her pastor, Elder Randall Saunders of Eden, NC, conducted her funeral with the comforting words that she had preached her own funeral by the way she had walked and lived as a true witness to God.

She was laid lovingly to rest in the Healthy Plains Church cemetery next to her husband.

To her children, these words from Proverbs, Chapter 31, fit our Mother:
*"Who can find a virtuous woman?
 for the price is far above rubies.
 Strength and honour are her cloth-*

ing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates."

*Esther C. Bissette, Daughter
Pearl C. Lamm, Step-daughter*

WOODROW W. HUDSON, SR.

My precious brother in flesh, and I hope in Christ, departed his earthly home Feb. 11, 1987 after a brief illness. He was a life long resident of Union Parish having gone to the Primitive Baptist Church all his life. He enjoyed visiting in the Liberty Hill Union and Spearsville Primitive Baptist Churches whenever he could.

Survivors include his wife Mrs. Fabrice Hudson, three sons Elder Woodrow W. Hudson, Jr. of Bastrop, La., Jackie L. Hudson of Houston, Texas and W. Prescott Hudson of Baton Rouge, La. one daughter Beth Winstead of Live Oak, Florida also two sisters Mrs. Lelia Harper of Springhill,

La. and Sister Ruth Miller of Farmerville, La. and seven grandchildren. His funeral service was conducted by Elders David E. Turner and George Jones at Farrars Funeral Home Chapel in Farmerville, La. Feb. 13, 1987, with burial in Liberty Hill cemetery near Farmerville.

Brother Hudson believed the doctrine that God inspired to be written by the writers of both old and new testament. He believed that God did so love the world that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That is the same love Jesus referred to in (John 1-29), "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," also the world that Jeremiah spoke of when he said "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying. Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. He that cometh to God must believe that he is God, the same that God said in (Psalms-127) "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." The same God that inspired Paul to write "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

This is written as a request of his beloved son Elder Woodrow W. Hudson, Jr.

Elder David E. Turner

**WILLIAM JEFFREY THOMPSON
VIRGIE LAWRENCE THOMPSON**

William J. (Jeff) Thompson, born October 17, 1896 passed from this life January 13, 1972. Son of E.K. and Mary Y. Thompson. He suffered much during a long drawn out illness. He was blessed to bear his suffering with patience. His brother, Elder B. Odell Thompson, together with several members of the church received him into the fellowship of Paynes Creek Primitive Baptist Church, at his home a short time before his death. He was never able to be baptized.

Jeff was a firm believer in salvation by grace. He could witness with the Apostle Paul I Cor. 15:10 By the grace of God I am what I am. His God given faith could enable him to say, O that I may be given to pray for a faith that will not shrink when washed in the waters of affliction. He served in the U.S. Army. He was in the Officer's Training School when the armistice was signed. After returning home he was married to Virgie Lawrence. Marriage rites performed by Elder Willie Vest, February 23, 1919. To this union nine children were born. One daughter, Una Inez preceded him in death.

He operated a country store (general merchandise) near his home place.

After selling said store he purchased a farm, a cattle ranch, near Floyd, Va. where he lived until he purchased a home on the outskirts of town. He and Virgie were blessed with almost fifty-three years of married life.

Funeral services were held at Salem Church, Copper Hill, Va. January 15, 1972. Elders Roy Ages and Julius Boccock officiating. His body was laid to rest in Rest Vale cemetery, Copper Hill, Va., to await the second coming of the Lord.

Virgie Lawrence Thompson daughter of Solomon and Ada Board Lawrence, born September 22, 1896. Died June 19, 1986. She was a life long resident of Floyd County. Virgie had deep religious convictions. She was impressed to offer to the church. I think her feeling of unworthiness caused her to fight against said impressions, until she finally took her bed, practically lost her appetite. Jeff had the family doctor come to see her. He after examination, told Jeff, "He found nothing wrong with her, and he was at a loss to know why she was so depressed and refused to eat normally." In the meantime Odell and I visited her. She said, "She would get no better until she offered to the church. Odell told her, "He would like to ask Elder J.P. Helms and some of the church people to come to her home. They complied with his request. Jeff told the doctor our plans. He suggested only two or three be allowed to see her at a time. I would say, her room was about full of people. Jeff took Odell to one side and told him the doctor's orders. Odell's reply was, "They will do her no harm, however for your satisfaction I will ask some of them to leave the room. After she had been received into the church and the people had left, she asked us to prop her up in bed and bring her some

food.

Jeff told the doctor what happened, his answer was, "Sometimes the Preacher can do more than the doctor can do." Virgie was a dedicated member of Paynes Creek Primitive Baptist Church. Attending church as long as her health permitted. She had been a member of the church about forty-two years.

How comforting are our memories

They sustain us in our sorrow

And give us reassurance

As we face a new tomorrow,

And though the world seems barren

When our loved ones depart

Their memory blooms forever

In the gardens of the heart.

She suffered a stroke, practically six months before her death, causing her to lose the use of one side and causing a great impediment of speech.

They are survived by two daughters, Mrs. Thomas (Angie) Cox, Eden, N.C., Mrs. Thomas (Eleanor) Kilduff, Roanoke, Va., six sons, Sherman, Arlie, Merlin, and Bain of Floyd, Va., Breeman and Harold of Dublin; one sister Mrs. Effie Janney, Roanoke; 25 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and one step-great-grandchildren.

Poor and afflicted, yet ere long, they'll join the bright celestial throng.

And all their sufferings then shall close,

And heaven afford them sweet repose.

Funeral services were held June 21, Salem Church, Copper Hill, with her pastor Elder Hale Terry officiat-

ing, assisted by Elder Lane Carter; with burial in Rest Vale Cemetery.

May God's richest blessings rest upon the family, and all who mourn, and may He enable them to say, "Gracious Father, thy will be done." Submitted in love by the request of a daughter.

Gaye A. Thompson

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 5/87
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.

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POEM

*A Sovereign Protector I have,
Unseen, yet for ever at hand:
Unchangeably faithful to save;
Almighty to rule and command!*

*He smiles, and my comforts abound;
His grace as the dew shall descend;
And walls of salvation surround
The souls he delights to defend!*

*Kind author and ground of my hope,
Thee, thee for my God I avow;
My glad Ebenezer set up,
And own thou hast helped me till now.*

*I muse on the years that are past,
Wherein my defense thou hast proved:
Nor wilt thou relinquish at last
A sinner so signally loved!*

Toplady.

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

A LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

Ex. 3:8

Since the kingdom of heaven is referred to as the smallest kingdom, and the children of that kingdom are referred to as being little children, it seems at this particular time (and especially since my correspondent requests that I write something beneficial to the little ones) a good time to speak and write quite often on that class of people. Speaking and writing to and about little ones calls for us to examine

their needs and capacities, and while we are treating on such a delicate subject, it will be just as well, if not much better, to know something of the delicacy of their make up, as well as to inquire into what is embodied in their diet.

While giving special attention to the little children of the kingdom, it is as well, if, indeed, not better, that we also pay attention to the fact that the elder ones among us (and it seems, at times that more and more of us are falling into that category) oftentimes seem to be delicate and weak and that they, too, need special diets.

As we scan the back issues of the Signs it seems that there has been a wide coverage of Israel going down into Egypt for bread. But little is said about delicacies for the feeding of the children of Israel. Primarily, it was bread, the staff of life, that they went after. There has been much arguing and oftentimes unkind things said on at least two sides of the vital issues involved. I do not have any desire whatever to argue, nor to wound, nor to make anyone offended for a word, but at the same time, I feel compelled to maintain the untarnished truth that God sent them all down there, to save much people alive, and brought every one of them out for the untarnished glory of Himself (Gen. 45:7,8). Furthermore, God destroyed all of the mighty host of the Egyptian empire that had enslaved His people.

Let us notice this all absorbing thought. Israel did not have long excursions into what would be called good times. It is best for Israel to consider in the day of adversity (Eccl. 7:14). Let us think soberly about the

condition of Israel in all of this history. Think about the children of Israel and as you think about them let us think about ourselves. What would have come of them all had it not been for Joseph? Isn't it a sad day of bitter facts against the brethren (against you and I)? Come dear brethren, tell me who it was that saved Israel? Was it Joseph or was it by any of the righteousness of his brethren? In fact, what saving power was in action in all of the spectacular events of grace along the route of these historical travels? Which one of the brethren contributed to the welfare of Israel? The brethren that sold Joseph did not intend to save any of them, including themselves, in the way that they were saved. If any kind of salvation that God's children have received in any age of the world has come from the brethren, let me say with my dying breath that here is an outstanding salvation that embraced ALL of Israel and yet not one thing did an Israelite contribute to their preservation and salvation except the part that Joseph had to do with it.

When the fulness of the four hundred years and plus that God promised Israel that they would stay, was up, there was another chapter to the history of that nation that was in the offing of God's reign over them. It has always been like that. It will always be like that. In every phase of the history of Israel it has been ordered of God. Israel was intermingled in every period of the history, but God declared before hand what was coming each time. Notice carefully the long write up about Israel going to Egypt long before they did. It was not too long after the

reason for Joseph going to Egypt had materialized before the next chapter or phase of Israel moving on was soon being talked about. This new land was talked about, as Egypt was talked about before it, as a goodly land. Starvation had caused them to go to Egypt and now persecution is getting them anxious and willing to go seeking a better place.

Adversity and prosperity are both from God. God has done the setting of one against the other. Thus, we are assured that there will not be any conflict between the events of each day. Time and again, Moses told the children of Israel that the land to which the Lord was sending them was a goodly land, even a land that flowed with milk and honey. This was, no doubt, good news to them, especially after having been persecuted and made to make hay and brick and labor in the fields.

Let us realize at the outset that there was not a thing coming out of this labor that was conducive to getting better production. It was exhausting labor that gave nothing to them in return except more demands on them for greater production. There was not anyway to satisfy the demands of the law. The more that you accomplished, the more there was to accomplish. While it has been truly said that the law came by Moses, I have always had a peculiar feeling that in some wonderful way that he in a double measure figured in some small measure as our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ also.

He began telling the children of Israel about a land to which the Lord was taking them to. He means more to me than just a messenger or a

type of the law, for here he is being guided by the Lord in getting the harassed people of God out from under the task masters of this new country to which they were going, would be flowing with milk and honey.

Have you ever heard of a man or a woman that could make honey? Do you know of a factory anywhere in the world in which they claim to be able to produce honey? Mark my question well. Do you know of such a thing? Now let us step back and read and meditate on Moses' declaration that the new land to which the Lord was directing them flowed with milk and honey. Was Moses telling Israel the truth? If so, name the time and place in which they found this to be true. Now before we venture further, let us ask this pertinent question, to wit, Has any man or woman, in and of themselves, ever produced any milk as food for their fellow creatures? No man, and no woman, in and of themselves, has ever produced a drop of milk. And notwithstanding all this. We are told that the new land flowed with milk and honey.

It is readily admitted that little ones need much milk in their diet. But they cannot produce a drop of this essential food. It likewise is readily admitted that honey is extensively used in feeding little ones. But here again, we run up against the fact, that no man nor set of men can produce a drop of it. Where is this flowing volume of milk and honey coming from? Remember the country is flowing with these two things.

Did Israel Live as well as Moses' statement would indicate that they would? They did not. However,

the Lord did take care of them. Goodness and mercy did flow as a continuing and flowing stream. Then, dearly beloved child, let us think upon what Moses told the children of Israel, being altogether truth, altogether lovely, but let us think of this fabulous flowing land of milk and honey as spiritual blessings. David, in his advanced years was as full of God's bountiful promises as was Moses in this case, but David did not see the literal fulfillment of God's bountiful care of his people. He had been young and had gotten old, yet he had not seen the righteous forsaken or His seed begging bread. But to me he was speaking about spiritual Bread, certainly not natural.

Certainly the children of God have had days of adversity as well as days of prosperity, but whatever have been the days, the goodness and tender mercies of God have been a continuing flow of blessings. Certainly Israel gathered the manna from heaven; they stood astonished as Moses smote the Rock and the cooling waters flowed out; it is readily admitted that Moses father in law encouraged the Israelites to go on the journey because it was a good one, and that everything would be alright. But the question in my mind is: Was the goodness of the journey to be in the receipts of the good land and prosperous journey, or was the pleasant figure of a land flowing with milk and honey to be rich in spiritual blessings. Did the Lord turn from His people on this goodly journey in giving them Himself, in giving them to experience seasons of rejoicings in the Spirit to a rich and full life in the perishable things of this

goodly land. Were they to experience the trial that Job experienced? Were they tried with the trial that Peter tells us to look for and to expect? In short, did Moses seduce them into this lonely hazardous journey with promises of a full dinner pail and change in the pocket, or was he describing for their consolation; was he preparing them for a journey in which the days of adversity were rigidly set over against the days of prosperity?

It was a trying journey, although Jethro described it as a good journey I believe, if I believe, that the gospel of the grace of God was preached to them, but I am not able to conceive, either by the letter of what Moses and Jethro said to them, nor by my own experience that they were talking about material blessings, about the things of the earth, even though they flow freely from God's beneficent hand. It seems, at times, at least, that I have little evidence of acceptance with Him, but when I survey my status in my relationship with the earth, it is not too much help and encouragement to me to take hope. I have had a lot of sickness; I have been near death twice. According to those that know more than I do; I have had reverses in the business world, but notwithstanding all of that, I have lived in a land that has flowed with milk and honey. Strange as it may seem, it has been a source of anxiety because the Lord has been so good to me. On the other hand, it has seemed to me that I have such a little to base a hope in His mercy upon, that I am often cast down and filled with doubts of my hope and my call to the ministry. And yet, it is with

shamefacedness that I write these things against myself. For, There has been times in the pulpit when I would have been as willing to leave everything precious to me on earth and to follow Him in death and in life. I have stood in the pulpit and wished that my hearers could stand there with me and see what I was seeing.

The things of the earth given me have been mine. God gave them to me for my benefit here. The weakness in my deportment before Him, and before His children have, likewise, been mine. Yet the things of the earth, having been as a land flowing with milk and honey, have seemed to be a stumbling block to me, but the things of the Spirit, if, indeed, I have been thus led, I have, as it were, stumbled or fell into the reception of them, as one that had no sense of direction. Yet, when water was given me, as by a Rock having been struck, when manna has dropped down when I was hungry and destitute, when a voice at my side spoke in soothing terms, This is the way, walk ye in it, at those times I do hope that my soul was built up, my faith increased, my hope brightened, I have felt some degree of desire to say, Have thine own way, Lord, thou art the Potter, I am the clay.

Elder W.D. Griffin

CORRESPONDENCE

“ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid

on Him the iniquity of us all.” Isa. 5 vs. 3-6.

I awoke this morning with this scripture running through my mind and would like, if I can do so, to express a few of my thoughts on it. This shows forth the sad, depraved conditions of the human race, more especially of the Lord’s people in their natural condition. Who is there among us who would not like to do as we please and have everything our own way. We very often strive very hard to have things our way until, finally, the Lord makes us to realize that our way is not the right way. It is such an easy and a natural thing for each of us to go our own way and it more often than not does lead us astray. Therefore God in His wisdom, before the earth was ever formed, knew that He had to have a plan to save man from himself. So by the everlasting covenant of the Triune Godhead, and by mutual agreement, so to speak, laid the burden of all the sins of man on the person of Jesus who was to be our Saviour at the appointed time and place.

Verse 3, “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”

Man in his natural state has no love for Christ, indeed He is despised, hated and rejected by men, they feel no need for Him nor feel any sort of admiration. Therefore none wish to know Him, so they turn away and hide their faces from Him, and hold no esteem for Him

whatsoever.

Verses 4 and 5, “Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.” “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”

When we in the strife and disappointments of life find ourselves burdened down with sorrow and grief, so great that it seems to be absolutely unbearable. Then it is that our blessed Saviour comes to us with healings in His wings and bears upon wings of love and brings us comfort and peace, because He has borne our sorrows and griefs and in love and compassion comes to us when we need Him most. Yet natural man holds Him in no esteem, a man whom God afflicted. Still, it is for our transgressions that He was nailed to the cross, was wounded with thorns, spears and swords and in His agony was given a sip of vinegar and gall to drink, which I think is a symbol of the bitter, bitter cup filled full with all the sins of man. To be His drink in His final hours and so it is that with His stripes, that is, His punishment, all His sufferings and wounds which were inflicted on Him and causing His blood to flow out, when He gave His precious life to be a ransom for His people and His chastisement or punishment, was to bring about our peace, so with His stripes we are healed, made clean and pure of all our transgressions which He cleansed with His own precious blood and made us to be forever accepted in the beloved.

And so, now that it is all accomplished for his wayward sheep who have all gone astray, they will all be housed in one fold watched over by one Great Shepherd, who saved them from all their transgressions and has since then made intercessions between man and God, that man's prayers may be heard and that he might find favor in the sight of God and receive the manifold blessings of a gracious, loving Heavenly Father who holds all things in the hollow of His hand.

These are some of my thoughts concerning this beautiful scripture of Isaiah, foretelling the life and death of Christ. To me this is one of the most beautiful chapters in the Bible. I know my wording is very simple and inadequate to describe this magnificent work of a most powerful and Holy God.

If you think it suitable for publication you are free to use it, otherwise just discard it.

May God bless all connected with the publishing of the "Signs" to His glory.

From one who is the least of all,
Mrs. Laura Wolf

February 3, 1987
Route one
Scrogins, Texas

Dear Elder Key:

I believe the scriptures to teach that Zion is the complete church of God, the Bride of Christ, the Body of Christ, and that

Zion is the one the Lamb of God did bleed and die for and did rise for on the third day, and He, Christ, did ascend back into the heavens to receive the Glory He had with the Father from the beginning. Is Zion in danger? Let us see.

Isaiah 46-13, "I bring near my righteousness: it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." I understand His righteousness and salvation, here spoken of, to be the Christ, the Lamb of God. Where then is Christ? He is, or I understand Isaiah to proclaim, in Zion.

Psalm 132-13, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion, He hath desired it for His habitation." Zechariah 1-17, "... and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and yet choose Jerusalem." Will He comfort Zion? 2 Peter 3-9, "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness but is long suffering to usward not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." As the scriptures set forth, God is not slack concerning his promise. Yes, surely he will comfort Zion. His habitation and salvation are in Zion, and He shall comfort her. What sweet news this is to a trembling child of grace; one who can find no resting place in this unkind sinful world. I can find no reason to be distressed over Zion, for "the Lord hath desired it for his habitation."

I will be honest, dear ones. What distresses me is me and my ungodly sins. I have to confess with Paul, "I am the chief of sinners." If I know my poor heart, I do desire to do all things that would be pleasing in the sight of

God. I beg him to "lead me in the Paths of Righteousness for His name sake," but I find I go farther astray. Oh, I would do good!

The Lord will surely take care of Zion. What could be desired for her more than the Lord has already done? He has placed salvation in Zion.

I know the scripture states in Amos 6-1, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria..." It does not say, woe unto Zion, but woe to them that are at ease in Zion. Who are those that are at ease? They are the ones that trust in the mountain of Samaria; worshipping strange gods, the flesh. Are they trusting in the Lord? If they are in Zion they will be brought to trust in Him. His salvation will appear to them at His appointed time and will surely bring them to a time of woe. Will it not lay the flesh low? Everyone that makes up the Body of Christ (Zion) will be killed to the flesh. All have or will be brought to a woeful time. Isa. 54-13, "Then they will be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of His children." This peace is given to each and every one of those that are in Zion. What is distressing about this? Psalms 9, 10, 11, "and they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." 11, "Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion; declare among the people his doings." The Lord has promised to never leave or forsake his little one, and when one is brought to know the Lord, after he has been brought to a time of woe, surely he will "sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion." Surely

he will declare the Lord is risen and alive forever more. He will no longer trust in the flesh but trust in the Lord. What is distressing about being brought to trust in the Lord?

I have felt a desire, at times, to beg the Lord in His mercy to keep each of the little churches here in peace, but I have not been given a desire to ask for an increase in the churches. I find the scriptures to teach that the Lord will "add to the church daily such as should be saved." I don't think this means a new one will be added, but Christ shall be revealed, here in time, to them that are in Zion.

Dear ones, I believe Zion will be comforted. No harm shall come to her. God does dwell in the midst of her. She is safe, for salvation has been placed in her.

In the 46 chapter of Isaiah God proclaims "he has spoken it, and he shall bring it to pass." He shall "bring near his righteousness" and "placed salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." Who or what is Israel my glory? In the 2 chapter of Luke, when Simeon, a devout man, was waiting at the temple "for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him." he beheld the Christ Child. He asked the Lord to let him, Simeon, depart in peace, for he had seen "the Lord's salvation, the light, to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Israel." This salvation, the "glory of Israel" (Christ) was placed in Zion by the Lord for his glory (Christ). It is by Him and through Him.

Job 23-13, "He is in one mind and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth even that he doeth." "He has spoken it, and he will bring it

to pass." He has placed a light in Israel for the Gentiles. He has promised never to forsake Israel. What is there to be distressed about for Zion? Zion is the habitation of the Lord.

Surely the Lord's desire is toward Zion. Surely He would not make Zion His habitation or place His salvation in Zion if His desire was not toward her. If God's desire is for Zion, can anything ever go wrong for her? Is she not safe?

Afflictions do come upon Zion. Are they for her good? In the scriptures we are taught when the Lord blessed Israel, she became a proud and stiff neck nation. How did the Lord humble Israel? He withdrew His blessings from her and brought her low. Then, she would "trust in the Lord" and "declare among the people his doings." "Was she ever in danger of being forsaken of God? No, for He has promised never to forsake Zion.

Would God forsake his salvation, the glory of Israel, the Lamb of God? Dear ones, to even ask this question seems almost blasphemous to me. He has given His promise to Zion. His promises are true.

There has come a great falling away among our churches, but has Zion been forsaken? Christ speaking of His second coming in Thes. 2-3, "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." The falling away seems to give evidence, to me, that the coming of the Lord is near. I trust, in small times, I can find a comfort in this. Trusting the Lord of

glory will soon gather Zion unto himself in the final consumation of all things. How could this be a cause of distress for Zion? It appears good news: the promise of his coming.

I am mindful of Elijah in King (1), the 18 chapter, where he asked the worshippers of Baal to lay their wood and dress a bullock and put it on the wood, and he would do the same. Then they could call on Baal to set the wood on fire and he would call on God. He told them, "I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answerest by fire, let him be God." You know how it was, they called on Baal; they worked themselves up quite a bit even to the cutting of themselves until the blood ran. Elijah mocked them and told them, "cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or preadventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." They called until they had no voices to call with. Then Elijah went near and called to the Lord and the fire fell and burnt all, even the stones and dust and licked up the water in the trench. Isaiah 59-1, "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it can not hear." The Lord whose habitation is Zion does not have a deaf ear. In Mathew chapter 6, Jesus teaches His disciples, telling them how to pray. He told them "not to be as the heathern," for they like to be heard for their much speaking, but "to pray to the father in secret and it would be rewarded openly." It is not with loud cries that inclines the Lord to hear Zion but with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered.

What more can we ask for Zion

than what God has already promised. Christ speaking in John 14-27, "My peace I leave my peace I give to you. Not as the world knows peace." This is the peace He has given Zion. Peace, salvation, light, promised never to forsake, and desireth Zion for his habitation-- what else does the trembling child of grace stand in need of? Does God need to be remindful of his promises to Zion? How foolish, how unprofitable we are.

Dear ones, I find much about myself to be distressed about, am I of Zion or not? This and my sins distress me greatly.

I find comfort and peace again, at small times, in that God's habitation is Zion, and that He has placed salvation and peace in her.

Pray for me and mine.

In hope of heaven.

Unworthy,
Evelyn Rhoades

Elder J. R. Williams
Dear Brother,

I am 92 years of age, have been a subscriber of the Signs for about 30 years. I have been blessed up till now that I still can read the book with my glasses and I have enjoyed reading it. But there is a time that I will have to quit.

I am sending you a check for another subscription, enclosed here with it a check for \$12.00. \$10.00 for

my subscription and the two extra is for the benefit of the Signs.

I probably will not be able to go any longer this probably will be my last subscription. I called you brother not that I am worthy or at least for any good work that I have done but it is for the hope I have in our Saviour. Pray for me.

Yours in hope,
Harvey Vick

Christ. Our Saviour. He is coming again some sweet day to gather up all his jewels, Elect of God. Whose names were written in the Lambs Book of Life, before the foundation of the world. No man or the Angels in Heaven knows when he is coming. Neither the Son, but the Father. Many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ. There will be wars, nation against nation. Trouble and sorrow, earthquake Kingdoms against Kingdoms. The sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light. The stars in Heaven shall be shaken. Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds. Angels shall gather together His Elect from the Four Winds, from the uttermost parts of the earth. Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. St. Mark 13:31. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch. St. Mark 13:37. I am alpha and omega the beginning and end. The first and last. I am that I am. God in Heaven. Blessed are they that do His Commandments that they may

have right to the Truth of Life and may enter in through the Gate into the City.

May the Grace and Love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be with you all.

My prayer is to know more of Christ our Saviour each day I live.

Pray for this sinner,
Fred Ballard Murphy
Route 8 - Box 50
El Dorado, Ark. 71730

been made to believe that Heaven will be my final resting place.

What a wonderful thought! I'll have no more rough roads to travel but I'll be able to walk the Golden Streets forever and forever.

May the God I love and trust bless his people the world over, is my prayer for Christ sake.

Love to all God's good people.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Roosevelt Peters

March 12, 1987

The Editors of the
Signs of the Times,

I have a mind to relate a couple of dreams I had in the past.

When I was about 16 years old, I dreamed I was in a deep pit. Fire broke out all around me. I tried to get out of the pit, but everywhere there was fire all around me. Suddenly I was wafted upward and carried away to a place of safety—to a beautiful place where there were many seats. I started to sit down, but an angel, say's to me, "Sister Peters, that seat is not for you." "Here is the one's we have reserved for you." It was beautiful and when I sat down it was the softest seat I ever sat in.

Sometimes old satan gets in the way, but the God I love, gives me strength to tell him to get behind me. Somehow, as I journey here on this sin-cursed earth God has made the way smooth part of the time. I have

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 6/87
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.

MEETINGS

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Staunton River Primitive Baptist Association will be held, if the Lord's willing, with Mt. Ararat (Old Mt.) Church second Sunday and Friday and Saturday before July 1987. We invite all lovers of the truth to meet with us. All ministers of our faith and order, who are at peace at home, are invited.

Take Mt. Cross Road (750) from Riverside Drive go approximately 13 miles to the church on right.

Elder J.R. Williams, Moderator
Harvey Wood, Clerk

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



MARTINSVILLE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Martinsville Primitive Baptist Church became a member of the Pigg River Association in the year 1900. The date the church was organized is unknown. Former pastors were Elder Randolph Perdue and Elder Cecil Turner. Elder Lane Carter is present pastor.

The church is located on Rives Road in the city of Martinsville, Va.

Their meeting times are 11:00 a.m. third Sunday of each month and at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday before. Communion service is held the third Sunday in June each year.

ARTICLES

GOD IS LOVE

The apostle John, inspired by the Holy Ghost, wrote much concerning love, and is often called the apostle of love, although, all of the apostles displayed great love for God and the saints of God after they had received the Holy Spirit. Before they received the Holy Spirit however, they showed forth their carnal, sinful natures. Each and every apostle that walked with Christ while he was on earth said he would die for Christ, yet all forsake him and fled, and Peter even cursed and swore that he knew him not. Of course Jesus knew exactly what they would do, and told them so. It could not be otherwise, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. Peter, especially, received a great lesson from this - that he was not his own keeper - and this is written not for his sake alone, but for the learning of all the children of promise; for all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. We are not our own keepers for without Christ we can do nothing. Jesus said, Without me ye can do nothing. Can we do anything that Jesus said we cannot do? Certainly not. On the other hand, we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us. Is not love one of the "all things"?

Everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. We are not here talking of natural, earthly, sensual love. There is love of parents, brothers, sisters, other kin-folks, friends, etc. and there is the love of money which is the root of all evil. Certainly this is not the love spoken of in the bible by the inspired apostles. We are speaking of the love that none but the born again child of God can know anything about. This is a love that God teaches. I do not know that I have this special love, but I have a certain feeling for the people I believe to be the children of God, a feeling that I have for no other people on earth, and I believe I have the witness in my heart that I believe on the Son of God, and if this witness be true then I can be numbered with the children. Even when I was a child in nature, I believed there is a God and I sought to worship him, but my efforts were in vain, for I did not worship him in spirit or in truth. I only knew of him as I was taught of men, but I did not truly know him experimentally in my heart as my savior, nor did I know anything of his doctrine. I may not know anything now, but my understanding has been changed, changed at a time when I certainly was not seeking change. Before this change I believed I could do something toward my own salvation, for all I supposed I had to do was accept him as my personal savior. He had left this part up to me, for he loved all men and would gladly save them if only they would let him. For God loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever was willing to believe on

him would be saved. What a God dishonoring doctrine this is, and it is still being taught by men today. I do not wish to condemn those who believe this, for I have many friends among them, but my hearts desire is for God to show them the truth as I believe he did for me. Other men cannot do this with any effect. God does not love all men, for he loved Jacob but hated Easu. Jesus told some of his followers that they were not his sheep, and that they would not come to him for eternal life. Why would they not come? Because they were not given to Christ before the foundation of the world. "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me, and I will raise him up at the last day." God has a people in every nation, kindred and tongue who were chosen in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world, and he loves them with an everlasting love. He knew that they would transgress his holy law and fall under condemnation of the law; and the penalty is death. God's law is just and holy. It demands death of the transgressor, and it must be satisfied. Love and mercy are attributes of the Most High, but so is justice. One cannot overpower the other, for they are equal. There is no greater love nor mercy than that which God has bestowed upon poor, helpless sinners, but where there is no shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Therefore a sacrifice must be found to satisfy justice and at the same time redeem sinners from the curse of the law. The blood of goats, bulls, doves nor any other creature could do that. Only the blood of the pure, sinless, holy Lamb of God could

accomplish that. Therefore Christ stood as a Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. How this innocent Lamb could die in the room and stead of guilty sinners and still satisfy justice is indeed a marvel to behold, but I will not attempt to describe it in this short letter. He came to do the will of his Father. "And this is the will of Him that sent me, that I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day." The work that his Father gave him was finished when he hung upon the cross and testified, It is finished. By one sacrifice he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified, and is now entered into the sanctuary not made with hands to make intercession for them according to the will of God. The Holy Ghost bears witness of this to us, and the Lord has made a covenant with us saying, I will put my laws in their hearts, and write them in their minds. And their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. Greater love hath no man than he should lay down his life for his friends. Christ has laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our life for our brethren. This we cannot and will not do of ourselves, but only with the help of the Holy Spirit. Therefore let us go down on our knees daily and cry unto Him for grace to esteem our brethren better than self, and be humble before them in brotherly love. If we do not love our brothers whom we have seen, how can we love God who we have not seen? Let us not love in words only, but in deeds. In our churches today we hear professions of love often, but in many cases we see little action to prove it. A brother

or sister is turned aside for some offence, unintentional or not, or maybe he or she does not see a scripture in the same light as ourselves. False doctrine should never be tolerated, but let us not destroy one another over minor differences. If a brother offends, let us go to him in love and attempt to clarify the situation. Should this fail, let us always follow the doctrine and ordinances set forth for us by Jesus Christ and the apostles. Let us not follow after men. We have seen this following after men, and it has caused great division amongst the brethren and churches. There are even those who exercise great authority in the churches, without truly having this authority, and it is tolerated by the other members. This should not be, for Christ is the only one with authority. He is the head of the church, and we should always look to him for guidance. Should I or anyone else attempt to control the church, be he deacon, elder or lay member, immediate action, in accord with the scriptures, should be taken.

I can well remember when I knew nothing of the doctrine or ordinances of the Bible as believed or taught by the Old School or Primitive Baptist people, yet they manifested a love that could not be denied and I was drawn to them like a bee to honey. Bickering and petty jealousy among them was unknown to me. The meeting houses were often full to overflowing, but now our buildings are seldom full and often almost bare at meeting time because of the lack of love. Think about it, brethren, and pray, pray, pray.

And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave commandment. Faith, hope and charity are gifts of God unto us, and the greatest of these is charity, for charity is Godly love. When we no longer have need of hope or faith, charity will abide. Let it not grow cold while we dwell here in this world of sin and sorrow.

Beloved brethren, I had an urge to write to you today that I could not resist. I have not written what I thought I might, but I have written what has entered my mind. I trust that it has been given of God, and hope that it is for his praise, honor and glory.

I beg an interest in your prayers of faith. May the love of God ever be with you.

An unworthy brother, if one at all.
Clifford Wilbanks

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

PROVERBS IX. 1

"Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars."

Some time ago Brother J.C. Kenerly, of Atlanta, Georgia, asked us to present our views in the SIGNS on the above text. We did not do so at the time the request came because we felt we could not, even now we fear to attempt it; however, to say that we have had no thoughts upon the matter at all would not be

true, therefore we shall try to present such thoughts as we have and leave them for the judgment of our brother and our readers. This wisdom spoken of by the inspired Solomon is the wisdom of God. The house of wisdom is the church of the living God. It is through the wisdom of God that the church is built and that her seven pillars are hewn out. Knowledge is one thing; wisdom another. The wisdom and the knowledge of God are both infinite, and comprehend all things. But if we confuse knowledge with wisdom in this matter we shall lose the beauty of the text. Wisdom is especially the use to which knowledge is put. Taking it naturally, a man might know many things yet have very little wisdom. On the other hand, a man might be very wise yet have a very limited knowledge. Education may strengthen the mind with knowledge, but it cannot compel that knowledge to be employed wisely. The natural-born mechanic can do marvelous things with a few tools, while a mechanic without natural ability might not do nearly so well with all the modern mechanical appliances; so a really wise man with a little store of knowledge might accomplish great things, wherein a highly educated man might fail because he lacked ability to be wise. We simply mention the above matters to show the distinction between knowledge and wisdom and that they are not at all the same thing. The true and living God is just as infinitely wise as he is infinitely knowing, but our text says particularly that it is through wisdom rather than through knowledge that the church is built. God, foreknowing from eternity all

things that should ever come to pass, comprehended all and every condition that should ever befall his children throughout the ages of time. Knowing all things, God knew beforehand just what to do, and when and how to do it in order to establish and to secure forever his holy house, the church. This marvelous wisdom God abundantly displayed when he beforehand blessed his people with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Herein was provision made in the wisdom of God for all the needs of his people in any and all times. It will be noticed that the text says, "Wisdom hath builded her house," not his house. Wisdom is spoken of as being in the feminine, not the masculine, gender. The reason for this is because the unity of Christ Jesus and his people is so vitally and eternally close that the wisdom of the eternal God embodied in Christ Jesus is at the same time the wisdom of the church also. What belongs to Christ belongs to her, therefore it is her wisdom, further, because it is the wisdom of God manifested in the church and flowing out of the church in a living walk and conversation, bringing about a building of her members up into the spiritual temple. As Paul wrote to the church of Philippi, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The outward fruit testifying of salvation in a believer's life is due to the Spirit of God working in the soul of the believer. Likewise the wisdom of God in the upbuilding of the church is not brought about by some outward influence brought to

bear upon believers, but it is brought about by the Spirit of infinite wisdom working in and through each of the living members of the body of Christ, and working so effectually as to bring them out from the quarry of nature where they have lain dead in trespasses and in sins and fashioning them and building them up into the spiritual house of God. The house of God is not in anyway the result of man's work or teaching; not even do man's efforts have a part in it. From the beginning to the end, from foundation-stone to cap-stone, it is entirely the work of God, and wholly the revelation of God's infinite wisdom working its will in and through the members of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul told the Athenians when he preached that remarkable sermon on Mar's Hill that the most high God does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is he worshiped with man's hands.

We now come to the second part of the text, which declares that wisdom has hewn out her seven pillars. In ancient times seven was often regarded as having a mystical significance, or as signifying perfection. For instance, the seven churches in Asia mentioned by John in Revelation do not mean simply seven literal churches, but signify the seven periods of the gospel church, or the entire travel of the gospel church from the days of the apostles to the end of this dispensation. Paul, in writing to Timothy, declared the house of God to be the church, the pillar and ground of truth. In the song of Solomon the bride, or church, is spoken of as coming out of the

wilderness like pillars of smoke. We shall not, therefore, contradict the word of God when we say that the church is the pillar of the truth, nor would it be wrong to say that the churches of the saints are the pillars hewn out by wisdom. A pillar is used in a building to support the superstructure, and is itself builded on the foundation. One of the purposes of God in maintaining his church in the midst of an ungodly world is to uphold the truth as well as for it to be supported by the truth. God has nowhere said in the Scriptures that the church is to convert the heathen, or to save the world for Christ, but the Scriptures do abundantly testify that God's object in the church is that it shall be the living witness of his truth. Therefore, the church as a whole being the pillar of truth, the individual and separate churches builded upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets are the pillars. These churches of the saints, beginning with the one organized in the city of Jerusalem during the time of Pentecost spoken of in the second chapter of Acts and continuing on down through the centuries to the present time, have been hewn out by divine wisdom. Human efforts and creature wisdom have had nothing whatever to do with hewing out these pillars. The wisdom of God incarnate in the Lord Jesus Christ is the mighty force that, in the beginning of the gospel age, lighted the lamp of his truth in the hearts of men, and that same wisdom trims those lamps and keeps them burning at the present time. No one of us can keep alive our own soul, and it is equally true that all of us together cannot keep the

church alive. God has his own perfect way of carrying on and accomplishing this work. It is not the way that men would do it, nor is it after the advisings of men's thoughts, but it is the only perfect way, and as far above man's way of doing things as the heavens are higher than the earth. Unto the Jerusalem church, the first gospel church ever organized among men, God himself added daily such as should be saved. The members of the church had nothing whatever to do with increasing its membership, or with decreasing it. This was the Lord's work entirely, and it is still the work of God to-day. Through his infinite and unerring wisdom God selects whom he wants to be members of his church, and he, by the Spirit of divine wisdom in the hearts of those individuals, brings them into the church, maintains them in the church as long as it is his will that they should stay there, and when done with them here takes them home to the church triumphant. We see, hence, that truly it is wisdom that has builded the temple of the living God, and that it is indeed his wisdom that hews out the seven pillars of the house, that is, the whole perfect number of the churches of the saints that have been here in the world organized through the Spirit into visible bodies. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

Elder Leferts

Dear Sir,—Is it scriptural for a Particular Baptist church to admit members of General Baptist churches to the Lord's table, upon a well-founded supposition that they are the Lord's children?

An answer to this would greatly oblige, Sir,

Yours in the Lord
BETA, DELTA.

ANSWER.

All Particular Baptist churches consider such a practice subversive of their principles, and a sanctioning of error and disorder. As some really God-fearing persons in our churches may not clearly see this, we will devote a few words to the subject.

We fully admit that it may seem, at first sight, narrow and rigid, and to some almost unchristian, not to allow members of General Baptist churches, assuming they bear marks of grace, to sit down with the members of Particular Baptist churches. But what we are to consider is not so much individuals as a principle; and then what seems harsh as regards persons, may appear quite right as regards things. Now, as a principle for a church to act upon—and here we must consider the private feelings of individual members, but the church, as "the pillar and ground of truth"—is it right in a church, as Christ's representative, to sanction error and erroneous men? But this it certainly does whilst it admits members of erroneous churches to sit down at the table; for in sanctioning the members, it indirectly, if not directly, sanctions both the church and the minister.

Besides, what evidence have we that whilst they hold such errors, which we must assume they do as long as they continue members of a general church, they are partakers of grace? The General Baptist churches are sunk in free will, and are for the most part deadly enemies to a free-grace gospel. How, then, can we welcome to the Lord's table those who deny his finished work, are not stripped and emptied of self, and fight against those precious truths whence we derive all our hope? If it be answered that these members do not, we may reply, their minister does, and the church with which they stand connected; and whilst in union with such a church, the voice and acts of the church are their voice and acts; for were they to testify against the doctrines held by the minister and the church, their membership would come to a speedy end. But would we admit their ministers to our pulpits? Why, then, admit their members to our table? "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" How then can the friends of a particular redemption walk with the friends of a universal one, or the lovers of free grace unite with the lovers of free will; or how can those who cleave wholly and solely to Christ's righteousness, walk with those who hold with part of their own? At the Lord's table, we want love and union, to be joined together in one heart and one judgment. But how can this be the case, when members of general churches unite with us at this solemn ordinance? If they be children of God, and have received the truth in the love of it, why do they still sit under error? Why still continue

members of erroneous churches? Why not "come out and be separate," as the Lord bids?

But why do they want to sit down with the Particular Baptists? Have they not a table of their own? Why do they not keep to it? Why do they want us to sanction their errors? Most probably the reason of their continuing members of dead churches is some flesh-pleasing cause, or some worldly, self-indulgent motive. Why should this be sanctioned and covered over, and they thus really strengthened in their evil-doing? If they are one in heart with us, why not unite with us openly? If not one in heart, why do they want to sit down with us? By making a stand against their sitting down at the table—not from any prejudice against the individual, but on the ground of truth and conscience—we may lead them to consider their ways, which are not good; and thus our seeming harshness be really more profitable to them than flesh-pleasing softness. As long as churches of truth countenance error by word or deed, in principle or practice, it will be thought of little consequence. Thus truth and error get confounded, the church and the world insensibly mingled, the barriers set up against false doctrine pulled down, and separation from all evil eventually nullified. The only way is to make a stand at the outset, and not give way in this apparently little thing and the other seemingly mere trifle, as men estimate them—as if any part of God's truth or worship were a matter of indifference—but to resist the entrance of all error and all evil from the beginning, as one would at once

stop a small leak in a ship, or trample out a spark in a room, lest the former sink the vessel and the other burn down the house. A Particular Baptist church that does not stand firm to its faith and order will soon tolerate other innovations, till at last it loses all its distinctive features, and sinks down into a mere worldly church, a wreck and ruin of what it once was. As in individuals sin begins by littles, and one thing leads on to another, till crime is consummated; so in churches error and declension usually commence by "Is it not a little one?"

Upon these grounds, then, we resist the introduction of the members of General Baptist churches to the Lord's table, as sanctioning error, breaking down our faith and order, and opening a way to a union with the world and all its evil results.

J.C. Philpot

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

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

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

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

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

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

CONTRIBUTIONS

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OBITUARIES

SISTER MARCELLA VEST CONNER

It has pleased our Heavenly Father by His love and mercy to call Home another one of our lovely members at Roanoke Primitive Baptist Church.

Sister Marcella Vest Conner was

born March 7, 1891 and passed away February 22, 1987, making her stay here on earth almost 96 years. She was married to Brother Robert Conner who passed away February 5, 1946.

She is survived by two sons, Mr. Estral Conner and Brother Hansel Conner, Salem, Va; one daughter, Mrs. Ada Lynn Bohon, Salem, Va. in whose home she lived for the past year. One daughter, Mrs. Sabra Short passed away in June 1984 and one son Mr. Basil Conner passed away in December 1986. A number of grand children and great-grandchildren also survive.

Sister Conner joined the Primitive Baptist Church with her husband in 1912. Her membership was at Laurel Creek Church until Mountain View Church Floyd Co. was organized, then they moved their membership there and Brother Conner was ordained a deacon. Later in 1957 she moved her membership to Roanoke Church where she indeed lived a faithful member until her death.

A few weeks before her passing she told me that she had been a member of the Primitive Baptist Church longer than some people had lived, about 75 years.

The faith of God all these years has kept her and the most important thing to her was salvation by grace and she never looked for anything better or had any place better to go than to attend the churches of her faith. She was a beautiful Mother in Israel, made beautiful by the love of God which shined from her face and enriched her life. She also was so beautiful in death.

Her funeral was conducted February 24, 1987 at Lotz Salem Funeral Home by Elder Lane Carter, who spoke so comforting to the family and the many brethren, sisters and friends that filled the chapel, after which she was laid to rest in Sherwood Cemetery under a beautiful blanket of flowers to await the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now to her family we would say, weep not for her but rather rejoice that she is now resting from all her labors in the arms of her beloved Saviour.

This memorial was written at the request of her son, Brother Hansel Conner and humbly submitted by one who loved her dearly.

Mrs. H.C. (Rlee) Houchins

Johnnie Gray Everette

In loving memory of our dear Sister, Johnnie Gray Everette, who departed this life November 28, 1986. She was born in Martin County March 4, 1907, the daughter of Samuel H. and Sallie Blount Roebuck. She was married to Hubert Everette who passed away in 1945. To this union two children were born, Staton, who preceded his mother in death in April, 1971, and Hubert of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. He was blessed to visit his mother and have her visit him during the last years of her declining health. He proved to be a loving and devoted son.

We of Flat Swamp Church extend

our deepest sympathy to Hubert and his family and to all who were near and dear to her by the ties of nature. We miss her very much as she was always one of the first to arrive at church. She loved to greet each one with a hearty welcome and that sweet smile, which manifested her love. She was a strong believer of the Primitive Baptist doctrine and was always ready to defend it.

Sister Johnnie moved away from this area for several years, but upon her return to Robersonville, she soon asked for a home with Flat Swamp Church, where her father and mother had been members many years before. She was received by baptism on November 7, 1971.

Her funeral was held in Biggs Funeral Chapel by her pastor, Elder Reeves Smith. She was laid to rest in Robersonville Cemetery where many flowers and friends showed the love they had for her. We believe one day she will be blessed to hear her Savior say, "Come and inherit that home prepared for you from the foundation of the world, where there will be peace and love forevermore."

Done by the order of conference, Saturday before the first Sunday in December, 1986.

Elder Reeves Smith, Moderator
Hassel Allen, Committee

EMMA SMOTHERS MCCOLLUM

Sister Emma 93 died Feb. 15, 1986 in Twin Lake Nursing Home in Burlington, N. C. Her Funeral

was at Pleasantville Primitive Baptist Church where she was a member over 60 years with Elder H. W. Wray her pastor and Dr. Wendell Manuel her grandson officiating burial was in the church cemetery.

Surviving are daughters, Mrs. Edna Earl Manuel Madison, Mrs. Hilda McNeily, Greensboro, Mrs. Ann Greene, Briar Cliff Manor, N.Y., foster daughters Mrs. Ruth Shreve and Mrs. Essie May Patterson, Reidsville, nine grandchildren 13 great grandchildren. Brother Reubin Smothers, Monticello, sister Mrs. Louise Lambert, Monticello, Mrs. Ollie Neal, Stokesdale, Mrs. Ida Hill and Miss Addie Smothers, Reidsville, Mrs. Mary Everette, Summerfield.

Sister Emma loved her church and was a devoted member, and served as Clerk and Treasurer for 30 years. She had a lovely home and loved to fix meals for her brethren, sisters, and ministers. When her health failed she sold her home and lived with her daughters since 1978. They gave her devoted care. She broke her hip two months before passing and was in the nursing home. She was blessed with grace and patience to bear all things, trials and afflictions. We miss her very much and are thankful we had the privilege of walking with her in the fellowship of our Lord over thirty five years. We believe she has entered into that blessed rest of our Lord Jesus Christ waiting that glorious resurrection day.

Sister Rachel Wray, Clerk

REUBEN TURNER PICKERAL

After a lengthy illness, God called our dear Brother (Deacon) Turner Pickeral from our midst, on February 14, 1987.

Brother Pickeral was born April 18, 1914, in Pittsylvania county. He was the son of the late David Wade Pickeral and Hester McClanahan Pickeral. He lived most of his life in Danville, Virginia, where he was employed by the Coca-Cola Bottling Co., before retiring in 1977. On January 15, 1937, he was married to Sister Effie Doss Pickeral. They had two daughters, Glenda P. Waller and Sandra P. Payne and two granddaughters, Lisa Brizoski and Gena Payne. They all live in Danville, Virginia. Other survivors include four sisters, Ida P. Hamlett, Ola P. Crawley, Laura P. McMinnis and Minnie P. Hedrick, all of Gretna, Virginia.

The Lord started dealing with Brother Pickeral at an early age. Many times he has told us that the Lord was with him so strongly on a ship, during World War II, at times, he didn't fear the enemy nor his bombs. This same Lord brought him safely home to his family and walked with him the remainder of his life. Brother Pickeral lived his religion. He was good to his family and a devoted member of this church.

Brother Pickeral joined Banister Springs Church on the third Sunday in April 1945, and was later ordained deacon. He served this office with great devotion. The welfare of the church was foremost in his mind. He believed that all church business should be done in decency and in order. He visited the sick and shut-

ins and reported to the church how they were getting along. Whether it was seeing that the church building and grounds were taken care of, passing the communion plate or welcoming visitors, he was always there with a willing hand and a smile.

Brother Pickeral led our songs for us and said when the Lord tuned his heart that he could pitch them just right. We shall miss his beautiful voice singing the hymns of grace.

Brother Pickeral loved the doctrine of salvation by grace, believing that salvation was solely by grace of God. When the Lord opened his ears to hear, no one enjoyed a good sermon more than he. He fed from the Master's table many times. Brother Pickeral felt his religion and others could see it in him.

For the past two years, Brother Pickeral has been in declining health. He bore his sickness with great patience and humility, stating that he would live everyday that God intended for him to live. He attended church whenever possible and led the singing even though he was very ill and weak, but spiritually he was strong.

He and sister Effie welcomed visitors to their home to see them during his illness. You usually came away lifted up because he was spiritually minded and talked about the Bible or things pertaining to the church.

The funeral was conducted from Barker's Funeral Home chapel by Elder Melvin Shelton and Elder H.P. Somers. Brother Pickeral was laid to rest in Danville Memorial Gardens to await the morning of the resurrection, when Christ shall come to claim

his Jewels. I feel that Brother Pickeral is one of those Jewels of mercy.

He shall be missed by his family and all who knew and loved him, however our loss is his eternal gain. The church wishes to express its sympathy to Sister Effie, their children, grandchildren and all his family. May God be with you and grant you peace.

Written by order of the church:

Ruth Taylor - Clerk

WILLIAM THOMAS ROBERTSON

We at Old Mt. Church were saddened to hear that Brother Tom Robertson had been called home. He was highly esteemed among the Primitive Baptist, as well as his friends and neighbors, and all who knew him. He was born June 9, 1888 in Pittsylvania County. A son of the late John Robertson and Sallie Ann Motley Robertson. He was married to the late Cora Mae Lewis Robertson. He passed away Sept. 27, 1986.

He was a member of the Danville chapter of V.F.W. and the American Legion. He was a veteran of World War I, and a retired contractor. He was blessed with an unusual talent, a master builder, in wood, brick and stone, that he did not learn from mortal man.

Brother Tom lived a rich beautiful life for 98 years. Joined Spray Primitive Baptist Church early in life, later moved his membership to Mt. Ararat

or Old Mt. Church. A faithful devoted member, attended regular as long as his health permitted. He always welcomed his brethren and friends who came to visit. Would ask about his church. He loved to talk on the scripture, and was always ready to give a reason for his hope.

He leaves to mourn a son William Thomas Robertson, Jr. of Charlotte, N.C. A daughter, Dr. Mary E. Bredemeier, Somerset, N.J. one sister, Ferrie Atkinson, Maple Shade, N.J. three grandchildren and two great grandchildren. A number of nieces and nephews, relatives and friends.

His funeral was held at the Fair Funeral Home Chapel, Eden, N.C. by his pastor, Elder H.W. Wray. His body was laid to rest by his dear wife in the Danville Memorial Gardens. beneath a beautiful mound of flowers, A token of love and respect from his family and many friends, to wait the second coming of his Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless the family, and reconcile them to his will. Written by request of Old Mt. Church.

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

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All articles and letters for publication, all notices of meetings and all obituaries should be mailed to Elder Kenneth R. Key, 721 Willard Street, Greensboro, N.C. 27405.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

Route 1, Box 65 Keeling, Virginia 24566

IN MEMORY OF JOHN RAYMOND BLACKWELL

*October fifth and fifty-two
Marked the day one year
The death angel visited our home and took
Our husband and father dear.*

*We didn't know that he would die,
Most certainly not just then,
But just before he died I think
It was revealed to him.*

*While on his bed in agony,
He tried to breathe a prayer,
In a trembling voice then to me said,
I'm feeling better now.*

*Some scripture that he repeated,
As it now comes to mind,
Was, ask and it shall be given,
Seek and ye shall find.*

*He will not put upon me more
Than He will help me bear.
It was then that he, I'm sure, resigned
Himself unto His care.*

*He said, "God knows how I am suffering,
Just what I'm going through;
He died upon the cross for me
So He has suffered too".*

*I said to him, "What can I do"
When he was suffering so.
He said, "Lie down and get your rest
For you are tired I know".*

*"I know you'd help me if you could,
But there is nothing you can do.
I hope that He will give me faith
And bear me conqueror through".*

*With death's cold sweat upon his brow
Still trusting Him, he did relate,
"I know my Savior hears my cry,
His loving kindness, oh how great".*

*When his suffering became so severe,
He arose upon his feet,
But getting easy, he lay down and said
"I think I'll go to sleep.*

*He closed his eyes in a peaceful calm
And never more did wake.
That he's at rest in his Savior's love
Is our prayer for Jesus' sake.*

*We know it was right that he should go,
Tho our hearts with sorrow break,
For He is too good to be unkind,
Too wise to make mistakes.*

*He loved his church, his pastor too
And always filled his place;
He loved those good old songs of Zion
And believed Salvation was by Grace.*

*He was always a good husband and father;
His family was his delight.
Tho crippled from youth, undaunted,
He worked hard all his life.*

*He had his troubles, as we all do,
And I have often heard his say
That there was nothing in this old world
To make his want to stay.*

*I hope my Lord will help me
To raise my children dear,
That He may work things out His way
And cause them Him to fear.*

*I know that I too soon must go
The way that he has gone,
But Jesus will be with me;
I will not be alone.*

*Tho separated from us below,
He is reunited with our little son.
While our family circle on earth is broken,
In heaven it has just begun.*

*Written in loving memory of my
dear husband October, 1952.
Lelia D. Blackwell*

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EDITORIAL

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Romans 6:14.

The above passage of scripture is not a commandment, nor an admonition, but a promise from Almighty God. Sin has dominion over all the Adamic race while in the state of unregeneracy. Sin has polluted all our blood and left the leprosy still in our veins down to the latest generation. Sin has been the parent of all our earthly sorrows and will be the cause of our everlasting misery unless we are delivered from it. There is no monarch who rules over so many souls as that of sin.

Before entering fully upon the above text of scripture let us first consider the origin of sin as spoken of in our text. In the preceding 5th chapter of Romans, the Holy Spirit very clearly set forth the state of all the human race as being in our federal head Adam. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5:12. The guilt of Adam's sin has been imputed to all of us down through the ages of time as members of his fallen corrupt nature. "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Rom. 5:18 For did not Adam "begat a son in his own likeness after his own image?" Gen. 5:3. We may wonder, how can it be said that all of the human race sinned in Adam? How did we do so? We must realize that in the first man Adam was the whole of human nature. He was the father of all mankind because the whole human race was in Adam. When he acted, the whole of human nature acted; they were all acting at the same time. So when Adam sinned, we sinned, and because we all sinned, death and a separation from God came upon us all. We all sinned in Adam because we were in him as parts of him. God made and appointed Adam as the representative of the entire human race. God decreed that the whole of humanity should be represented by Adam, and should suffer the consequences of his actions. Did God not have a right to do so? So we all sinned in and with Adam.

Thanks be unto God, the same 5th chapter brings forth the rich gift

and free grace of God to His elect people in Christ as their Spiritual Head. "Even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification to life. "So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. 5:18,19. So can we not see that through the disobedience of one the whole human race became sinners; but by the obedience of One all are made righteous (all elect believers chosen in Christ.) That as sin reigns unto death in Adam; so grace will also reign unto life eternal by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us attempt at this point to make plain as to whom this rich gift and free grace are meant for. There are two very important pronouns in our "you" and "ye" which show that the text is spoken to a particular class of people. Chapter 1 verse 7 says, "To all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." "called to be saints" includes all of God's people, because they have been called, are being called and will be called by the Holy Spirit until the last one is regenerated. Who are the "called?" They are those whom the Father has chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. Divine or Holy calling is a special work of the Holy Spirit upon the soul. It is a shining of divine light into our hearts and souls giving us an unpleasant scene of what we are by nature. This holy calling brings forth a separating from the world, and as fears enters, our conscience is pierced with conviction. To be made a partaker of this heavenly calling is to be taught con-

cerning the law and gospel by the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called." Rom. 8:30. This divine calling springs out of eternal predestination, and is accompanied by justification, which issues into future glorification. God did not choose or call you in Christ Jesus because of any foreseen goodness in you such as spiritual belief, faith, love, hope etc. because all were completely void of all spiritual fruit, as well as any other consideration in us; but only from the sovereignty of His own free will and pleasure and "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth." Rom. 9:11.

"For sin shall not have dominion over you." The text does not say that sin shall not exist in you, for if so, it would lead us all astray. It does not say that sin will not cause you to grieve over the felt effect of it, as sin at times seems to be mixed with all we attempt to do. Sin becomes a great hinderance to that which has been made good within you. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit." Regardless of the anxiety and the shedding of tears that sin may cause us, it "shall not have dominion over us."

The scriptures declares sin to be the transgression of the law, and that all men are sinners. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23. The whole Adamic race by nature is guilty, corrupted, condemned and depraved before God. Sin therefore reigns in our hearts, over the affections and lives of all men in their

natural, unregenerated state: but to all of God's elect and redeemed people, grace will enter the heart and dethrone the reign and dominion of sin. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." Luke 11:21,22.

Upon regeneration, Christ enters the heart as Lord of Lords and King of Kings and continues to be so. Grace does subdue the governing authority of sin. This is why we find two natures operating within us, grace and sin: the new man and the old which are completely opposed to each other. "So that we cannot do the things that ye would." Yet, "The elder shall serve the younger" The elder may at times seem to be the stronger, causing great fear, guilt and distress; but the younger shall prevail because "sin shall not have dominion over you." "for where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom. 5:20. Because Christ by his death crucified the entire body of sin, (the sins of the whole of His bride) and destroyed it. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. 6:6. We may be ready to ask this question: if grace always reigns in a believer, why is it that we seem to fall a prey to sin for a season and at times feel the power of sin so strong within us? Let us look at some godly men of old. Noah was a righteous man and "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Yet, he was overtaken with

wine, but he did not continue to live in the habit of it. Moses sinned in unbelief and free will in smiting the rock in the wilderness; but grace pardoned him through his faith and took him to glory, for he appeared in glory on the mount with Christ. With David and many others sin appears to reign, yet it does not, as grace worked true penitence and godly sorrow in each of them. Peter committed a great sin when he denied his Lord and Master with oaths; sin threatens to reign and appeared for awhile to have dominion over Peter. But Christ prayed that his faith fail not. Grace convinced Peter of his sin, pardoned it, and he was kept so by the power of God. Thus in the best of saints of all ages, sin has made strong attempts to have the dominion; but sin shall not have dominion for they are under grace.

“For ye are not under the law” God’s quickened and born again children are not under the law as a covenant of works. To be under the law is to be subject to it, bound to its requirements and conditions, and as a covenant it demands all who are under it to perform its requirements, or come under its curse. For it is written, “Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Gal. 3:10. And “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law. Rom. 3:19. Now by nature the whole human race is under the law, but true spiritual believers are not under it because they have been separated from it by an inward death. Paul says, “For I was alive without the law once, but when the

commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” Rom. 7:9. Paul knew the letter of the law, but not the spirit of it until it came to him. When the above killing sentence came into our hearts and consciences, it slayed us as to any hope that may have sprung from our own self-righteousness, our creature wisdom, strength, works, etc. because these faded to nothing. We died to any hope of salvation from our own efforts. “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death.” Rom. 7:24. At this point in our own experience we could say with the Apostle Paul, “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.” Rom. 7:18. Were we not assured in our own mind that salvation by the works of the law was a sure impossibility?

Jesus died in His flesh under the law and if we are in union with Him, we must experience an inward death. “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” Rom. 7:5. In one respect, we were married to the law; but by our inward death, we are free from the law. “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Rom. 7:4. For “it is faithful saying: for if we be dead with him, we shall also reign with him.” II Tim. 2:11.

The law was not given to deliver us from our corrupt and dead condition

in any respect. But the law was given to bring forth the exceeding sinfulness of sin, causing us to "exceedingly fear and quake." The law acts as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ by teaching us our helpless condition, our inability to combat sin.

"But under grace." The law was not destroyed, it was fulfilled by Christ. But we are not to be lawless, for we are under another law, the law of the gospel, the authority of grace. To be under grace is to be in Christ and to be in Christ frees us from all condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. 8:1. The gospel is a perfect and sufficient rule for believers, it is the law of liberty for our rule. The gospel teaches us to "Abstain from all appearance of evil." I Thess. 5:22. To be under the covenant of grace is completely opposite to being under the covenant of works. The law of works is purely conditional; the covenant of grace is purely of free favor, absolute and immutable promises, and unconditional gifts and blessings wholly independent of any conditions whatever on the creature's part. This is what makes the gospel excel the law in glory. It sets free the lost, the guilty, the ruined, the utterly unworthy and the helpless. It is unconditionally and forever "a kingdom which cannot be moved." What joy when He says, "Thou art my people" and our believing hearts can say, "Thou art my God."

If anything has been written according to the truth and your experience, give God the praise, and remember this poor sinner in your

prayers.

With love,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Elder Key,

I would like to use the Times to thank all the friends in Virginia and North Carolina for the many cards and letters I received following heart surgery. Would also like to thank our friends in whose homes we were so wonderfully treated these last two years. We hope to come that way again this year.

It is truly amazing, as I go out among these people, to see the love and fellowship that is shared, and how He works His people in such a way as to bring this about. He causes them to feel they should be at their brother's feet, which is contrary to human nature.

If the Lord will bless me, I would like to write a little about the word "Wilderness." You will remember the scriptures teach that the Lord's portion, and a very small portion it is, is his people. Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found Jacob in a desert land, a waste howling wilderness. He led him about and instructed him, and kept him as the apple of His eye. Never was Jacob, nor will we, be led out during this life.

He led him about and instructed him. Until this instructing began, we were aliens from God and without hope in the world. In the book of

Hosea 2:1, Hosea stated "Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi (my people) and to your sisters, Ruhamah (having obtained mercy)." The 14th verse reads, therefore I will allure her. In other words, He will make Himself the most desirable something she has ever seen before. All the beauty of this world will mean nothing. All those things she at one time longed for will fade away. Then He leads her into the wilderness and speaks friendly to her. He gives her the valley of trouble for a door of hope. His people have always been in trouble, but nothing like they find themselves in when He first touches their heart. They find themselves wanting something more than before and have no way of obtaining it. They, as we all, must realize they have withered hands and crippled feet and can't go on their own. Then, as in Psalms 107, they turn to the Lord, and the 35th Chapter of Isaiah tells what He does for them. This, to me, is some of the most beautiful reading in The Book. It tells us that the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. This is the beginning of being brought out of nature's darkness, the work on the heart, mind and soul of one of His little ones. It shall blossom abundantly, and they will rejoice, even with joy and singing. Can you remember how sweet it was when you first believed, how beautiful the brothers and sisters had become? How beautiful the old songs sounded. And they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.

Then He begins to do something

for the cripples. He tells them to be strong and fear not. He will come and save you. Then, at this time, the eyes of those that at one time could not see, are opened, to read and understand the scriptures. The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, to hear the truth of the gospel preached. When this has been done to one of his little ones, then the lame shall leap as an hart, and tongues that at one time had nothing to say, will sing, and it will be a new song, because in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool. When He has opened to us our understanding, and we read all the wonderful things He does for His people, our cup runneth over. In the desert land where there was nothing, we begin to be taught.

Also, there is a highway and a way. It shall be called the way of holiness. We can't get there by ourselves; we have to be "put" or led. The 40th Psalm tells us He puts our feet upon a rock, establishes our going, and puts a new song in our heart. The unclean shall not pass over it. This is why He went to the cross, to do away with our uncleanness. It shall be for those, the wayfaring men. Hebrews tells us they admit they are pilgrims, they have no certain home nor are they looking for one here, but they are looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go thereon, but the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there, because Jesus goes before His sheep. He leads them in paths of righteousness for His names sake.

The ransomed of the Lord shall

return. Our sins as a multitude have separated us and God. Love covers a multitude of sins. Because of these truths, they shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; sighing and sorrow shall flee away. This is the inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for those that were chosen in Him before the world began.

In conclusion, may the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart be acceptable in thy sight, oh Lord.

Elder Graydon Smith

MEETINGS

PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Pigg River Association will be held, the Lord Willing, the first Sunday in August, Friday and Saturday before, July 31, and August 1 & 2, 1987. Reed Creek Church is the host for this setting of the Association. The meeting place will be on the grounds and the meeting house at Leatherwood Church.

Leatherwood Church is located in Henry County, Virginia, on State Road 657. Those coming from the south on Route 220, and those coming from the east on 58, go the north side of Martinsville, there take Route 108 N. for about 8 miles turn right on Route 657, and keep on this road for about 5 miles to the church.

Those coming from the North or East on Route 40, take Route 890 at

Penhook. Route 890 goes to the Henry County line, then go 2 miles to Route 657, turn left on Route 657. Follow above instructions.

Those coming by Route 57, take Route 657, go about 2 miles to church. At each of these intersections, you will probably see a road sign "Leatherwood". Also watch for Association sign.

Jamie E. Cooper
Association Clerk

GOOD HOPE CHURCH

There will be a 5th Sunday meeting in August, 1987 at Good Hope Primitive Baptist Church.

7 miles south of Strong, Ark. on highway 275, if the Lord willing. All lovers of the truth and those of like precious faith, are welcome.

Lula Fox - Church Clerk

OLD PINE CREEK CHURCH

An annual all day meeting will be held, the Lord willing, at Old Pine Creek Church on the third of July, 1987. The Church is located off highway 221, five miles north of Floyd, Va. Those coming from Floyd, turn left onto road #682. Those coming from Roanoke, turn right onto road #682. All lovers of the truth are invited and especially all ministers of our faith and order.

Elder Hale Terry

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



NEW HOPE PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

New Hope Primitive Baptist Church was established in 1847. The current structure is the third building, located in Spearsville, La. Former pastors were Elder John Lee Smith, his father and the present pastor is Elder Graydon Smith. This

being three generations of the same family serving this church.

New Hope Church meets for service first Sunday of each month at 10:30 a.m. and Saturday before at 2:00 p.m.

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

PSALM 9:1-2.

I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

 ARTICLES

LORD REVIVE US

Ofttimes when searching the scriptures and meditating upon them, which I hope is from the heart, I wish I could be blessed to put in words of love and understanding, the thoughts that are precious to me. Let me not be ashamed of my hope.

I have said many times, "My hope is so small; it seems almost gone." Our hope has never been small. It is Christ in you the hope of glory. Our sorrow is continually before us, and it makes us feel so small when we are not blessed to joy in the Lord.

Psalms 51:12, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."

Restore means to revive. Isaiah 57:15, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and Holy place, with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Contrite means broken down with grief, humble, and sorrowful.

We read of many revivals over the land to excite the minds of the simple for the love of money. They have their reward.

I feel that the desire of our hearts is as we find recorded in Ezra 9:8, "And now for a little space, grace hath been shewed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his Holy

place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage."

Jesus is the nail in the Holy place. The Holy place is a sure place, as we find in Isaiah 22:23, "And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house."

Romans 8:29, "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."

When we look in a mirror, we see the image of our flesh and we see nothing but corruption. We cannot see the image of our Lord in ourself, if indeed it is there.

God's humble poor are like the lily that has a beautiful flower and cannot see itself. Others see its beauty, as others see the image of Christ in the precious ones who are blessed to do all things decently and in order.

Conform means to make like. I believe the persecutions, heart aches, and sorrows his people--the chosen few that are a remnant--suffer in this low ground of sin and sorrow are conforming them to the image of Christ who suffered many things of the elders, chief priest, and scribes.

As unworthy as we feel, we are blessed with a precious hope that the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death. Therefore, we can say with John, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

The world tells us what we ought to do and ought not to do. I believe we do what we do because of what we are. What we do doesn't make us what we are because we are not justified by works.

When we are revived by His free spirit, we are blessed to "joy in tribulations that worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope, and hope maketh not ashamed."

May the Lord bless us not to be ashamed to separate ourselves from disorder and unbelief, own our Lord and defend His cause, and pray for those that despitefully use us for we feel they know not what they do.

If we are not kept by the grace and mercy of almighty God, we will surely fall by the wayside. We cannot prosper by the wisdom of man, for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

Lord revive us,

Clifton Robertson
Route 1
Reidsville, N.C. 27320

"For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Will he delight himself in the almighty? Will he always call upon God?"—Job xxvii. 8-10.

Many of God's people are at times exercised as to their hypocrisy, and sometimes they may think themselves the most consummate hypocrites that ever stood in a profession. But if you are exercised

with these painful surmises, these doubts and fears, just see (and the Lord enable you to bring it to the light of his countenance) these two features of a spiritual character. Do not talk about your hope; it may be "a spider's web." Do not boast of your gifts; they may be altogether in the flesh. Do not bring forward the good opinion of men; they may be deceived in you. But just see if, with the Lord's blessings, you can feel these two tests in you soul, as written there by his own hand. If so, you are not a hypocrite; God himself, by his servant Job, has acquitted you of the charge. Did you, then, ever "delight yourself in the Almighty?" It is a solemn question. Did your heart and soul ever go out after the living God? Did affection, love and gratitude ever flow out of your bosom into the bosom of the Lord? Did you ever feel as if you could clasp him in the arms of faith, and live and die in his embrace? Now if your soul has ever felt this, you are not hypocrite; and nothing can rise up out of your wretched heart, as an accusing devil, that can prove you to be one. Or if you cannot fully realise this, if you are one that always calls upon God, you are no hypocrite. I do not speak of your regular prayers, or any other of your regularities; for I believe that there is often more of God's Spirit, and more craving after God and delighting in him, in your irregularities, than in all the daily regularities which hypocrites delight in. But I mean, is there a sigh or cry by night, as well as by day; a pouring out of the heart into the bosom of God from time to time, as the Lord works it in you, in trouble, in perplexity, in

sorrow, and in distress? This is a test and a mark no hypocrite ever had or ever can have.

J.C. Philpot

PROVERBS 22:1-4.

A Good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.

By humility and the Fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.

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IS IT TIME TO RENEW
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"WRATH"

The word wrath denotes several emotions including anger, grief, bitterness, indignation and fury. When used of God, wrath refers to His absolute opposition to sin. In no way is the anger of man compared with God's anger. Man's anger is destruction and cursed. Gen. 49:7 "Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel." Man has no mercy of himself and his wrath is cruel. Let us not fall into the hand of man. Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord: for His mercies are great. God is merciful God and His anger is a constant aspect of His Holy Righteousness, and man's wrath is an unholy emotion to which we should not give vent. Luke 4:28 "and all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath," and rose up, and thrust him out of the city.

"O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Vipers, beasts, serpents, dragon. "The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and satan. John the Baptist referred to the Pharisees and Sadducees as vipers. Christ said to the scribes and Pharisees, John 8:44 "Ye are of your father and devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it." John asked the question to a generation of vipers of which there was no answer from. Their own cursed anger which was

them to flee from their own destruction to come. Men are warned today and they seek to flee the wrath of man to come. Think and think again of the nuclear power build-up today; man's wrath to come. Cursed be their anger for it was fierce and their wrath, for it was cruel.

God being a merciful God and His anger a constant aspect of His Holy Righteousness, God's wrath warns not His people to flee from God, but by His tender love and mercy compels them to Him.

Hebrews 12:5 "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.

To those, whom John the Baptist was addressing when he said, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," were just and devout people waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Ghost was upon them. It had already been revealed unto some by the Holy Ghost that they should not see death before they had seen the Lord's Christ. (Luke 2:25-32 Jesus presented in the Temple.) To those who were waiting by faith for the consolation of Israel and looking for redemption in Jerusalem heard the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Words which they had long waited to hear. "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Rom. 11:5 "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." To the remnant, the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ that was enough to say. When John saw the generation of vipers come about him, he found it necessary to say much for they gloried in it that they were the seed of Abraham; but John knew they were of their father the devil. John was not bashful nor did he fear the face of men for he was full of the Holy Ghost and of power. The Pharisees and Sadducees were a viperous gang, they were all alike, though enemies to one another. A wicked generation is a generation of vipers and they ought to be told so. Note; many come to ordinances, who come not under the power of them.

Now to the word of exhortation and direction. Matthew 3:8 "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."; we profess repentance and attend upon the doctrine and baptism of repentance. Repentance is sealed in the heart and it is there as a root, but in vain do we pretend to have it there, if there be no fruits of it. If repentance is sealed in the heart as a root, it is there by the baptism of Christ who has baptized us with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and the fruits are sure. John 15:5 "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bring forth much fruit: for without me

ye can do nothing. The fruit of the Spirit are what the branches are to bring forth. Eph. 5:9 "For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." If we are of His kingdom, we will continue to pray to God to keep us faithful.

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Col. 2:6 "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Is this not our desire to walk in the same faith and or the order of the Orthodox churches, and to continue in the faith of the Apostles? Some will answer this question, "Yes, it is my desire." This Dear Brother in Christ will be praying to God to lead him and direct his path in the strait and narrow way and he will press forward holding fast to the faith with those comfortable words of Christ; "Lo, I am with you always even until the end of the world." Christ did not say, He would be with us in all our ways. He said, St. John 12:26 "If any man serve me let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my father honor."

God of Heaven and of earth gave the oracles of faith to the elect according to the foreknowledge of God preserved in Christ. The first and primary ordinance of the Church is the baptism of the Holy Ghost and with fire, by our Lord and Saviour; Jesus Christ. Matthew 3:11 "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." The baptism He performs with the Holy Ghost and with fire is in union with Him sharing in His death, burial and resurrection. The baptism

of the Holy Ghost, in no way, can be separated from the born again child. The new birth and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and with fire are united in one in Christ.

The baptism of water unto repentance is a symbol of Christ's baptism into the Militant church here on earth and is the first ordinance of the Militant church along with the Lord's Supper. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, leaving us an example. 1 Peter 2:21 "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." an example pertaining to His kingdom in His words, things which shall be, things which must be and things which should be. Christ bore the sins of all His people expiated them by His death upon the cross and no man can depend safely upon Christ as having his sins and expiated his guilt, till he dies unto sin and lives unto righteousness. 1 Peter 2:25 "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls." Not only is He supreme in examples, but supreme in all Holiness and righteousness, having taught His disciples the eight characters of blessed people and plainly in His own words set forth the fact concerning adultery. Matthew 5:32 and 19:8-9 There would be great comfort to the militant churches and members to read these scriptures along with the third chapter of First Timothy and repent. The letter to the angel of the church in Thyatira said, Rev. 2:18 "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication." There are those whom

do say, I have read these scriptures many times, but my conscience will not permit me to comply with them. Brethren, please, I beg you; the conscience is not the final appeal. The final appeal is God and not man's conscience. Due to the persistence of sin, a man's conscience can become seared or hardened; for this reason the conscience can not be our guide. By the Grace of God, we are given blessings which are rich and divine inspired scriptures which are true. To hold fast to the scriptures is not an injustice to any person but love and kindness to the members. It is a divine biblical right, given by the Grace of God, to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. To do so, is not taking anything away from any person or depriving them of spiritual blessings. When we, church members, including deacons or ministers, step outside the inspired scriptures to our conscience, we can and must feel assured that five of the letters in Revelations chapters two and three are applied to us. Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardus and the Loodiceans. He who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ said, Rev. 3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent. 3:20 "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." Note: just to hear the voice is not good enough, but the door must also be opened. The five foolish virgins heard the voice but the door was not opened. All ten virgins had

everything in common, including the grace, love or charity, of God, except oil, which represents faith.

There is a great difference between Heavenly spiritual blessings and blessings from Heaven. The children of Israel received blessings from Heaven while in the wilderness. The blessings they received were to sustain the natural body and to provide them with strength to continue on to the promise land which flows with milk and honey. Bread, milk, butter, honey and wine are the nourishments to the hungry soul, spiritual food from Heaven and Heavenly food to the eight characters of blessed people. The natural food we received each day is no doubt food from Heaven and for this food and all other natural and spiritual blessings, we are to offer thanks and pray to God to give us hearts to be thankful unto Him. If we receive the Heavenly blessings, we must follow Him, not enticing words of man's wisdom or man's conscience with cruel wrath. Matthew 8:12-13 "There are many come and sit down with Abram, Issac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven and the children of the Kingdom are cast out into outer darkness; there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." The kingdom of Heaven, (the church), is first above all things on earth and we must seek first the kingdom. To those who seek first the kingdom in faith, will of no doubt be scourged, not only by some outside the church, but even of some false professors in the church, who will seek after their own conscience and believe. The church is first above our everyday work, friends, our children our husband or wife. Christ

plainly set this forth in Luke 12:53 "The Father shall be divided against the Son and the Son against the Father, and the Mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother; the Mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." Seek ye first the kingdom, and when people say, regardless of who they are, or how close they may be to you, "He loves the church of Christ, Primitive faith and order more than he loves me," that's a blessing to you.

To the true professor in faith, those who by the Grace of God, through faith, possess the eight characters of bless people, are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places and will not fall down to worship any other. A steadfast faith in Christ will produce a steadfast faithfulness to Christ. Our own close of kin will tell us we must give in a little here and there when even kings must own that when their commands are contrary to the commands of Christ, that it is Christ to be obeyed and not them. Daniel chapter 3, Matthew chapters 4 and 27, and Acts chapter 25.

We, the Church of Christ, Primitive faith and order, would not deny any person, any organization or group of people the right to worship as his or her conscience may dictate to them, nor would we deny them to worship any gods they may choose, nor would we deny them the right not to worship, or even to say, there is no God. It is a constitutional right of this United States of America. Let us pray, hope and try that this right will remain for it is the only way this

nation can stand as a nation. However, there is a great difference between a constitutional right and a divine biblical right. The divine right and the right to worship as the conscience might dictate was made manifest in Cain and Abel. By the Grace of God, Abel was given the divine Grace of faith to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. By the power of God, the right of the conscience was given to both Cain and Abel. So by faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. At the season and time to the purpose of God according to the election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, began the most brutal war that has ever been or will be upon the earth, when Cain slew his brother Abel. Cain, who was of that wicked one, slew his brother because his own works were evil and Abel's Righteous. 1 John 3:12 "Cain who was of that wicked one and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous." Cursed be his anger for it was fierce, his wrath for it was cruel. For now the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. The voice, the blood and the cry was made manifest to man, of the first sons of Adam. The voice, the blood and the cry was in Egypt, in the wilderness and on the cross. Christ Himself, the only offering acceptable unto God for the sins of His people whom were chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world. The Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon the flesh and the flesh withereth, but the word of our God shall stand forever. So above all, take the shield of faith

wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the darts of the wicked. Hebrews 11:4 "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts and by it, he being dead yet speaketh." At the time Abel made the offering, we have no record of the word faith. Genesis 4:2 plainly sets forth the fact that by the Grace of God, Abel was given faith before the offering. "Abel was a keeper of Sheep." God gave Abel repentance and faith in the promised seed and instructed him in the mystery of sacrificing. Faith was made manifest in Abel, a saint, along with the first example of religion. By the Grace of God through the sanctification of the Spirit Abel was made acceptable unto God first and then by faith, the offering was more excellent unto God. Abel lived by faith and died for it. This is one of the first instances that is upon record of fallen man going in to worship God. God is a merciful God and communication between man and God was not void due to the fall of man. The strait gate and narrow way was opened to God's elect according to the election of Grace when Christ stood as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Matthew 7:14 "Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Thanks be to God, by the Grace of God, there are a few who do. The Grace of faith here mentioned is vastly different from the false and feigned faith of the hypocrite or fruitless faith of the false professor. It is the faith of God's elect, wrought by the spirit of

God in effectual calling. Faith is a precious grace and not only, as it is very uncommon, very scarce. Even in the visible church a very small number of true believers, among a great multitude of visible professors, have the true grace of faith. To those who do, it is most precious. The just live by faith, a truly divine spiritual life. Faith procures all the necessary supports and comforts of this excellent life. Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Here we are given a definition or description of the grace of faith in two parts. Faith and hope go together, and the same things that are the object of our hope are the objects of our faith. (1) It is firm that God will perform all that He has promised to us in Christ to the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit. The divine promise is firmly embedded in the soul and the things which are included in the promise are fruits of the spirit which produce the substance of things hoped for, by the first fruits and the foretastes of them. The true believers in the exercise of faith are filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Christ dwells in the soul by grace through faith. (2) The evidence of things not seen. Faith demonstrates to the eye of the mind the reality of those things that cannot be discerned by the eye of the body. Faith is the firm assent of the soul to the divine revelation and every part of it and set to its seal that God is true. It is an approbation of all that God has revealed as holy, just and good. It keeps the soul suitable for affection and endeavors and

serves the true believer instead of sight and to be to the soul all that the senses are to the body. Faith reflects honor upon all those who have lived by it.

Faith is not a new invention. The Grace of faith, by the Grace of God, has been planted in the soul of God's elect since the covenant of grace. The first best men that ever were in the world were believers in the true living God. They were an honour to the faith and the faith an honour to them. It put them upon doing the things that were of good report and God has taken care that a record shall be kept and report made of the great things they did in the strength of His grace.

Faith goes to Christ and buys the wine and milk, which are the proper nourishment of the new inward man. Isa. 55:1 "Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters and he that hath no money, and without price." Faith buys and brings home the tried gold, the heavenly treasure that enriches, faith takes and puts on the white raiment, the royal robe that clothe and adorn. Rev. 3:18 "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see." Faith unites the weak believer to Christ as readily as it does the strong one and purifies the heart of one as truly as another. And every sincere believer is by faith justified in the sight of God. The righteousness and obedience of Christ gives faith all its values and preciousness and the righteousness of such a person

cannot but be of infinite value to those who by faith receive faith. (Faith for faith)

Jesus Christ is God, yea our God. He is truly God and infinite being, who has wrought out this righteousness and therefore it must be of infinite value.

Rev. 1:11 "What thou seest, write in a book and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia." Let us hold in view that the letters were to the visible churches made up of visible people and set up by the apostles shortly after the day of pentecost. There were two of these Churches that Christ did not say He found fault or He had something against. These two churches are Smyrna and Phelodelfia. Christ said to the Smyrna church "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." Christ said unto the Church of Phelodelfia, "Behold I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

I will therefore that men pray every where lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Abstain from all appearance of evil. Faithful is He that calleth you who also will do it.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Elder Benard Moon

PSALM 13:6.

I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

 VOICES OF THE PAST

 "he being dead yet speaketh"

MATTHEW XXV. 14-30.

Brother F. L. Cox, of Dardanelle, Arkansas, desires that we shall write concerning the parable of the talents, recorded in Matthew xxv. 14-30. He says some in his section have said that they knew that to them had been committed a talent, and that they meant to so improve it that they should gain the reward promised, but his feeling about the matter is those to whom the talents are really committed, will not see that it is so, because near the end of the chapter it is expressly said that those who had done the things named there, could not see that they ever had done them, while those who had not done them, thought that they had.

First we will say that we think that our brother is right in his view of the matter. Whatever the parable of the talents may signify, we are sure that it does not present a bargain between the master and his servants, or that the servant knows that if he uses his talent well, he shall be rewarded for it. So far as the statement of the parable itself is concerned, it is plain that when the man took his journey into a far country, and before doing so committed the various talents to his servants, he said nothing to them of any reward for good and profitable use of the talents. He promised nothing to them at all, but simply committed the talents to their charge. This is a picture of all the dealings of God with his servants. He does yet commit to all

his servants some talents, but he never says to them, If you will be faithful and gain other talents, I will reward you. Indeed, according to the very terms of the parable, the master could not have offered any such reward. These were his servants, not hired, but his own bond men, belonging to him, and he had a right to all their service, and they had no claim for any reward at all from his hand, and no right to expect any. He could not be put in any debt to them, nor come under any obligation to them by all that they might do. This is fully set forth by the Master in another place where he expressly says that after the servant has done all, he is to say, I am an unprofitable servant, I have done only what was my duty to do. There also he teaches that instead of rewarding the servant who has been faithful, he still expects that servant to gird himself and wait upon him at his meal. It all sets forth the truth that we cannot put the Almighty under any obligation to us in any way. So in the parable, the servants of this man belonged to him, and all their powers were his, and he could owe them nothing, for all they might do. We may be faithful, and it may be said of us, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," but never Well done, thou profitable servant. We can never do more than we are under obligations to do, and so can never deserve a reward.

All that was conferred upon the faithful servants in the parable was a reward of grace, and not of debt. Still further, it was not ease, or riches, or relief from care, but added burdens and responsibility. It was said, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I

will make thee ruler over many things." That is, I will commit to thee still more talents, that thou mayest occupy upon them. In this very thing is the joy of the Lord into which the servant should enter. This enlarged field of care and responsibility conferred upon him, was a mark of the favor of the Lord, and in entering upon this greater field he entered into the evidence of favor, and here was the joy. What a solemn joy this would be to that servant. There would be gladness that the field was widening, and yet what a sense of solemn responsibility would be there, so that the joy would not be a careless, light hearted, thoughtless joy, but rather a sober, thoughtful joy, which is far more abiding and satisfying than any other joy can be.

The sense in which it was said, That servant should be made ruler over many things, did not differ from his former rule over the five or two talents. What a false idea men have of what ruling must mean. To rule does not mean that one is to be ministered unto by others, but rather it means that he who rules must spend his life and every power within him serving others. It is a life of service, and not of ease, if indeed one be a true ruler. In ruling over the five, or two talents, labor and care and service were involved. Now to rule over many things, meant still more labor and care and service. It was not to places of ease or careless pleasure that these two men were promoted, but to more constant labor, and more solemn responsibilities. It was such a promotion as would cause them to shrink and hesitate, rather than feel any great

elation. It was not a promotion for which they had striven, and which they had coveted. There would be in them, growing out of what they had experienced in their former care, a sense of unfitness and fear and a shrinking from it, because of the greatness of the work, and because of the true desire in them to honor their master in all that they did.

The whole spirit of the parable is that they did not do what they did as a stepping-stone to wider and more honorable things. Such a motive as this would have spoiled the service. It would not have been with an eye single to the glory of God, but would rather have been seeking their own glory. The one motive set forth in the parable was to just occupy upon what the Lord had committed to them, that he might have his own with usury. Nothing for self but all for the Lord. O, for more of this spirit in us all. If any of the Lord's true servants have begun to think of the service as one for which a reward is offered, and which they engage in because they expect some future gladness, or some added favor, that servant has missed the true service, and misunderstood the true reward, and whatever he has, or fancies he has, comes to him not as a reward of grace, but rather of debt. That servant is getting away from grace, and sinking back into legal service and bondage.

By the talents we do not understand what men now call talents, as for instance, it is said of some person that he or she possesses great talents, meaning ability in themselves. But we understand by the talents, and also in the other similar

parable of the pounds, the field assigned to one for his occupancy. For instance, one is called to the ministry of the word, that one manifests that faithfulness which is becoming in that which is committed to him, and soon, without any thought upon his part that it ought to be so, but rather while he yet feels that he has been very unfruitful and unfaithful, still larger demands are made upon him; he is called to wider fields, and soon he finds more and more responsibility thrust upon him, which he will feel very unfit for, and which will bring to him more of care and anxiety than of gladness, though there will be also a sense of gladness that he is counted worthy to serve, and to serve more and more. It is so with whatever his talent may be. They that use the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith. The same rule applies here, such a man is not seeking preferment; indeed he does not see how it can be for him at all. It is not conferred upon him as in any sense a payment for his service, but it comes by growth without his taking one thought for it. In every department of service in the house of God they that serve well shall have the honor of still more and more service. Upon the willing heart and the willing hands shall more and more demands be made, and in this wider and still wider service there will be also a growth in humility and fear, without which no service is of any value. In the parable the servants did not say, I ought to have a reward, or I ought to have a wider field, but the lord himself said that. It must always be so.

Not he who commendeth himself, but whom the Lord commendeth, is approved. To commend one's self is sin, because it arises out of pride and not humility, and is of the flesh, all the thoughts of which are sinful. The service is a loving one, and therefore a willing service. The servants in the parable to whom five and two talents were committed, did not say of the master, Thou art a hard man, thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and gatherest where thou hast not strawed. No such thought had entered their mind, they did not feel so toward him, theirs was willing, loving service, they desired to honor him, and to show forth his praise. But here was one, of whom it was said that he did thus regard his Lord, there was no love in his heart, and there could be none. All who are legal in their service yet, thus regard the Lord of life and glory. They regard him as a God who exacts, and who only rewards those who are of service to him, and according to the measure of their service. No wonder that they fear, and fail to really occupy the talent committed to them. All that service that grows out of the flesh of the people of God, is of that sort, and for it there is only a curse. Gospel fields are not open to them, and there is no growth in their usefulness to the people of God, rather what has been conferred upon them in the way of a field of labor, will be removed from them, and they will cease to be known by any service which they may render. They still belong to the Master, but become of no use in his household. He calls them wicked and slothful servants, and to express the wideness of the separation

between the two kinds of service, and God's approval of the one, and disapproval of the other, it is said that the one talent is taken from the slothful servant, and given to him who now has ten talents.

This servant who regarded his Lord as a hard and exacting master, and so spoke of him, no doubt, to others, might have seemed very jealous for the rights of his lord, and anxious that he should have his own, but it was not so in the eye of the master himself. It is free gospel service, and not legal, that he first begets in the soul, and then recognizes and blesses, and so this blessing always comes as a sweet and glad surprise to the recipient of it.

Our brother was right in his reference to the closing parable of this chapter, the blessings conferred upon the true servants were not expected, and they could not see why it should be said to them that they had served at all, but how out of their humility must they have rejoiced and magnified grace, which had so dealt with them.

*"Grace all the work shall crown,
To everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."*

There will be a solemn fear in all those whose hearts are filled with love to God, and regard to his honor, lest they regard the Lord as a hard Master, and lest their service be of that slavish sort that knows not grace but only bondage. Between outbreking sin and pharisaical or legal service, there is a most narrow path. Truly the vulture's eye hath not seen it, or the lion's whelp trodden it. Human wisdom and human power,

symbolized by the vulture's eye and the lion's whelp, can never enter there. In that way of life to God is given all the glory, and the creature is abased. In that way we must decrease, and Jesus must increase, and if we be in that way we shall rejoice that it is so. When Jesus is exalted our joy is fulfilled. How wonderful the grace which saves from outbreking sin on the one hand, and then on the other hand keeps us from boasting that we are therefore better than our fellows.

We leave these somewhat scattered thoughts to the consideration of brother Cox, and our readers in general. We have not attempted to give a full explanation of the parable, but only to suggest such considerations as were called out by the questions and remarks of the brother, in his note to us.

Elder F.A. Chick

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR APRIL 1987

Mrs. Fannie Wiles, VA	5.00
Mrs. Devine Bradford, OK	2.00
T.R. Pullig, TX	7.00
Dolphus Hall, FL.....	2.00
Dean & Ettie Connell, TX	2.00
Mr.&Mrs. K.A. McKinney, VA...	10.00
Mrs. J.L. Marze, LA.....	2.00
Mrs. H.W. Jones, AL.....	2.00
Alpha Sears, OH.....	2.00
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Mrs. Rlee B. Houchins, VA.....	5.00
Mrs. Susan Chandler, FL.....	2.00
Wayne Edwards, NC.....	15.00
Eld. J.Y. McCormick, FL.....	7.00
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T.E. Hall, NC.....	2.00
J. Cline Chandler, NC.....	5.00
William E. Mitchell, VA.....	5.00

OBITUARIES

Theodore Calvin Austin

In memory of a beloved brother in Christ, Theodore C. Austin whose time ceased on Feb. 1, 1987 after more than 76 years.

The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh blessed be the name of the Lord.

He was predeceased by his wife Pauline Setliff Austin July 1981. He is survived by one son Curtis K. Austin of Ruffin, N.C. and one daughter Kay H. Burnett of Blairs, Va.

Brother Sport as he was called by the Brethren and others who knew him who loved him so dearly was a gentleman of excellent character and behavior, which made him greatly esteemed by those among whom he lived.

He united with Dan River Primitive Baptist Church Sept. 25, 1982 and was baptized by the late Elder D.V. Spangler along with seven other members on this same occasion.

He loved his church and its members because he considered them to be a manifest portion of the children of God whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world.

He belived that the Lord called his people out of natures darkness into his marvelous light, according to the measure of his grace in the appointed time.

Funeral services were held in Dan River Primitive Baptist Church Feb. 4, 1987 by Elder H.W. Wray and was buried in the church cemetery by his wife.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his dear family.

Prepared by one who loved and appreciated him.

Coley S. Strader

Elder Paul Poyner

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be multiplied."

Elder Paul Poyner ceased his service to the church at death on January 10, 1987, at the age of 97. He was pastor of the New Providence Church near Murray, Kentucky. This was the church where he was received by experience and baptism in September 1934. In July 1936 he was ordained to the full work of the ministry at New Providence.

In the exercise of his gift it seemed apparent that he was given

spiritual understanding above the measure of most. He traveled much along the Primitive Baptist Churches in his area and had the pastoral ministry of two other churches, including The Soldiers Creek Church near Benton, Kentucky. This is the home church of The Soldiers Creek Association. He was the moderator of the association for many years.

Although Elder Poyner had not been able to attend meetings for about 1 1/2 years, those visiting him at home found the same active mind that they had known, and a tongue eager to proclaim again the doctrine of sovereign grace and the merits of his Lord and Savior.

His loving and faithful wife preceded him in death September, 1977. Other graces given him in this life are evidenced by his surviving offspring; three daughters, two sons, ten grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.

With sorrow for our loss, but joy of his gain and our joy for having known him, this notice of his passing is written and submitted to the Signs of the Times, at the request of The New Providence Church.

Wayman G. Chapell

MAME WATSON

A very precious sister was called from our midst on September 17, 1986 to be with her God, that is the feeling of all that knew her.

Sister Mame Watson was born May 25th, 1883 and died September

17th, 1986, her stay here on earth being more than 103 years. She joined the Church at Beulah in 1915 and was baptized by Elder E.E. Lundy. Her membership remained at Beulah Church until the church ceased to function, and then her membership was moved to North Creek Church.

Sister Mame was of small stature and that with her humble walk and childlike voice endeared her to all the brethren. She was well taught in the scriptures and anything unresolved, she would tell you.

Sister Mame in her last 3 or 4 years became confused in mind at times, but in the nursing home, she was as gentle as could be, and could often be heard singing the songs of Zion without missing any words.

She leaves behind two daughters, Sister Beatrice Lupton of Coinjock, North Carolina and Virginia Garcia of Chesapeake, Va. and one son, Hatten Watson of Buxton, North Carolina.

Her funeral was conducted by her Pastor, Elder J.T. Prescott and the writer. Her body was laid to rest in Beulah Church Cemetery under a mound of beautiful flowers to await the coming of our Savior, when body and spirit will be immortally united and there forever be with the Lord.

Elder J.T. Prescott, Mod.

ST. JOHN 8:31-32.

Then said Jesus to those 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.

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 65 Keeling, Virginia 24566

POEM

*While in thy school I lessons learn,
Unfolding as I go;
My heart uplifts in praise to thee;
My God has willed it so.*

*My heart would speak thy praise
aloud,
Would sing it as I go,
At home, abroad, in jostling crowd;
My God has willed it so.*

*His love saw fit to raise me up,
To share in human woe,
By drinking from the bitter cup;
My God has willed it so.*

*My life is hid with Christ in God,
He is where'er I go;
Nor would I from my Saviour flee;
My God has willed it so.*

*And when my race on earth is run,
My body buried low,
I'll rise again, bright as the sun;
My God has willed it so.*

*Sing blessings, blessings to the Lamb,
We'll start the theme below,
In rapture to the great I AM;
My God has willed it so.*

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EDITORIAL

ISAIAH 61: 1, 3.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me 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 the spirit of 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.

Truly, truly, He is the bearer of good news to all classes of men. These classes of men are all described by the gospel that He preaches to them. Every class of them have been overcome by problems that no one of them, in their own category trouble, could extricate themselves out of that which had them in its control. In the proclamation of His gospel, by either Himself or the servants which He sends into the gospel field, always describe the people to which He or His followers, are sent to with the good new of their message.

This precious Saviour not only preaches the gospel, the truth, but He applies the truth and the power of the truth. God's people are taught the truth, and the truth frees them from all the false doctrines and shackles and encumbrances. The gospel in every phase of it, is good tidings. In all of these different aspects of the gospel, or good tidings, there is not any creature conditions about what He is exalted to preach. In fact, as soon as conditions are put to it, it ceases to be good tidings, regardless of who preaches it, or of how it is dressed so as to appeal to the carnal mind.

The Lord has anointed the Saviour to preach glad tidings to the meek. Let us be careful what we say. This scripture is too pleasant that Christ Jesus our Lord was anointed by the Father to comfort all those that mourn.

God the Father appointed unto them that mourn in Zion grand and

glorious experiences in the administration to them of all these magnificent blessings. In fact, let us never forget that our Father only has power and authority to appoint anything to us. None of them are what is sometimes called bad appointments. He is good and only good can come from Him, and He is the only Saviour and none can hurt or damn that which He has blessed. Let us, as moved by the love of God, ever be alerted to the fact that "out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined (Psa. 50:2)." Zion is the resting place of God; He will rest in His love there (See Zeph. 3). Here is beauty forevermore, and from here the source of it, it is given to every inhabitant of that holy Mount Zion, yea, even beauty for ashes. Stop poor sinner and ponder the significance of this rich promise. In the meantime do not let satan nor any of his cohorts becloud the clarity of His promise.

Let us listen at the beloved apostle for a moment. Do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, He conditions us all. That fiery trial tried Job in his far off day. It was one of the most trying times of his Christian journey. All kinds of falsehoods were concocted to torment him, and to induce him to deny the Lord that had been such a glorious benefactor to him for so long. Faith made the difference; faith gave him the victory; faith enabled the patriarch to say in all of the fiery ordeal, "when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold." Peter was blessed to bring the same sweet assurance in his day.

The Spirit of the Lord is a consuming fire. The application of this

fiery ordeal, which is applicable to us all, is not to destroy us, but to save us. That is what the saving is about from beginning to end. To separate us from the vain and perishing objects of the flesh; to wean us from the vain things that are forever rising up in our carnal mind to lead us astray. As these objects rise God has blessed His children by the gift of His consuming fiery Spirit which sits as a refinery in us, consuming the fleshly desires and ambitions, thus saving us as by fire. Fire does not reduce to nonentity; ashes are always left. If these ashes which was the result of the burning of your fleshly works, they would be a source of shame to you. But God the Father anointed Jesus Christ your Saviour to give you beauty, which shines out of Zion, for the ashes that otherwise would accumulate day by day.

The Lord God hath anointed His Son and your Saviour to give you the oil of the joy for your mourning. Does that also come as a free gift to poor sinners. Delightfully so, dear heart. He alone delights fully and freely in the law of God. Although suffering untold agony, yet, while in the throes of death, His delight was upon the happy delight that He, in those agonies of death, was bringing and giving to His lovely bride the oil of joy for every mournful tear she had ever shed because of her sin. That oil of joy was wrung from him as in anguish of soul He cried out, My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? And the answer is that she might, being a poor weak and sinful and oftentimes unfaithful bride that she might have the oil of joy to succor her in her hours of desolation and doubts and

fears.

But that is not all. The blessings of this faithful Husband will never end. He was anointed to give unto His bride, His people, each and every one that came up out of the wilderness leaning on the arm of the Beloved. It was plenty to go after her. It was plenty to endure the dreadful agony of the cruel tree for her. It was much, much more than any of us could have borne to ransom her from death, but that was not enough. He knew her enemies, and He knew the suggestive cunning powers of satan. He had gone before her, and He knew the cost, the soul trying cost, of her travel in this low ground of sorrow and anguish and death. He knew what her path and her journey would consist of in solitariness, in sorrow, in loneliness.

People talk about God being the author of sin. Let us settle that once and for all. By man came sin, and death by sin. God commanded that they not eat of the tree, for, says He, in the day that they ate of it, that then and there they died. Adam and Eve sinned, and on the day that it was revealed to them that they were sinners, then and there set in the spirit of heaviness. That is as soon as any man or woman has ever grieved because of sin. What a grievous burden it is to mourn on account of being a sinner. What a pall of heaviness sets in when first it becomes apparent that the things that they would not do, that those are the things that they do. What lamentations have gone up before God because of indwelling sin.

How dreary is the travel of a poor sinner. What pleadings for a divine

unction that the Lord has had mercy on one that when he or she would desire to walk obediently before the Lord in all sincerity and in humility, and yet to be swayed by evil thoughts.

In each case like unto this, it is a savor of good. Not a savor that your sin is good, God forbid. But it is a savor that God has been dealing with you; that He has begun a good work in you. Could ever a work be any better? The Master has begun to reveal to you that you are a sinner. He gives you a desire to leave it off, and instead of leaving it off it seems that you are getting worse. You say to me, what do you know about such a life? What do you know about being heavy pressed because of outbreaking sins? Come let us go backward fifty eight years. I hope that God had already shown me what a weak wretched sinner that I was. But He had not cured me of profanity.

No reader can ever know, save he and she that has gone under that spirit of heaviness. What a pall of blackness it was to bear. The time did come, when even that was removed, but the stigma of sin is still prevalent in me today, and I need the garment of praise to be brought down from above, and as my sins are rolled away and from off me, I need that garment of praise put on me, beginning at my head, and proceeding downward until I am enveloped in a garment of divine praise to His great and holy name.

Now let me ask you to go back with me and read the whole text slowly and quietly. Let us ask the question, Why were all these things done? Who is it that done each of

these saving acts? Let our blessed Saviour answer. He is to have the final work in the salvation of the family of God. He tells us, all that we need to know about not only our individual salvation, but the salvation of everyone that will ever enter the realms of glory. There was unity in heaven, long before the conception of Jesus in His mother's womb He was. Before Abraham's day He could say I am. Long before the morning stars sang together, He was the great I am. Listen, dear reader. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to the end that I perform each of these miracles upon the people described. There is not a logician on the face of the globe, neither has there ever been one that could, nor will there ever be one that can enact any rule, or set of rules, that can ever open up any plan or new system that can ever add one more to the list that is going to be saved than these enumerated, nor will hell ever devise anything to take one of these away and cause them to be lost.

After enumerating all of the miracles that the Lord God had anointed Him to do for these poor sinners, He then proceeds to tell us why that all of this was done in the first place. I am not afraid of the security of God's children, one and all. I am not in doubt as to the safety and the truthfulness of the gospel as Old Baptist preach it. It is the truth as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Everything that Jesus was anointed to do was for only one purpose. All of this work of Jesus Christ in their behalf was that, they (everyone of them) might be called trees of righteous-

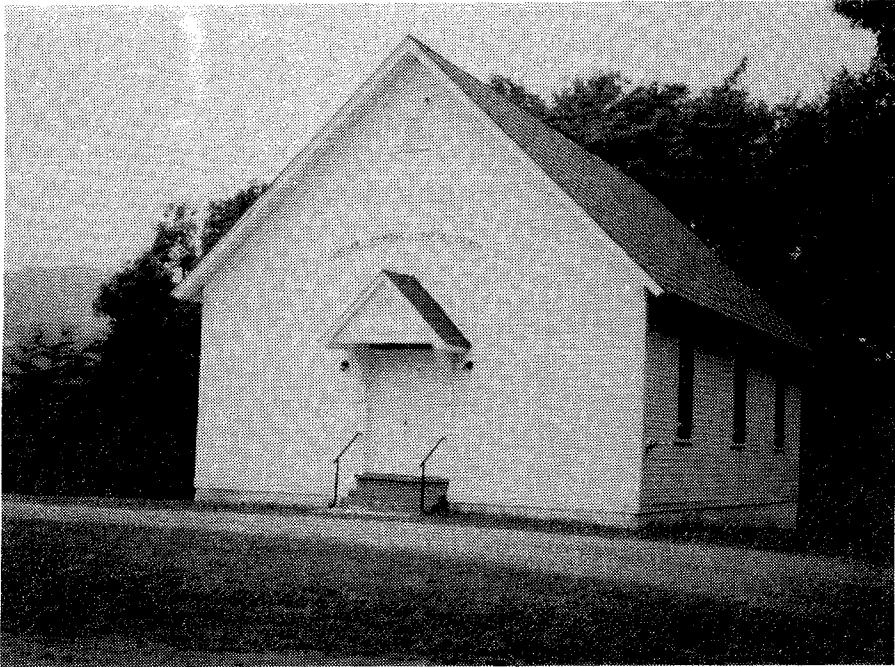
ness. All of these trees were to be planted by the Lord. Let false religionists rage and let the people imagine vain things, all of their spite belched forth at once will never endanger one of the least of these plantings. Every tree which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. (Mat. 15:3). Now our delightful text tells us that all of this work was done as a result of what the Lord God had anointed His Son to do, and they are referred to as trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.

The final and clinching purpose in all of this being done was that the Lord be glorified in it all. Suppose that one tree is not planted by the Lord? That will not get by. God keeps His promises in both directions. He saves to the uttermost all of them that He has planted, but He does not save even one that somebody else plants. God's work is perfect (Deut. 32:4). There is not a loose link, nor a broken link; there is not a dropped stitch in all of this catalog of events, for everyone of them was done as a result of the Lord God anointing them to that end. Surely, surely men are not so foolish as to charge Wisdom personified as being so foolish or lacking in anything so as to come short in that which He planted. Surely men are not that brazen. How weak it sounds to charge God of planning such a gigantic forest, every tree therein being a righteous plant and everyone of them planted for the glory of God.

God has, and God will adorn every facet of His glorious work.

Elder W.D. Griffin

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



BASHAM PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Basham Church was organized in 1908. It is located in Stewartsville, Va., 6 miles east of Vinton on route 24.

Their meeting time is 2nd Sunday each month at 11:00 a.m. and Sat-

urday before at 2:30 p.m. Communion Service, 2nd Sunday in July each year.

Their present pastor is Elder William Holland.

MEETINGS

Springfield Church

As Per Precepts and examples as set forth in the written word of God, Springfield Primitive Baptist Church looked out among themselves and recognized a certain gift. They therefore called for a

presbytery to be formed Saturday, May 9, 1987 at 6:30 at Springfield Primitive Baptist Church, Gretna, Virginia; for the purpose of examination of this gift, Brother Oscar Donald Pickeral 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

Raymond Goad. Elder O.K. Tench was elected as moderator and Elder Amos Hash to serve as clerk. Brother Homie Dalton acted as spokesman for the church. Elder Denver Simpson delivered Brother Oscar Pickeral to the Presbytery.

The qualifications for deacon read as set forth in scriptures I Timothy 3:1-13 by Elder Lane Carter. Examinations followed by Elders and others. The presbytery being satisfied as to the qualifications of this candidate proceeded with the laying on of hands and prayer was offered by Elder William Holland. The charge was delivered to Brother Oscar by Elder Julian Williams. He was then delivered back to the church as an ordained deacon. The spokesman said, "The church was satisfied with the work of the presbytery."

The minutes 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 Oscar Donald Pickeral along with a certificate of ordination.

Presbytery was dismissed by prayer by Brother Marvin Brumfield.

Elder O.K. Tench, Moderator
Elder Amos Hash, Clerk

Elders:

J.R. Williams
William N. Holland
Denver L. Simpson
Lane Carter
Raymond Goad
O.K. Tench

Deacons:

Brother Clay Brown

Brother Silas Payne
Brother Harvey Wood
Brother Fred Murphy
Brother Marvin Brumfield
Brother Nelson Bryant
Brother Nelson Nester
Brother Bobby Bernard
Brother Claude Johnson
Brother Clyde Johnson
Brother Stafford Houston
Brother Richard Stegall
Brother H.D. Ingram
Brother E.S. Horsley
Brother Homie Dalton

Smith River Association

The Lord willing, the next session of the Smith River Association will convene with Union Church, Sept. 4, 5, & 6, 1987. It is located in Patrick County, Va. on state road #623, near Fairy Stone Park. All lovers of the truth are invited and especially all Elders of our faith and order.

Elder Amos T. Hash, Moderator

South Ouachita Association

The next session of the South Ouachita Association will convene with New Hope Church, located 1 1/2 miles north of Spearsville, La., 4 miles east of Hwy. 67, beginning on Friday before the fourth Sunday in September, 1987. All lovers of the truth are invited.

Elder Graydon Smith

The West County Line Union

The West County Line Union meeting will be held, the Lord willing, the fifth Sunday in August at Pleasantville Church. We appreciate the presence of all who desire to meet with us. Elders of our faith and order are especially invited. The church is located on 704, five miles east of Madison, N.C., 220 junction, 704 at Tuttle Chevrolet Madison. By Reidsville 87 W. junction, 65 take to 704.

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

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 8/87
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.

ARTICLES

PROVERBS XXV. II

“ A Word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”

While journeying through Samaria our Saviour comes to Jacob's well. The disciples have gone for meat. Seeing a woman at the well about to draw water, Jesus asks a drink at her hands. She stands aghast at such a request, for, seeing he is a Jew, she

knows it to be an unusual thing for one of that race to ask anything of a Samaritan. Thus she reminds him, but he replies, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water.” Thus begins a remarkable conversation between our Lord and this adulterous woman. In it he reveals himself to her as the Christ, the Messiah which was to come. At the close the woman runs away joyfully to her companions exclaiming, “Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” Yes, this poor, miserable woman has seen the Savior, and knows that he it is who speaks to her. His words to her are “fitly spoken.”

Shifting the scene, we behold the gate of the temple, Beautiful, at Jerusalem. Hither come a number of men bearing one whom they lay at the entrance. This man has been lame from his birth, and never able to walk a step, and is placed here daily to receive alms of those who pass by. Peter and John, two disciples of the Lord, approach him. He begs an alms of them. They have none, but say, “Look upon us,” and then follow these remarkable words, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” Immediately he is healed, leaps up and goes with them into the temple, leaping and praising, not the disciples, but God. Their words were “fitly” spoken.

Let us glance at one more scene. Before us is the road leading out of Jerusalem toward Damascus. Down it come a company of men headed by Saul of Tarsus. Look at him. He has

left Jerusalem with letters admitting him into Damascus. One of the most remarkable men of his day, he is skilled in the law of his fathers and in the wisdom of the east. Dominating him is a fierce hatred of the followers of Christ. The purpose of his journey to Damascus is to persecute these people, and to bring them captives to Jerusalem. He verily believes he is doing God's service, and breathing out slaughters and threatenings against the disciples of the Lord, goes forward. Suddenly a dazzling light from heaven shines round about him. He falls to the earth, and to him a voice speaks, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Astonished, he cries, "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Humbled, ashamed and groveling in the dust, this once haughty man implores, "What wilt thou have me to do?" "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." In Damascus we find him preaching the gospel he hated to the very ones he had intended to persecute. What has wrought this wondrous change? "A word fitly spoken."

In these instances which I have cited, Christ either directly or through his servants has given the fitly spoken word. "The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." It is the tidings of that salvation which God has wrought for his people in his Son Jesus Christ. These tidings may be spoken directly to us by God himself, in our sleeping or in our waking hours, while at work or at rest, while reading or while in meditation. It may come through an earthen vessel such as all of God's

servants are, but not necessarily so. Most emphatically the preaching of the word is not essential to give one a knowledge of Christ or his salvation. But no matter in what way it comes, the gospel of Christ is a "word fitly spoken." In it is embraced the doctrine of God, that doctrine which Moses declares shall drop as the rain and distill as the dew upon the tender herb and upon the grass. "Upon the tender herb," which is a conscience made tender by the application of the law. To such a one the tidings of salvation are certainly words fitly spoken. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,"... This word is Christ, the word "fitly spoken." It is "fitly spoken" because peculiarly adapted or fitted to the needs and conditions of those to whom it is declared. In your lost condition, who found you? In your blindness, who restored your sight? In your sin-sickness, who healed you? In your darkness, who brought the light? The answer is one word, Christ. That word revealed with power is our salvation from all the wretched conditions that befall us. Then is it not a word spoken with fitness? I do not hesitate to say that no other word under heaven is ever "fitly spoken" but the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But how is the gospel like "apples of gold in pictures of silver?" A picture all one color would be a barren monotony. Picture a wide expanse of ocean in a dead calm, with not a sail or a ruffle to mar its peacefulness. What weary, monotonous waste it is! Just so would be a picture of silver. It may be valuable,

but it certainly is not beautiful. One color never yet made a beautiful picture. But what a change is wrought when "apples of gold" are painted in it! How it sparkles in its lustre, and how clearly the yellowness of the gold stands forth displayed on a background of silver. Black will appear blacker if placed next to white. So will gold appear brighter when placed in contrast with silver. This picture of apples of gold in silver is a picture which typifies the lives of the saints. Take out of your experience the seasons of rejoicing you have had when in the Savior's presence, and what have you left? Only sorrow, pain, affliction, darkness and tribulations of every description. This, dear child of God, is the background of silver. The 'apples of gold' are the high and bright places in your experience when you have been drawn away from the world for a time and have rested alone in the arms of the dear Redeemer. They are seasons of rejoicing and gladness you have had when the word spoken in your heart lifted you out of the horrible pit and set you upon a rock, and put a new song in your mouth, even praise to our God. "Apples" implies sweetness. Truly these are sweet times. They are also a fruit. So are these happy days the fruit or the result of many days in darkness and tribulation. Without these "apples of gold," these "words fitly spoken," our lives would be but as trees without fruit. With them the lives of the saints are pictures beautiful, rich and rare.

H.H. Lefferts

"TEN VIRGINS"

Matthew 24:1 "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom."

First, let us note the time in which Christ was speaking of. He was speaking of, then shall be the kingdom, when the kingdom of heaven or the church would be fully established and the spirit of truth returned on the day of Pentecost as He had promised. "I will not leave you comfortless."

After coming forth from the sepulchre and ascending unto his Father and your Father, the day of Pentecost was fully come. Devout men out of every nation under heaven, by the Spirit went in with Christ to the marriage, all of one accord, in one place, in Jerusalem, the church. By faith, just and devout men had long waited when the day of Pentecost was fully come and the spirit of comfort had returned to them as promised by Christ. "I will come to you."

John 14:15 "If you love me, keep my commandments. 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you forever." 14:17 "Even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: But ye know Him: For He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." 14:19 "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me because I live, ye shall live also." So, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins. Likened unto one company

of ten virgins having everything in common, with the exception of Oil. All ten are virgins, modest, untouched, clean and undefiled. There is not one goat among the ten, but five wise virgins and five foolish virgins. Apart from other considerations, this description is decisive as regard to the main character of the actions of the visible church which are represented by two groups. The one is wise unto salvation, the other have their foolish hearts darkened in outer darkness.

Matthew 8:11 "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." 8:12 "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." It is clear that which is outward in the visible church is the lamp. What is inward and spiritual is the oil laid up in the vessels. When we contemplate with the apostle Paul, the works having a valve from the living principles of faith, out of which good works spring, the works are the lamps and faith is the oil, which must feed the lamp. Ephesians 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Our Light must shine before men in good works, but this cannot be, unless there be a fixed active Spirit of God in the heart of faith in Christ, love and kindness to God and our brethren, from which we must act in everything we do in the faith. The oil, which keeps the lamps burning, is derived to the candlestick from Jesus Christ, the great

and good olive, by the golden pipes of the ordinances, which is explained in John 1:16 "And of His fullness have all we received, and Grace for Grace." Let us hold in view that it is of His fullness, therefore it is faith for faith as well as Grace for Grace. For where there is Grace there is the portion of faith given, to His servants according to his several ability, to them that are called His own.

The bridegroom come and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage. It is to the marriage and not to the wedding. Marriage being the state of being married which Christ is joined to His bride, the Church.

We must behold the letters to the seven churches of Asia, that five of the churches had done as the apostle Paul said, II Timothy 4:4 "And they shall turn their ears from the truth, and shall be turned into fables." Let us not overlook the fact that the lamps of the foolish virgins were at one time burning or they could not have gone out. Matthew 25:8 "And the foolish said to the wise, give us of your oil: For our lamps are gone out." The five churches of Asia, of which Christ finds fault, were no doubt at first, when they were established, were of the original faith and order. If they were not, they would not be part of the seven.

All ten are virgins, all ten have lamps, all ten are at one visible meeting place seeking one common goal. Joy, comfort, peace, fellowship with our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ in His kingdom and eternal salvation. Let us observe that works are performed by both groups of which the lamps represents works.

The wise take oil in their vessels. They all slumber and sleep, they all arise, and they all trim their lamps. It is sure all these things are directed by the Spirit. So we ask the question, then what is the difference in the works? The Spirit of truth and faith made the difference and it is the difference. By the kind providence of God, the Spirit brings forth action and movement to both the wise and foolish. Does not the wind blow on both the wise and foolish? The Spirit directs both the wise and foolish to slumber and sleep. The spouse sleepeth, but by faith his heart awaketh. The Spirit directs both the wise and the foolish to hear the words "Behold the bridegroom cometh," and commands both to go out to meet Him. By the Spirit of faith the wise go in the open door to the marriage. The door is open only to the wise in faith, wise unto salvation. Grace for Grace, Faith for Faith. Revelation 3:7 "He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." The Spirit directed the foolish to the appointed place and time where their eyes are open to the fact that the door is shut to them. The Spirit opened their mouth to say, Lord Lord open to us," and the Spirit opened the unstopped ears of the foolish to hear the words of the bridegroom say, "I know you not." The bridegroom did not say, I never knew you. The bridegroom knows the foolish as not having light for their works are without faith. The faith they went to buy did not suffice. The foolish must have obtained what they went after for they did return, and experienced displayed the fact that the Grace of faith of God cannot

be obtained other than from God. The bridegroom knows the works of the seven churches of Asia as He knows the works of the wise and the foolish. Revelation 2:4 "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou has left thy first love." 2:5 "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. We repeat, Gods wrath is a constant aspect of His Holy Righteousness.

James 2:17 "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 2:18 "Yea, a man may say, Thou has faith, and I have works: Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. 2:19 "Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well: The devils also believe, and tremble. The lamps and the oil go together, and light is shown. The works are Christ's workmanship, of which we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, and faith go together. Where the oil is there is also the vessel which contains the oil that feeds the lamps. Where faith is, there is also work performed by faith. Where there are works that are not fed by faith, the works are confused, of which God is not the author. I Corinthians 14:33 "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

Christ delivered unto His own servants His goods, to every man according to his several ability. The servant that hid his Lord's money in the earth, was a servant as well as the other two. Matthew 25:29 "For

unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: But from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which be hath." So is faith, when it is hidden, we are known to be in a lukewarm condition, neither cold nor hot, and Christ said "I will spue thee out of my mouth." "I would thou wert cold or hot." Revelation 3:20 "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. 3:21 "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcome, and am set down with my Father in His throne.

Let us keep in mind, Christ was speaking to the churches, to those who profess repentance and attend upon the doctrine and baptism of repentance. The kingdom of heaven was at hand when Christ was walking with us on this earth. It is not only at hand now, but much more. He has fully established the kingdom leaving us with the inspired scriptures of full instruction, pertaining to the visible churches and church members, to follow the plan precept of His kingdom. Though God's divine will renders that obedience is impossible of man, sets forth the fact, that we must look to Christ to lead us and direct our footsteps. We must pray without ceasing that Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.

Let us not be so obsessed with the words absolute predestination that we leave the impression with anyone that we believe we are justified in our

own disobedience. We are not excusable for neglecting God's planned precept of His kingdom. The divine will of God, considered in itself, is simply one and the same: However in its lower and present state to the visible churches and their members, the divine will is very much set forth into secret and revealed. The brief of the matter is this, secret things belong to God, and things that are revealed are given to us. Therefore, we are given the ordinances of the church, the rules of actions or conduct and direction. We should simply endeavor to obey all set forth by the scriptures, without tarrying to inquire into God's hidden purpose.

God does not mock His people, for if we do not believe His word nor observe his precepts, the fault is not to Him but in ourselves. If God directs His people to the door of His kingdom and then shuts the door for an everlasting time, against those whom He has directed, then His directing would be a mockery, and unworthy of Himself. Those that are chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world, of whom He shed His blood for, even the foolish virgins, the slothful servant, and those who have not on a wedding garment, are directed by the Spirit in God's grace and kind providence to the appointed place and time where Christ's gracious influence compels them to know that God is God, and that it is God's plan precept of His kingdom that we must follow.

"I am the Lord and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded thee, though thou has not known me. Ephesians 1:10 "That in

the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." Christ did not use the words, to the five foolish virgins, the slothful servant or the one whom had not on a wedding garment, as He used to the goats on the left. Matthew 25:46 "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal.

There are so many times we feel as the foolish virgins and seem to hear those words from the bridegroom say "I know you not." So many times we feel as the slothful servant who took his portion of faith and hid it in the ground and was cast into outer darkness. How many times have we felt being without the wedding garment? There is a great consolation in these feelings as we find them to give us the desire to press forward in the faith, in hope to be as the wise virgins, the servants which doubled their faith, and as the guests who have on their wedding garments, for these are the faithful in Christ in His kingdom for they (I Timothy 6:12) "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life whereunto thou art also called, and has professed a good profession before many witnessess." So follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. For it is they which are of the churches Smyrna and Philadelphia.

Dear Lord lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, give us the strength in faith to fight the good fight of faith, that when we are near death we can say as the apostle Paul

said; II Timothy 4:7 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith 4:8 Hence forth 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.

Those who have never experienced the feeling of being cast out into outer darkness is because one of two things. The portion of faith has never been given to them or either in their slothful sleep state of disobedience to the precepts of the kingdom, they have fallen into a luke warm condition in believing and saying, we have need of nothing, not knowing that thou art wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. When God rebukes and chastens in and by His constance aspects of His Holy Righteousness, then is when the pain, suffering and crying begins, saying; Lord Lord open to us, and the bridegroom says, "I know you not." Be zealous therefore, and repent. For we are given exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, therefore add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and brotherly kindness charity. These things make you not barren or idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and His kingdom, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: For if you do these things, ye shall never

fall, An entrance is ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting marriage, the kingdom of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ.

Beloved, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in grace, faith and in the knowledge of our Lord. To Him be Glory both now and forever.

Elder J.B. Moon

ECCLESIASTES XII. I.

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.”

By the approval of the editors I will offer a few thoughts to the readers of the Signs for their consideration upon the above words. These are the words of the wise man, addressed to the wise, and since this is true this commandment has always been obeyed. This Scripture, according to my understanding, does not apply to the boy of sixteen, when he feels youthful and strong, but to the youthful in the church. Remember, the Scripture is written for the church, and not to those who have not and do not want any understanding of the Scriptures. How foolish it would be for me to say to a youth, “Remember now thy Creator.” In fact, it would be just as foolish to quote these words to an adult, if he had never tasted that the Lord is gracious. No natural being can be interested in the Lord unless the Lord makes him interested. When this is done, then such an individual remembers his Creator.

This word “Creator” demands our careful attention. Something beautiful seems to appear as we meditate “Creator.” Brethren, consider with me what it means. Does it not mean to form something from nothing? The Lord formed man from the dust of the ground, and he formed the dust to form the man. Then the Lord is a creator. (I will arrive at what is in my mind later on.) Let us go back to the very beginning, so that we can build upon a solid foundation. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Keep in mind the fact that the Lord is doing these things, and not man. This is very necessary for us to remember. We are to remember further that he is creating things from nothing. This brings us to understand that our God is a creator, bringing into existence creatures and things from nothing; so we will say of our God the following words: *O“Eternal Power! whose high*

abode

Becomes the grandeur of a God;

Infinite lengths beyond the bounds

Where stars revolve their little rounds.”

The Lord also formed the sun, moon and stars and set them in their places. We cannot understand how the Lord did those things, but we have these created things around, above and under us to prove that things were created. While these things are wonderful for us to consider, there is something still more wonderful for us to consider. What is it? The Lord has made or formed a way by which miserable and hell-deserving sinners can be saved.

What is that way? The answer is Jesus. I am the way, the truth and the life, said Jesus. To prove that man is incapable of coming to Jesus I will quote from the Messiah again: "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Here again is proof that the Lord of hosts does all things after the counsel of his own will. The Father sent the Son. Brethren, consider this well, that we do not forget to give the almighty God credit and praise for all things. Remember thy Creator. Why remember him? Because he has remembered you. When you were in your mother's womb he knew you; he it was that caused the bones to form therein. But you say, Why did the Lord bring me forth to see trouble and sorrow? The answer is, Because it was his will. You say again, I am no profit in the earth, and I am sorry I ever came into existence; but you are praising the Lord unconsciously, you are worshiping him in spirit and in truth, because he seeketh such to worship him.

We must consider the word "youth," as mentioned in the subject. As stated before, it is the youth in the church. What is this first experience in the church like unto? It is like unto heaven below; everything is beautiful and lovely, the singing is grand and thrilling, everything is calm, the gentle breezes and the singing of the birds praise the Lord. "Tongue cannot express the sweet comfort and peace of a soul in its earliest love." But this is not to last. How strange that evil days must come, and the clouds not to return after the rain, and even the grinding is to be low. What does all this mean?

It is my desire to try to interpret these last words, though as a rule I try to refrain from trying to interpret or expound the Scripture, because I feel to know but little if anything about it; but I will only give my views. As stated before, the clouds fail to return after the rain, and the sound of the grinding is low. To my mind this Scripture has a deep spiritual meaning. To illustrate the spiritual meaning I will do so in the following manner. The writer of this book, Ecclesiastes, knew something (knew much) of christian experience. He tells it by natural illustrations. The clouds return not after the rain, and the sound of the grinding is low,... How well does each subject of grace remember his youthful days in the church, when the clouds soon returned after the rain and when the sound of the grinding was strong. The preacher in this book is calling our attention to natural things to reveal the spiritual. You know that our Creator, of whom we have been writing, sends rain often sometimes, and at other times withholds the rain, and for many long days at times there is not the least sign of a cloud in the sky, and the streams which our Creator has placed in different parts of the earth become short of water, so that there is not sufficient force in the water to turn the upper upon the nether millstone. Those living in rural districts will better understand what I mean by the force of the water, but that I may be better understood, will say that when there is a full head of water in a stream, that is, when the water is high, all will understand that there is more power in the water when the gate is hoisted from below

than when the water is only twelve inches above the bottom of the gate. This is due not only to the amount, but the weight of the water, and when there is a head of water it is then the grinding is strong and the upper millstone moves with great rapidity. But the preacher talking about a drought, when the clouds return not after the rain, and when the streams are dry and the sound of the grinding is low. How many are there today who have gotten into this condition spiritually. They feel they are famishing because of the drought; the clouds are not returning, they have almost forgotten when there was a shower, their heart seems to have turned to stone, love has gone, there is a coldness indescribable, foolish and vain thoughts only are passing through the mind, and we try to go back and get into the condition of mind we were in when we first came into the church, or even later. As for myself, I wonder what has come over me. Only a few years past I was continually writing to someone concerning things which I then thought were spiritual, but now all is changed, I have gone down into the depths, shut up entirely, not a sign of a cloud. If I were called upon to read a hymn in the meetinghouse I do not feel that I could do it. Hence the clouds are not returning, and the sound of the grinding is low, the streams are almost dry, my heart is out of tune, I cannot sing with any satisfaction, there is no life back of it. How different from the days of my youth, when I could hardly wait from one meeting day to the next. I often find myself studying a way to make more money. How long is this terrible

condition of mind to last, and what does it all mean? Who can tell me? One of our poets tells us his experience in the following words: "I sometimes go where others go, but find no comfort there." He is not finding fault with the preacher, it is himself that is in a dead state, and the dead know not anything. Just now I am reminded of another poet, he tells us: "Something yet can do the deed, and that dear something, Lord, I need." Again I am reminded that clouds and rain come very unexpectedly sometimes, and this brings to my mind and experience that had entirely gone from me, and I am wondering in amazement right now why I am thinking about it. I almost tremble to tell it, yet feel that I must. Some years ago when I lived in Cannon, Del., there was a long dry spell in the summertime, and it looked as though crops would be destroyed. On a certain day I walked out to a neighbor's field near by. I felt I wanted to get out of the post-office for a little while. Everything looked desperate; the melon vines were scorching, the corn blades twisting and the sun was shining very hot. A strange sadness came over me. What if the Lord should will to withhold the rain? I knew he had a right to do this. Then it seemed I could see how the people would suffer. I stood in silence a little while, and there came over me a strong desire to ask the Lord to send rain upon the scorching vines and crops. This I did in a very few words. I did at that time seem to be in possession of a little faith. I remember that a man came into the office and said something about the dry spell, and I replied that

while there were no visible signs of rain, yet I believed it would rain soon. He said he hoped I was right. Not long after that I heard it thunder. I wanted to look for the cloud, but for some reason, I know not why, I was not allowed to look. I cannot describe my feelings at that time. The following is the best that I can explain: a simple trust, the thunder continued, and in due time the sun was hid by the cloud and then I was allowed to go out and look. In a short time it was raining hard and it thundered loud. At that particular time the thunder sounded musical to me; it seemed to me the Lord was speaking to the earth, demonstrating his wonderful power. O how good to think of the Almighty doing his will! We fear him and we adore him in songs of sublime adoration and praise. O, if our minds could always be in this pleasant condition.

Brethren, after considering this experience which I have just related I feel like telling you that we have not a God that is afar off, but a God at hand; that he is ever near, and his ear is ever open to our cry. I cannot understand how this can be so, but it is. The natural mind says, It would have rained had you not asked for it. My reply is, It did not rain until after I asked. I must be careful here, lest I am misunderstood, and I may be anyway. There is no virtue in me to bring rain. If I had or have faith it is the gift of God. It is like the dew upon the grass, it comes down upon me and us, and in such a quiet way that we hear no noise, but we feel its power and influence. In this respect we are like the grass: the dew nourishes the grass, causing it to grow; so the

heavenly dew comes down upon us, causing us to grow in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. So the clouds return after the rain, though it seems to us to be long sometimes.

A.T. Benson

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Editors

PSALM 1:1-2.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

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VOICES OF THE PAST
"he being dead yet speaketh"

ACTS XX. 37, 38.

"And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more."

This text and its connection embodies an interesting subject, as well as one of importance, from many standpoints. Some things embraced in the Scriptures are seldom mentioned, perhaps for various reasons, and we confess our own omission of some such things. Often they are reckoned unimportant, hence unnecessary, but is there really anything in the "holy book" unnecessary? All must have its place and its application in its season. The weaknesses of man, as well as the power of man, through grace, are often shown clearly and in a decided way through the inspiration of God, and in the text above quoted this is done. But before taking up that side of the subject it is our desire to make mention of the strength of Paul, as a man of God, and his faithfulness to Him who called him unto glory and virtue. We have no reason to believe that any other apostle suffered as many hardships, privations and persecutions as did he. Perhaps one reason for it was the promise of God that he would shew him what great things he must suffer for the name of Jesus Christ. Be this as it may, no other apostle suffered more bravely and patiently than did he, no one of his

brethren in the ministry served more cheerfully, nor worked harder to do so than did he, and, if we be allowed the term, no one accomplished more in the apostleship than did Paul. In the service of God he was seeking a clear conscience before God, and seemed ever to have it. He called to the attention of the elders of the church of Ephesus his manner of life among them, at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, with many tears and temptations. It must have been good for him, and to him, that he could conscientiously call attention to those things as he was taking his last leave of the church of Ephesus. His entire life among them had been as becometh the gospel of Christ. Again, he had kept nothing back that was profitable to them, whether it suited their feelings, notions or ideas or not. This is one point of his strength. We would that all of us who are in the ministry could be strong in this direction. He taught them publicly, and from house to house, testifying to all classes repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He said at one time, "For to me to live is Christ," and whether in life or death Christ should be glorified in his body. As we think of this holy man of God, and his manner of life, we feel ashamed of our unprofitable existence, lo these many years, in the house of God and in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. We wonder, with fear, if it will ever be any better than in the past. What little testifying we have done has been publicly, surely not from house to house.

The apostle then told the elders

that he was going, bound to Jerusalem, not knowing what things might befall him there, save the witness of the Holy Ghost that in every city bonds and afflictions awaited him. But brave and fearless he said, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Here again is his strength made manifest in his determination to finish his course in testifying the gospel. At last he could say before God and his brethren that he had finished his course, had fought a good fight and kept the faith. The good work that the Lord began in him He finished, or performed. Perhaps it would not be out of place to say that Paul was twice a soldier. First, in nature's army, fighting in the armor of Saul, with all the strength and zeal possible for a natural man to possess, believing he was doing God service, but when the commandment came the battle was against him; his strength failed and his armor proved worthless. After that he was pressed into the service of God and became "a soldier of the cross," clothed with the authority and power of the Captain of our salvation, having upon him "the whole armor of God." He obeyed every order and the armor never failed him, though he died, or finished his course, in it.

The Holy Ghost made known unto him that the elders and brethren of Ephesus would never see his face again, and during this wonderful talk to them he told them that they would

see his face no more, and in the parting forever he declared unto them that he was pure from the blood of all men, having fully and faithfully discharged his duty, both to them and to God. It will be seen by reading the Old Testament that the watchmen placed upon the walls of Zion were to take the oversight of the inhabitants of the city. If when they saw the enemy approaching and gave the alarm and the people did not prepare to meet the enemy, the watchmen were pure, or free, of the blood of those killed. But if they saw the enemy coming and did not warn the people, and the enemy caught them unawares and slew them, then the blood, or responsibility, of the death of the people was upon the watchmen. Paul, therefore, not having shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God, and to warn them night and day, was pure from the blood, or responsibility, of what might take place after his departing if they kept not in mind the things he had declared unto them during his stay with them. Hence he said unto them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Then came his farewell benediction: "And now,

brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." He then kneeled down and prayed with them all. "And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more." We can readily understand how the love, honor and respect the elders had for Paul caused such deep sorrow at parting with him forever, but surely their weakness was greatly manifest in sorrowing most of all for those words: Ye shall see my face no more. It is perfectly natural, and when we say "natural" we mean natural, for a church of God to feel sorrowful and weep when a faithful, loving and true pastor takes his leave of it to serve in some other part of the vineyard, even though that church has no thought of never seeing his face again, but sometimes there are greater reasons for weeping than the parting with the man, let his faithfulness be ever so great and their love ever so strong, and in this the natural weakness of that church is made manifest. It should be remembered that the leaving of a pastor is not always the greatest calamity that can befall a church, and surely the final farewell of Paul to the church at Ephesus was not the worst thing to come upon it, but in its love for the man everything else was overlooked, and they sorrowed most of all that they should see his face no more. In reality what did that amount to, when compared with other things he said to them? He told them that grievous wolves should enter in

among them, not sparing the flock. When the nature of the wolf is considered, and the certainty of their entering in among the sheep of God, not sparing the flock, but rather to devour, wound and scatter the sheep and lambs, in other words, making havoc of the church of God, what a small thing the parting with Paul was, yet they sorrowed most of all for that. What a frail weakling man is, and in how many ways it is made apparent, more to others perhaps than to himself. There seems no reason to think that the elders of Ephesus realized their weakness when sorrowing more for the departing of Paul than for the sure entrance of wolves in among them who would not spare the flock. Again, Paul told them that of themselves men should arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Instead of each one asking the questions, Lord, shall I depart from thy truth and speak perverse things? Shall I be a wolf among thy sheep? those grave questions and the vitally important matter weighed very lightly upon their minds, if at all, but they sorrowed most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. Paul's parting with them did not strike him with much force or significance, but the dangers to which the church was to be subjected, the troubles and divisions, were uppermost in his mind and feelings. No doubt he felt sorry to leave forever the brethren, but he sorrowed most of all for the things which were sure to come upon that church. In this again his wonderful strength was made manifest. He doubtless loved them as well as they

loved him, perhaps more, but the parting did not hurt him anything like as much as those things he knew would follow his absence.

May we all ever be given to weigh the matters that may come upon us with carefulness and prayer, always considering the most important points first, and not make our weakness known through our natural feelings and emotions. Let us stand up for the right, and bravely meet every loss and cross as it comes to us, and above all things consider the peace of the church first of everything in this world. The parting with pastors, whether by death or otherwise, is severe, and hard to bear, but not to be compared with divisions and other church troubles. To have to give up our sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, crushes us to the earth, but the grace of God is sufficient for us. The chief desire of all the people of God should be to dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold his beauty and to inquire in his temple.

*“My soul shall pray for Zion
still,
While life or breath remains;
There my best friends, my kind-
red, dwell,
There God my Savior reigns.”*

Elder H. C. Kerr

“I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.”—Isaiah xxvii. 3.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who lives at God’s right hand, has to send down supplies to his grace

continually to keep your soul alive unto himself. Without this life being kept up and maintained by these continual supplies of his grace, you cannot pray, or read, or hear the word, or meditate with any feeling or profit. You cannot love the Lord and his blessed ways; you cannot submit to his righteous dealings; or hear the rod and him who appointed it. You may approach his throne, but your heart is cold, clouded, and unfeeling; your spirit sinks under the weight and burden of the trials and difficulties that are spread in your path; nor are you able to do anything that satisfies yourself, or that you think can satisfy God. By these painful but profitable lessons, you are experimentally taught that you want the life of Christ as well as the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ as much as the crucifixion of Christ; Christ as an ever-living, ever-gracious, ever-glorious Mediator, to send down supplies of his love and power into your soul, as much as you needed him to die upon the cross for your redemption.

J. C. Philpot

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OBITUARIES

ALICE LAWS ADKINS

Died April 18, 1987

JACOB MORRIS ADKINS

Died April 7, 1987

Alice Laws Adkins, a long time and staunch friend of the Old School Baptists, died at her home in Berlin, Maryland on April 18, 1987. She was the daughter of the late Sarah Catherine Jarmon Laws and James H. Laws who were members of the old Indiantown Church. Her husband, Jacob Merrill Adkins, Jr. died in 1970. His parents, Emma Morris Adkins and Jacob Merrill Adkins, Sr., were also members

there.

Funeral services for Alice Adkins were conducted at the Burbage Funeral Home in Berlin by Elder W. Randall Saunders who spoke from the words of Solomon in Proverbs, chapter 31, verses 10-31, ending with the thought about the virtuous woman...“but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.” Her favorite hymn, “Does the Gospel Word Proclaim Rest For Those Who Weary Be?” was read as well as “How Firm a Foundation”, and one found marked on page 204 of her Durand Lester hymnal, ending with these words:

*‘Tis sovereign mercy finds us
food,
And we are clothed with love;
While grace sustains us in the
road
That leads our souls above.*

*His goodness runs an endless
round;
All glory to the Lord;
His mercy never knows a
bound,
And be his name adored!*

Watts

Surviving Alice Adkins are two daughters, Alice May Adkins Fisher and Emma Catherine Adkins Esmark, both of Berlin and five each of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A sister, Irene Laws Toadvine of Salisbury, a brother, Homer Laws of Wango, and several nieces and nephews also survive.

It was especially poignant that the only son of Alice Adkins, Jacob Morris Adkins, age 56, died in the

Salisbury Hospital on April 7, 1987, preceding his mother's death by eleven days. He was faithful in his attendance at the Nassaongo Old School Baptist Church. At his funeral services Elder Saunders chose the text found in 1st Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 51-58 that end with these words: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Both Morris and his mother were laid to rest in the Evergreen Cemetery in Berlin. By their walk in life, they and their forbears gave evidence that by God's mercy their trust was in the Lord and that by His grace they were "given to hospitality" to the brethren and friends. In death they have caused us to remember again that it is through faith, the gift of God, that we are "willing to be absent from the body, and be present with the Lord."

Written for The Signs of the Times at the request of a grandson of Alice and Jacob Adkins and submitted in love by the undersigned.

Frances P. Parish

BUELAH TRUITT LITTLETON

Buelah Truitt Littleton, born December 3, 1894, was called home to be with her Lord, April 25, 1987. She was the daughter of John H. and Mary Hasting Truitt. Her husband, Charles M. Littleton died 1957.

Living was one step-daughter, Florence Hopkins of Chincoteague, Va.

She had been a member of the Snow Hill Old School Baptist Church since 1914. She was a devoted wife, mother and always faithful to her church as long as she could go. Although she had been unable to attend church during the past ten years, due to age and sickness, she never ceased to be interested in all the churches. Up until the time of her death, she always wanted to know where the services were, who preached and what the sermon was about. She loved to have Old School Baptist ministers and brethren visit.

After the death of her husband in 1957, she became a resident of the John B. Parsons Home and for the past four years had been in the Harrison House Nursing Home in Snow Hill, Md.

Funeral services were held at the Holloway Funeral Home in Salisbury, Maryland. Officiating was her pastor, Elder James Poole. She was buried beside her husband in the Snow Hill Old School Baptist Cemetery.

She was a loving, kind and caring person. She loved children and cared for many. She was strong in the faith and longed to go home to be with her Lord. A few weeks before she died, she asked to have a tape brought in to play for her, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds". When done, she said, "Now I am satisfied."

She was loved dearly and shall be missed, but to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. May His name be praised.

Frances T. Jarvis

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

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Keeling, Virginia 24566

Elder Smith wrote the following in 1944. When we visited with him recently, he recited the entire poem word for word from memory. He is now eighty-five years old.

Elder J. R. Williams

EXIT THE OLD YEAR-- ENTER THE NEW

*Farewell, old 1943;
Come in, thou '44.
I say to thee, old '43,
That I'll not see thee more.*

*And what, thou 1944,
Pray tell us, wilt thou bring?
Wilt thou bring troubles more and more?
No peace song shall we sing?*

*Wilt thou the war's death-toll increase?
Will casualties run high?
And the great prize--O lasting peace!
Will it be far or nigh?*

*I'm sure no living mortal knows--
Not Roosevelt or Pope;
And Churchill great, and Stalin too,
What hold they forth of hope?*

*Old '43 was bad, we know--
What anguish, pain and grief!
Could I it change, with '44,
I'd do so, and with lief.*

*And '45, through '48,
Will each grow worse unless,
It please the Lord to intercede,
With His great power to bless.*

*The nations seem not yet to know,
Jehovah rules supreme:
And that He issues weal or woe,
Just as it pleases Him.*

*The monarch great, the peasant, too
Both on the Lord depend;
Though it may be they neither do,
Nor can they see His hand.*

*Thy saints, dear Lord, keep by thy grace,
Through this great conflict sore,
Grant us the shinings of thy face--
O may we trust thee more!*

*May we due strength, from thee on high,
Be given to suit each need:
And may we, Lord, be made to cry;
With thee, O may we plead.*

*Nor may our pleadings be in vain,
Thy ear it is not dull,
Thy arm it has not shortened been,
That thou can't save in full.*

*Thy power display, thy love make known;
Come, save thy people sore:
Then in that sweet and lovely home,
We'll praise thee evermore.*

Elder John Lee Smith

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

Psalm 116:15

EDITORIAL

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or not. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Revelation 3:14-18.

"Amen" is much more full of meaning than we may have supposed, and as a title of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is eminently suggestive. Amen signifies true, faithful, and certain. Our Redeemer took this as a personal title to himself. He called himself "the Amen" and so he is, "the faithful and true witness." He proved himself to be Amen; the God of truth, sincerity, and faithfulness in his fulfillment of covenant engagements. The Lord undertook to bring all His elect to glory. His Father gave him a people chosen in him to be his for-

ever; and he undertook suretyship engagements, that every one of these should be delivered perfect and complete without spot or blemish by his own hands. He undertook, in order to accomplish this, that he would suffer, bleed, and die for his Church; that all her debts should be discharged from his own veins; that a perfect righteousness should be wrought out for her, in which she will stand in perfect beauty in the sight of God. My dear brethren, do you not believe the Lord Jesus has faithfully kept his engagements? He has been "the Amen" to the full in this respect. "Lo, I come! (In the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." Heb. 10:7. Seven years of toil for Rachel were achieved by Jacob, and seven years afterwards, and our Master has achieved the same. He has paid the price of his Beloved to the uttermost farthing, and it is said by him, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and he that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. "Having loved his own which were in the world he loved them unto the end." John 10:1.

"The beginning of the creation of God." Christ is said to be the beginning because he was in the creation of all things. Without Him was nothing made which was made, and therefore he has Lordship and dominion over all. All power both in heaven and earth is committed by the Father into his hands. He has been given power over all flesh and all things.

The epistle to the church of Laodicea is not to be thrown into the waste basket and forgotten. Upon its pages still flow the words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." "I know thy works." As much as to say, "Nobody else really knows you. Some think better of you than you deserve. You do not really know yourself. You think everything is excellent, but I know different." Their

works were not pleasing in the sight of Christ. Nothing can be hid from Jesus, He knows and sees all things. He knows our thoughts from afar off. He searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men. Our opinion of ourselves as a church and Christ's opinion of us may be very different and it is a very sad thing when it is so. "I know thy works." Does He make you feel this? Does He follow you in your secret life, in your purposes, your designs, aims, motives, thoughts and ways? "That thou art neither cold nor hot." Is this our state? If a church is in a lukewarm condition, it may feel comfortable; but is in a dangerous state and is dishonouring to the Lord. The church spoken of, no doubt, maintained much of the truth; but how did she maintain it? In form, but not in power; in the letter, but lacking in Spirit. Yet with all her decay, she was no doubt, a church of God; for she is addressed as such. The Lord gives counsels such as he gave her to those only that are his.

"I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot." They were not cold but they were not hot either. They were believers; but not in real earnest. They were not in real earnest, they were not disreputable in moral character, but they were not distinguished for holiness. They were not irreligious, but they were not enthusiastic in piety nor eminent for zeal. She was alive, but not lively; neither was she without some spiritual love to God, and Christ, and to his people. She was not without some light. They had a deficiency of real prayer and liberality. They were lacking in real piety and were careless in their walk. But everything seemed to be going well with them; what more could they expect. They were no doubt holding on to some phase of the truth while other phases of the truth were left wanting. Many of their members were attempting to serve mammon and God while some were sincere in only serving God. Some were no

doubt making all kinds of excuses not to be with the assembling of the saints, while others were eager to attend. As a whole the church was in a "lukewarm" condition.

My dear ones, I believe what Jesus is warning us concerning the state of the Laodicean Church should be of vast importance to us all today. Do we say, I believe what he teaches, but I do not think it is sufficient importance for me to disturb myself much about it? Did Jesus Christ think salvation of such importance that he must needs come from heaven to earth to work it out? Did he think the gospel which he preached so worthy to be made known that he must needs spend his life in proclaiming it? Did he think the redemption which he wrought out to be so valuable that he must needs shed his own precious blood in order to complete it? Should not we all who profess a blessed hope, be concerned over our present condition? Should we, as ministers of the truth, attempt to pray that God would give us grace and wisdom to preach the whole counsel of God? Do we degrade the mercy seat by not making it a wrestling place in prayer as Jacob did? Oh, how far short I see myself in all these things. No wonder the Lord has said to his people, you are "lukewarm."

Oh, if we could be blessed to look upon Jesus and say, "Oh, Jesus, thy heart was full of love for us in whom there was nothing lovely! Thou didst leave the glories of thy father's house to come down and become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, yet without sin. Thou didst fight our enemies and rescued us out of the hands that were stronger than we. Thy pangs were grievous, thy sufferings were bitter, and thy anguish was extreme. We look up to thy thorn-crowned brow, we gaze into thy marred face, and see those innocent eyes red with pain. Now may we be given grace to pray that thy love will

burn in our hearts as coals of fire. Oh, Jesus, thou art worthy of the best place in our hearts."

Jesus shows his faithful love to the Church by this letter to them and prescribes the only remedy and cure for the disease this church was under the power of. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." this verse may be somewhat confusing as the Lord has said the church was "poor, blind, and naked." How can she buy? What does she have to offer in exchange for "gold tried in the fire?" We may ask what does this gold represent? I believe it is faith which is a gift of God. But how is she to buy it? Only when the soul is deeply convinced of sin, of its helplessness, ignorance, blindness, wretchedness, folly etc. and when the Lord draws the poor, needy, guilty sinner to his bosom and enables him to lay them all at the Lord's feet and cross as the Holy Ghost dictates: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, He will sustain thee; he will never suffer the righteous to be moved." Psalm 55:22. The church had these things to give in exchange for "gold tried in the fire." This faith comes from Christ as a free gift. Was it tried in the fire? Yes, the hottest fire, the fiercest furnace that ever burned. Everything about this glorious Jesus, our Prince of Peace, was sorely tested. His life, his love, his patience, his obedience, his strength, all, all was put to the test his Father imposed. Sinners tried him, the devil tried him, imputed sin tried him, his own law tried him, justice tried him, his Father's stripes tried him, divinely made darkness tried him, death and the grave tried him. Only, Immanuel, our immortal Jesus could have overcome such a "sevenfold" furnace. This trial was necessary for the assurance, as well as the salvation of the church. The foundation rock on which the church was to be built must be well proved. This is the foundation on which our most holy faith is built. So says

Christ, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." He gives no other than this precious faith tried in the fire. What was the Church to buy with nothing? Nothing but our sins, our helplessness, our ignorance, our blindness and wretchedness.

"And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Why did the Church need white raiment? Because she was naked, defiled, polluted, and unclean. "For I say unto you; that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:20. The Lord's people who are to dwell forever in the glorious presence of God must be suitably clothed. "White raiment," raiment for covering; white for purity, loveliness, and with absolute perfection. It is the wedding garment, it is the way in which she is made ready. "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." "Naked and ye clothed me." Matt. 25:34, 36.

"And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." This eyesalve is surely heavenly teaching by the blessed Spirit of God. So this eyesalve seems to be made up of the Word of God which is our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Holy Spirit. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 4:6. Can we say with the man who was born blind, "One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see?" Can we see our sins, our pollution and hate them? Can we cry out from our hearts, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" Why? Because the things we see by divine light concerning ourselves are not pleasing, but fearful to us. Perhaps some of you who have

had a zeal for the truth, are faithful in attendance etc. maybe troubled at times with doubts and fears as to your standing in the Beloved; but when these doubts and fears come across your soul and mind, can you not say with regard to them, I know one thing, namely, that I'm not what I used to be. I feel I have been brought into a new sphere of things. I have experienced many changes to which I was a total stranger. One thing I do believe, that once I was blind but now I see, I see Jesus as being my only hope of salvation. Is all this the truth? How can it be a lie when wrought forth by the Holy Spirit? When the time arrives for Jesus to reveal himself to our hearts and consciences, can we then sing that beautiful hymn:

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

We see Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life. The Holy Ghost causes every soul he teaches to come with his sins to the Lord, willing and anxious to part with all. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." To buy, ordinarily is to exchange or give money for that which is of equal value. In this sense buying of Christ is impossible. What have we but corruption? Yet the Holy Spirit causes every elect soul to come with all in exchange for pure gold, his white raiment, and his eyesalve.

My dear brethren, what is the general state of the Church today? Are we all concerned on the growing decline of our churches for the past seventy-five years or so? Several associations in our country which were once prospering are no longer in existence. In the past ten years we have seen three of our churches in the state of Texas cease to exist. What sadness this brings to our hearts. Can we not keep from asking, is there not a cause? we know that we can relieve our

minds some by saying it is exactly as God wants it or He would change it. None of us would dare dispute the absolute sovereignty and authority of God in ruling all things because, "He doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Dan. 4:35. But can we say, God is well pleased with the present conditions of our churches? Was He well pleased with the Laodicean church when He said, "I would thou wert cold or not?" Are we satisfied in our hearts as the Laodiceans were not knowing the sad state which they were in?

Are we as ministers of the different churches we have been called to serve and believe to be among His visible churches here on earth, preaching the whole counsel of God? We may as ministers say and feel that we need exhorting and reproving more than our brethren (and so we may) we therefore refrain from bringing forth these things before our people. But are we to go by our feelings or by the command of the Holy Spirit by the pen of Paul when he says, "I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with longsuffering and doctrine." II Tim. 4:1,2, also "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." II Tim. 3:16, 17.

Do we who have been given a hope in Christ Jesus, and as Christians, have certain responsibilities to attempt to perform? Knowing without a shadow of a doubt that we cannot of ourselves perform one good act, but only by the grace and strength of God. Paul says, "I can

do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13. We are not what we hope to be only by the grace of God? Paul also says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Cor. 15:10. which was with me." I Cor. 15:10.

No doubt we all believe that the sovereignty, foreknowledge, and predestination of God is the backbone of our precious doctrine. Naturally speaking, our backbone is a very important part of our body structure, but our ribs which are attached to our backbone play an important part for protection as well as other parts. Can we not also say that the promises, the precepts, the commands, the applications and exhortations in the gospel, also play an important part in our precious doctrine? How often do we all pray, pray, and pray that God will give us grace and wisdom to read and study the scripture with the correct understanding of them. Jacob wrestled all night praying to the Lord. Paul says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II Tim. 2:15.

Our forefathers with much zeal for the truth in their hearts, endured bad weather, road conditions, and poor means of transportation to attend church. Where is the zeal they had? Some still have it, but do we all? Are we good at making excuses for not assembling ourselves together each Lord's day? "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." Heb. 10:24,25.

I realize that some of the things written in this article may be offensive to some; but please try to accept it in the love and concern, I trust, in which it is written. As an Elder once said to me, "If

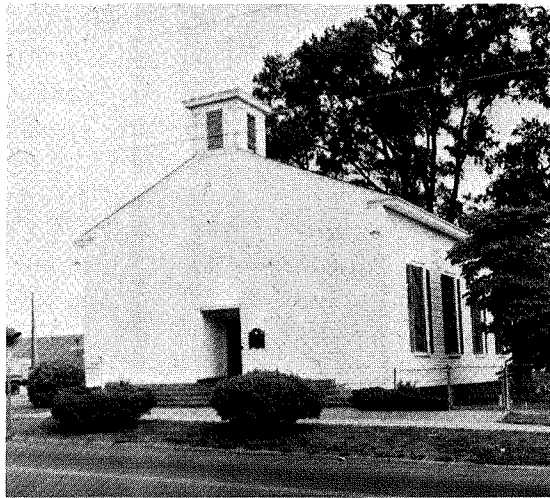
we disagree, let it be in love, and not with malice." I hope what has come on my mind to write was prompted by the Spirit and not by me. I pray that no one is offended. If I'm in error, please forgive me. I ask each of you when you are

given a mind to pray, remember our churches and remember me. I need your prayers.

A concerned sinner
in hope of mercy,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH

TARBORO PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH



Tarboro Primitive Baptist Church is located at the corner of St. James Street and Albermarle Avenue in downtown Tarboro, North Carolina. It was established on February 7, 1819, by Elder Joshua Lawrence, Martin Rose, Thomas Billings and Thomas Meredith. Elder Lawrence is buried in the church cemetery.

The present church building was built in 1826 after the first building was

destroyed.

Elder D. B. Stokes has served us as pastor for the past 29 years. Previous pastors have been Elder Joseph D. Fly, who served for nearly 28 years, Elder S. P. Denny, Elder P. D. Gold and others.

Our meeting time is every first Sunday morning and Saturday night before of each month. We welcome you to visit us.

John H. Coker, Clerk

"A GOOD name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."
Proverbs 22: 1

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22: 6

 CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editors,

We received our Signs this week and I have felt for sometime I wanted to tell you editors how very much we appreciate all the work and time you put forth that we may enjoy the Signs each month. We feel it is another of the many blessings we receive from the hand of our loving God and Saviour. He has been so good to us. If we could only praise Him as we should.

For awhile it seemed our Church went thru dark days but now with Elder Williams coming to us each month and Elder Robertson coming to the Salisbury Church and different dear Elders visiting, we feel we are receiving double blessings for all our troubles. It seems as we get older and the world means less and less to us we look forward to the weekend and our meetings more each month. Also each weekend seems more precious.

I wish God would move more of our Elders to write for the Signs and the Brothers and Sisters to write their experiences or how the Lord is leading them in this world. It is comforting to read the travels of those of like beliefs and faith.

Everyone has been so kind and thoughtful of us since Lawrence had the stroke. It melts our hearts in thankfulness.

When we were able we traveled some to the different churches and now that we cannot get around as we did, we remember with much pleasure the many Brothers and Sisters we met and friendship and fellowship shown us.

May the good Lord continue to give you health and strength for this work that means so much to all who believe in salvation by grace and in predestination.

Your grateful sister, I hope.
Ethel Holloway

Dear Brother Kenneth:

I hope all of you dear people are doing well, by the mercies of our covenant God.

I'm sending a sermon preached by Mr. C. A. Wood, while we were in attendance at one of his churches in England last year. I thought our people might be interested in reading a sermon preached by a Particular Baptist minister from England.

They call their ministers Mr. in place of Elder. We fully enjoyed meeting the people of the Gospel Standard churches affiliation. The Particular Baptist people in England have been blessed for many centuries to preach the truth, in fact, long before the United States was ever inhabited by our forefathers.

Elder Joe Hamrick

SERMON PREACHED BY
MR. C.A. WOOD, THURSDAY, 20TH
MAY, 1985---CROYDON, ENGLAND.

Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." Isaiah 44: 21, 22.

Distinguishing grace separates the believer from the idolator, the wheat from the tares, the wise virgins (having the vital possession of oil in their lamps) from the foolish. It distinguishes the true Israelite from Israel at large. Here the Lord is speaking: "Remember these," think of that state in which you were born, dead in trespasses and in sins, without God, without hope, without Christ. O wondrous grace that delivers us from

such a state! Nothing but God's mighty power in grace can deliver a sinner from that state in which we are born, with the carnal mind at enmity to God, turning away from the ways of God, not seeking God. But now, as one of our hymns says,

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

What cause have the redeemed to bless and praise God for salvation by Grace, redemption by blood and that mighty, effectual work of the Holy Spirit in the soul delivering it from that state of darkness and bringing it into the light of life. Those words have been fastened much on my mind lately - "the light of life." Where that spiritual light shines in the heart which was before in a state of darkness and of death, there is now spiritual life.

Quickened by the Spirit, made alive, brought out, God has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Remember then O child of God, from whence thou hast been called, thy wondrous deliverance, the matchless grace put forth toward thee, a lost, ruined and perishing sinner. It is God which hath begun a good work in you and He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Think of where you would be tonight, but for the wondrous grace of God. Certainly you would not be in this place, would you? Certainly you would be without love to the Lord, without a desire for the things of God! Certainly your heart would be destitute of a cry for mercy. Certainly this Jesus would be nothing to you. But now, called by His grace, you are a new creature in Christ.

O beloved, I say how precious is this Jesus to convinced sinners, taught by the Spirit their lost state and ruined condition. We often quote the line,

'Twas grace that taught my soul to pray

And it is all of grace if ever I pray to God, if ever I know the burden of sin, if ever I feel the solemnity of eternity, if ever such a vile wretch is directed to the cross to look to the Saviour of sinners, to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.

'Twas grace that taught my soul to pray

Yes, a spiritual groan is a prayer, the upward glancing of an eye when none but God is near, that "Lord, help me," that "Lord, save me" springing from the depths of your hearts, is blessed evidence of spiritual light and life in the soul.

*'Twas grace that taught my soul to pray
And pardoning love to know*

This is what some of you are praying for. Some of us have tasted just a little of it; we want much more, we want to know the full blessing of the second part of my test: "I have blotted out..." God has done it. No one else can do it. God has done it - "Blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions and as a cloud thy sins."

And pardoning love to know

'Twas grace that kept me to this day

So that you have not gone right back, turned back into the world, turned your back on Him whom your soul loveth, Alas! we have to mourn our backslidings, our wanderings. But God says, "return unto me." Look, poor sinner, "I have redeemed thee." So,

*'Twas grace that kept me to this day
And will not let me go.*

This is the wonder of it - "will not let me go." It holds me, it keeps me, and it will bring me to glory at last. "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." We may look with pitying eyes, sometimes, alas, almost with self-righteousness, on the heathen man that

makes (as described in the Word of God) his idol of wood taken from the tree, shaped and fashioned. Part he burns, part he uses to warm himself, for cooking etc. Another part he uses to make an idol and bows down and worships it. Yet, my friend, as we look at the heathen, what can we say of any and all that are without Christ? What a mercy to have our eyes opened and to remember these, remember the futility of worshipping anything but the true Jehovah, or resting on anything but the finished work of Jesus Christ, of building on the sand instead of the rock. O beloved, may we pray to be preserved from a false religion, a vain hope, dead tradition, just a head knowledge of the truth. We want something wrought in our heart by the Holy Ghost and if we have this we shall look back with increased wonder and say, "Why such love to me, Lord?"

*Why was I made to hear His voice
And enter while there's room
While thousands made a wretched choice
And rather starve than come.*

"Remember these, O Jacob and Israel." What need we have to be kept from going back. I know every child of God will be brought to glory at last but we have to be kept from backsliding or trusting in anything but Jesus Christ. How vain it is to lean on the arm of flesh, for if we turn our eyes from our God, if we trust in anything but our God, are we not guilty of forming an idol and bowing down to it, looking to man for our help? O may we worship God and "remember these," think of the lost, of that "so great salvation," of that mighty power of grace wrought in the heart. Then pray to be kept, for believers need to be oft in prayer to be brought to remember that word at the end of John's first Epistle, where it seems as though the Apostle of love closes with abruptness (we speak with reverence, for it is the Word of God) - "Little children, keep yourselves from

idols." He saw the danger, and we need to be kept from it.

"Remember these, O Jacob and Israel." Jacob sets forth the wrestling one, but it also sets forth weakness, it sets forth "worm Jacob." Yet it was to Jacob that God spake "exceeding great and precious promises" at Bethel. It was this dear man who in his time of trouble and distress, called upon his God and pleaded a promise with a "Thou saidst." The Lord himself wrestled with Jacob and there Jacob's thigh was put out of joint. There the Lord said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh," and Jacob said, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." Do you know something of prevailing prayer like that in your heart at times? Do you know something of such a need of Jesus Christ that you feel you cannot go on without a blessing for your soul? You are weakness itself, poverty itself, sinfulness itself. O cling to Christ! "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." As said Jabez "O that Thou wouldst bless me indeed." That is it; that is the language of this spiritual Jacob and this prevailing Israel. "And He blessed him there." So his name was changed from Jacob to Israel for "as a prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed." He prevailed by the grace of God, by the strength given him.

As Israel of old groaned under their burdens in Egypt, so God's people spiritually groan under the burden of their sin in this tabernacle of their body. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened," groan because of some besetting sin, groan because we come so short of what we want to be, of what we hope and long to be. Yet we cry out, and this is our mercy, that God hears a cry and a groan and in His time will come down and deliver the burdened soul.

One more thought here - "O Jacob and O Israel" - speaking of Nathanael the Lord Jesus said, "Behold an Israelite in-

deed, in whom is no guile!" He did not mean that Nathanael was sinless but that the grace of God in exercise in the heart will make a sinner honest and sincere so that they seek to speak the truth and will not go beyond what God has shown them, blessed them with, and taught them. The fear of the Lord implanted in the soul will undoubtedly affect and direct our spirit and the words that we utter. "For I have formed thee, thou art my servant." This fear will make us turn from idols to serve the living and true God. "If any man serve me, let him follow me." No man can serve two masters, so as the Lord works this mighty work of grace in a sinner's heart he will be like the Hebrew bond servant on the day of liberty when he was entitled to go free; but said, "I love my master." O Lord Jesus, help me to serve Thee, help me to love Thee, preserve me from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, help me to do the will of God, to be a true servant. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Was the cry of the Apostle at his conversion, and it is the language of those who are spiritually minded, exercised in the things of God. They constantly seek to serve God, and not like a slave who only fears the whip, and has not love in his heart; but as a child in loving obedience to the parent, knowing that it is for his own good. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

As we look at this word, "I have formed thee" we think of dear Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, who was bidden to go down to the potter's house and there, said God, "I will speak to you." There was a vessel which was marred but it was made anew. "I have formed thee." O, when that work of grace is begun there is a new creature, a vessel made meet for the master's use. That vessel has to be cleansed; it has to be emptied. True grace has an emptying effect before filling. My friend, it is painful, but profitable, to be emptied, emptied of all vain

hope, all that is of the creature, all that is of dead religion, to be emptied, cleansed and then filled, held in the hand of the Lord Himself and used for His honour and glory.

"Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel!" Do not read this word too quickly, do not pass over the little word, 'O'. Just think what that means to you sometimes, when you feel so burdened, so cast down, such a sinner, tempted by Satan, accused by the enemy, derided perhaps by the world, burdened and distressed in affliction's path, in darkness and under pressure. What is then squeezed out of your soul? Not a very long, wordy prayer, but sometimes just this - "O, Lord." O, what a word! It comes from the depth of the heart; it is the upward glance of faith to God. But is it not God that is speaking this word, "O, Israel." This letter "O" has no beginning and no end. It speaks to me of the love of God, His everlasting love. It is as much as to say, "O Jacob, amidst all your distresses and all your troubles, O Israel under all your burdens, I love thee." Yes! though you may be passing through the fire, though you may have many fears, may be sorely tried, greatly tempted, though your sins are as great mountains before you, or as we have in the text "thick clouds" yet the love of God is everlasting, it has no break in it. From this love the dear people of God shall never, never be separated. If you are tired and tempted, turn to the Word of God and O that faith may rest in and lay hold upon such a word as this: "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."

In the words of our text tonight there is a love taken from heaven, it is a kiss

from His mouth to a poor trembling, burdened, sorrowing sinner, who feels to be so lonely, to be forgotten, forsaken, full of fears. You look at the future as you look at your present path, and perhaps you feel that nobody loves you. We do not despise the love of brethren, of husbands and wives, friends, brothers and sisters, but sometimes God's children may walk a very lonely path. But think of this: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." O think of it! I shall never forget hearing Mr. Pilgrem shortly after the death of my Pastor when this came as a word from heaven to my soul. "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." "Moses, my servant is dead, now therefore arise, go over this Jordan. As I was with Moses so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee or forsake thee."

Brethren, your poor Pastor has to confess that he looks so much at the things that burden, press, try and trouble him and forgets the God that says, "I will not forget thee." We lose sight of our great God, the God of all grace, the God of all mercy, the God of all love, the God of all power. My friend, whatever your burden or need may be, whatever your weakness or need may be, whatever your weakness or your trial, your path, your cross, your thorn in the flesh, your cup, your dark valley, whatever you may be passing through, seek grace to look up. It is not all gloom, though it is through much tribulation that we must enter the kingdom, for there are times of blessing, green pastures, still waters, the love visits of our God. We can bear testimony to the truth of the Word before us: "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." When I had something before me my dear Pastor would say, "I will remember you." Sometimes you come to me and I say, I will remember you, but that is as far as it goes. The prayers of the godly are a great strength, a great support and help, but the God who says, "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of

me," is our God, and there is nothing too hard for Him. Our God can make you strong out of your weakness. In the path that seems to us so strange, he can turn the curse into a blessing, the bitter into sweet and if your burden lingers and gets greater, do you mean to say that your God will fail you? Do you mean to say that He will not give strength to bear the burden? Your God has told you this, beloved, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee." He "upholdeth all things by the word of His power." He "hangeth the earth upon nothing." And he holds up, bears up and supports His dear children, even as we read a little later in this prophecy, "Even to your old age I am He, and even to Hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you."

He will bring you through the fire. Yes! God here speaks of the path of His dear people. "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest" - you are walking step by step; you are not consumed in that fire, you are going to come through it; "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned." The work of grace in your soul shall never be destroyed, that precious faith will never be overthrown, "neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." But I hear you say, "I am in the dark; I am in such a sad state, so cast down, so oppressed. I do not know where I am." But is there that cry from your poor heart for the Lord? Can you find light in your darkness, help in your trouble, strength in your weakness, joy in your sorrow outside Jesus Christ? Tell me, can you? You may be under the cloud, it may indeed be a dark path; but this word still stands. You may not have that faith in exercise to penetrate the dark cloud above, but God says, "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgot-

ten of me." Joseph was forgotten by the butle, but he was never forgotten by God, never!

It is not an easy path and we do not use this word tonight as an easy way out of trouble, but it is a strength to us in our trial, it is a support to us as we go forth. Sometimes you may fear as you enter the cloud, but God says He will bless all who fear Him, both small and great. "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." This is true in your providential concerns. Once they came to Peter for the tribute money and the Lord told Peter to go and cast a hook into the sea and in the mouth of the first fish he caught was money sufficient to pay for Peter and for Himself. Elijah proved it; the brook dried up, but He, God did not fail. There was a widow woman at Zarephath; she had only a handful of meal and a little oil but "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." Later when Elijah was under the juniper tree, His God had still not forgotten him but sent an angel. He knows what is in front of you and that the journey is too great for you. "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me."

So beloved, what a strength and comfort this is. You may be passing through a deep trial. May the Lord sustain and support you and comfort you with this word. "Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in his mercy." He will show love, pity, and compassion. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." We do not want to sing a song with a heavy heart, but where else can we go with our trouble? Dear Medley wrote hymn No. 7 on the occasion of the sudden death of one of his children. O what a mercy to have a God to go to!

*Too wise to be mistaken He,
Too good to be unkind.*

O, we want another visit from Him, another love token, we do long for the kiss of His mouth, we do want the sun to pierce the cloud and to hear His lovely voice

again speaking to us. Have you ever heard it? Has ever your poor heart been crumbled and melted and humbled as the Lord has spoken a word of His love to your poor soul? He will not forget you. He changeth not. He will not alter that word or go back on what He has said, "He is faithful that hath promised."

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." This cloud comes between your soul and God, between you and the enjoyment of His love. You say, "Lord, my manifold transgressions are like a thick cloud from me. Indeed Lord, every moment I live, every breath I draw, I am adding to the intensity of that black cloud of my transgressions, the cloud of my sins that comes between my soul and Thee." This black cloud speaks also of something else; it speaks of the wrath of God that should justly fall upon us because of our sins. But God says, "I and none else can do it." Blessed be His name, He has done it. "It is finished" was the cry of the Saviour on Calvary's cross. We cannot meet the demands of His holy law, but He blots the debt that we owe. God says, "I have blotted out all that debt." It is paid.

*Payment God cannot twice demand,
Once at my bleeding Surety's hand,
and then again at mine.*

What moves a thick cloud literally? Is it not the wind and the sun? When the Holy Spirit comes and bears witness in your soul of your interest in the blood, when the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings, He pierces the cloud and shines with healing in His wings. He pierces the cloud and shines with love in your soul. "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me." "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins.. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own

sake and will not remember thy sins." "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

To whom then is this spoken? Why, friend, it is to a poor coming, venturing sinner, whom the Lord has drawn to himself, pleading mercy and looking alone to Christ, hanging on the cross.

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.*

"Saying unto my soul I am thy salvation." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just (you see, justice is on our side) to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The great cloud speaks of sins in our life. I look back on mine and you look back on yours, and we see things that grieves us. Our sins are as the cloud that covers the sky as we see sin mingled with everything that we do. But here is our God who blots out. And what is it that blots our sins? Nothing but the blood. What is it that you pray for and plead for? Nothing but the blood.

*Assure my conscience of her part
In the Redeemer's blood,
And bear Thy witness with my heart
That I am born of God.*

"Return unto me." God will bring them back, and what a path it will be! It will be with weeping, with tears, with sorrow. It will be coming afresh, feeling that load of sin, to seek the Saviour, to acknowledge what a wretch one has been and to stand amazed at the grace of God manifested towards us that in His long-suffering He has not dealt with us as we so richly deserve.

"Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." This redemption is by the blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord. "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me" right to the end of time. You may have a fear of death,

but this word shall stand. You may not have the comfort of it, but I trust you will have faith to believe it. The full enjoyment of it will be when you come down to death itself and you will be given dying grace in a dying hour. So you will prove that your God has never forgotten you, failed you or forsaken you. The Lord bless His word. Amen.

MEETINGS

FIVE MILE CREEK ASSOCIATION

The Five Mile Creek Association will be held, Lord willing, the 3rd Sunday in September, Friday and Saturday before, September 19, 20, and 21.

Shady Grove Church is host for this Association. The church is located off highway 69 between Jasper and Cullman, Alabama at Bugtussle. Turn east and go to top of hill and then turn right on first road. Go about 4 miles to church.

Elder H. C. Moon, Moderator
Bremen, Alabama

SULPHUR FORK ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the one hundred and forty-first annual meeting of the Sulphur Fork Primitive Baptist Association convenes with Hopewell Church Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, October 3rd, 4th, & 5th, 1986. Church is located about 5 miles west of Winnsboro, Texas, just West of FM 515.

We extend a cordial invitation to all lovers of the truth to come so that we can enjoy your fellowship and presence in our homes. We have been blessed to have some wonderful preaching during these Associations and do gracefully welcome all ministers of our faith and order.

For additional information, call (214) 269-3561.

Elder Joe Hamrick

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

Pursuant to the request of Salem Primitive Baptist Church, Floyd County, Va., a presbytery met May 10, 1986 at Salem Church for the examination of Brother Andrew Agee, if found qualified in accordance with the written word of God, at the satisfaction and discretion of their judgement, ordain the above mentioned to the full work of the office of Deacon.

The solemnity was begun with prayer by Elder Raymond Goad. All Elders of our faith and order present constituted the presbytery. Those present were as follows: Elders Larry Hollandsworth, Noel Conner, William Holland, Lane Carter, Junior Conner, Raymond Goad, Amos Hash, Hale Terry and Carl Terry.

The presbytery was organized by electing Elder Hale Terry as moderator and Elder Carl Terry as clerk. Elder William Holland and Elder Junior Conner was chosen to lead the examination of the candidate. Deacon Tiris Conner, having been duly appointed by Salem Church in conference May 10, 1986, as spokesman for the church, delivered brother Andrew Agee to the presbytery. Examination was made by Elder William Holland and Elder Junior Conner, using scripture reference Acts 6 and 1 Timothy, 3rd Chapter. The presbytery being satisfied with the examination and answers given by the candidate, administered the laying on of hands. The ordination prayer was delivered by Elder Amos Hash. Elder Lane Carter delivered the charge to the candidate. Scripture reference, 3rd chapter 1st Timothy, 6th chapter Acts, and 5th chapter 1st Timothy.

The moderator asked Salem Church if they were satisfied with the work of the presbytery, which was answered in

the affirmative.

A certificate of ordination was presented to brother Agee and the right hand of fellowship and brotherhood given. The ordained deacon was delivered back to the church as an ordained deacon of the Old School Primitive Baptist Church at Salem.

The minutes consisting of the work of the presbytery were read and adopted. The presytery was dismissed with prayer by Elder Larry Hollandsworth. Deacons present were: Harry Cannaday, Lawrence Myers, W.T. Conner, John Plunkett, Woodrow Abshire, Grover Semons, G. T. Abshire, Ed Dyer, Hancil Conner, Lonnie Nichols, Donald Agee, Bobby Bernard, Jamie Cooper, Nelson Bryant, and Claude Hopkins

Elder Hale Terry, Moderator
Elder Carl E. Terry, Clerk

BEL SPUR PRESBYTERY

Pursuant to the request of Bel Spur Primitive Baptist Church, Carroll County, Va., a presbytery met April 19, 1986 at Bel Spur for the examination of brother Carl Terry, if found qualified in accordance with the written word of God, at the satisfaction and discretion of their judgement, ordain the above mentioned to the full work of the office of the Gospel Ministry.

The solemnity was begun with prayer by Elder Leonard Key. All Elders of our faith and order present constituted the presbytery. Those present were as follows: Elders Leonard Key, Kenneth R. Key, Larry Hollandsworth, Noel Conner, Jr., Amos Hash and Hale Terry. Deacons Nelson Bryant, Alan Terry, Claude Hopkins, W. G. Parsons, Donald Agee, Jamie Cooper, H. D. Ingram, Edwin Dyer, Wilson King, Lonzie Nichols, Grover Semons, Tyres Conner and Jimmy Holley.

The presbytery was organized by electing Elder Amos Hash as moderator

and Elder Hale Terry as clerk. Elder Kenneth Key and Larry Hollandsworth were chosen to lead in the examination of the candidate. Deacon Alan Terry having been duly appointed by Bel Spur Church in conference April 19, 1986, as spokesman for the church, delivered brother Carl Terry to the presbytery. Examination was made by Elder Kenneth Key and Elder Larry Hollandsworth, using scripture reference 1st Timothy, 3rd chapter. The Presbytery being satisfied with the examination and answers given by the candidate, administered the laying on of hands. The Ordination Prayer was delivered by Elder Junior Conner. Elder Larry Hollandsworth delivered the charge to the candidate.

The moderator asked Bel Spur Church if they approved the work of the presbytery, which was answered in the affirmative.

A Certificate of Ordination was presented to brother Carl Terry and the right hand of fellowship and brotherhood given. The ordained Elder was delivered back to the church as an ordained minister of the Old School Primitive Baptist Church at Bel Spur.

The minutes consisting of the work of the presbytery were read and adopted. The presbytery was dismissed with prayer by Elder Junior Conner.

Elder Amos Hash, Moderator
Elder Hale Terry, Clerk

ARTICLES

ISAIAH XLII. 16

“And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not for sake them.”

The above prophecy is full of wonder to the blind. It is evident that this prophecy is to Israel; that is, the prophet was speaking to the house of Israel. There is no doubt this is a figure, or type, and did and does embrace spiritual Israel (the church) in her travels in this gospel day, for the prophet begins this chapter with the mark of attention: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.” This can have reference to none other than Jesus, our blessed Redeemer, and this being so we see that the Gentile is embraced in those who are led in a way they have not before known. There are three things in this text I wish to notice. First, the leader, the one who says, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect,” is God, and he says, I will bring the blind. No conditions nor ifs in it. Oh how precious is this positive declaration. No wonder Paul says the gospel of Christ is the power of God. No wonder it comes to the blind in demonstration of the Holy Ghost and in power. No wonder it comes with such assurance to the poor soul who feels ready to fall by the way, and says to him, You are not your own keeper, but are kept by the power of God. I am glad that Wisdom away back in eternity saw and prepared such a safe and sure way for these poor blind pilgrims who have no abiding place here, but seek a country where all the shade will be removed from their eyes and they will be blest to see their blessed Leader as he is and be like him. This anointed of the Father says, I am the good shepherd, and my sheep (the blind) hear my voice and they follow me; they know not the voice of the stranger. Bless the dear Lord for this understanding the blind have to hear and know the voice of their leader (Jesus), and we just as truly thank his holy name for making us (the blind) deaf to the voice of the stranger. Dear, blind brethren, lift up

the drooped head and receive strength for the feeble knees, for our God blessed this same old prophet to see this way so secure and sure that one, though a fool, should not err therein. Now we come down to the day and time when this blessed prophecy began to manifest itself, and let us (the blind) gaze upon the great mystery, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not," a way which they had never traveled before. Oh how beautiful is the way. Angels, with the heavenly host, awakened the shepherds who were watching over their flocks by night and led them in the way (Bethlehem), and their eyes (the blind) saw the way. I am, says the Anointed, the way. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and was God made flesh. As we follow him in the way every step is taken in wonder and amazement. It is a new way, it is God's way, and his way is as high above man's way as the heavens are above the earth. We see him in Simeon's arms, and hear Simeon bless God for what he (the blind) saw: God's salvation, and hear the old prophet say that he (Jesus) was a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel. Simeon saw here what Israel saw many years before. Now as we start out in this way let us note the great mystery in the way, but in this let us not lose sight of the surety of the way. I will have to pass over many of the waymarks, on account of space, but before I leave the babe I want to notice some of the crooked things which are in this way, also the darkness that shuts it out from the wise and prudent of this world, but he who leads the blind reveals it unto babes. We see Joseph and Mary take the babe and flee into Egypt (darkness). Why did they go? Because he who said, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not," said, Go. What! the God of the whole earth running for his life? Yes, Herod will seek his life. Right here in the beginning of the way is a place so dark that nothing

but the light of the Spirit which Jesus says shall guide you (the blind) in the way can penetrate, and so crooked that the world, with all its boasted wisdom, can never find or get one of these blind ones. Now let us go back to the Father of this blind nation, Abraham, who is the father of all the faithful. See him when called out. Though blind to the way he staggered not at the promise of God, but went out, not knowing whither he went, but it was a strange land to Him. Here is evidence that he was led in a way he had never before traveled, but while it was a new way to him he did not stagger, and the reason he walked uprightly was because the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. It is said that the sheep know not the voice of the stranger. Oh how my poor soul does rejoice while traveling this mysterious way to find these immovable monuments of the faithfulness of our blessed Leader, who knows all the way, and who makes all the mountains of doubts as level as the valleys, and makes straight all the crooked ways that come up in the mind and heart. Dear ones, all this heavenly host of blind pilgrims was completely hid in the seed of Abraham, for in his seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. When this had come it was declared by the angels that this good news should be to all people, and as we journey on in the prophetic day we see them all stop and wonder with great admiration at these blessed waymarks. Take old Jacob, to whom this blessed promise was confirmed, after he had spent a life in this way, and had proved the faithfulness of God, his great leader, he could look back and see how wonderfully God had straightened all the crooked places and smoothed all the rough places. While passing through many of them he felt they were against him, but the dear Leader could show him, as he did Paul, that all things were working for the good of all the blind who

loved this way and were called to walk in it. Then please note Elijah, the old prophet, in this way felt in his very soul all his companions had been killed and that he was left alone with his enemies. Oh how rough and crooked was then the way to him, but God, faithful to his promise, removed every obstacle by showing him that he had reserved seven thousand who had not surrendered to his enemies, and the young prophet Elisha (the gospel church which followed Elijah, the church under the law) saw him as he traveled in this highway, saw him go up in a chariot of fire drawn by horses of fire. This, to my mind, represents the fiery trials and afflictions through which all God's children must travel in this world. As we behold the dear church of God, which embraces every one mentioned in the text, in their fiery afflictions, singing as they go, we glory in tribulation, because it worketh patience, and in no way can the path of the weary souls be made smoother and straighter than to have patience to wait upon their dear Leader, knowing his faithfulness to all his blessed promises to his chosen and called. If we could see the end of the way (purpose of God) there would be no mystery, but our text truly teaches that this way was made for the blind (redeemed) to walk in, and they possess two natures: the Adamic, or carnal, which is enmity to their divine nature, which is spiritual. The gospel of God, which is Jesus, leads and guides us in the way of truth. The carnal mind was received from our earthly father, Adam, and is so corrupt it cannot understand the things of the spiritual way. Satan is ever present with his deceit, and tells us that God, who leads us, doth not know. Jesus, who is the way, was not exempt from this great deceiver, but God the Father prepared for him a body which was to atone for this blind nation, who should be led in this sure way. While he was tempted in all points as his brethren, yet without sin; that is,

the Spirit was given to him without measure, and he was able to resist all temptation and live a holy life, and in this he fulfilled the law, and all this blessed blind nation was in him, and he bore their sins in his own body and nailed them to the cross. If the knowledge of him and this blessed atonement had stopped at the cross we would have been like the apostle who said, If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable. But the promise in our text is that he will make crooked ways straight and rough places smooth, so let us wait upon the one who promises. We have now followed him as far as we can, and unless he rolls away the stone that has the king's seal (death) upon it we never will see the way. How true it is that we, like Israel, who came up to the great waters of the Red Sea, must stand trembling and wait for God's salvation, and, according to his promise, his angels on the appointed morn come and roll the stone away and the seal of death is broken and the eternal sun shines forth in all its glory and lights up the highway, and makes it so plain through the gospel which brings life and immortality to light. The prophet's vision is now made plain, for we see the blind as they are journeying and communing on the great mystery, the crooked and rough way. This eternal Light which is to remove everything that blocks the way appears, and shines with such glory it causes the heart within to burn with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Please look and listen to this wonder. Jesus says, What is it troubleth you so? With astonishment and wonder they say, Are you a stranger in Israel and know not the things which have taken place? O my soul, see how wonderful is the teaching of this Teacher. What things? Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, and we had hoped he would redeem Israel, but to our great disappointment they have crucified him, and this is the third

day, and some bring strange news to us, saying he is risen. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" He began at Moses and the prophets and straightened and smoothed the way so these blind and fools could not err in the way.

I must now leave this glorious subject with a short exhortation to the blind to watch for the footprints of the flock who walked this good old way, and be not carried away by the new ideas that are now being manifested among the flock. The gospel tells of these, and says, Go not after them, for they are designing men. They have men's person in mind, and not the welfare of our beloved Zion. In all your troubles rest with faith in your great Leader, for he has promised to bring us off more than conquerors.

J. T. Barnes.

VOICES OF THE PAST

"he being dead yet speaketh"

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "On these two commandments hand all the law and the prophets."

Matthew xxii. 37, 39, 40.

The law, and all the prophets, and all of the glory of the Father's house were hung upon the nail that was fastened in a sure place. That nail is Jesus. Isaiah xxii. 23, 24: "And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house," &c. The law was a part of the glory of the Father's house, because Paul says, 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8: "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stone, was glorious, so that the children of

Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?" "For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." Luke xvi. 16: "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached." It is plainly set forth that we are not obligated to keep the law; none but the Savior did or could keep it. Our salvation depended upon his being able to keep the law. He loved God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. All the glory of his Father's house was hung upon him, and he had the power to fulfill the law, and kept it perfectly. It demanded perfect and perpetual obedience. He said, No man taketh my life from me. I have power to take it up again. In the first place, this party who wrote me cannot do what he thinks he can, and no one else can. Then if our eternal salvation depends upon something we cannot do, we are lost, unless it is so arranged some one else can do for us what we cannot do, and his doing is credited to us. Unless what the one does who is able to satisfy the requirements of the law is imputed to us we are lost. This is exactly what was done for us when the Savior came. By his righteous living, death and suffering on the cross in the garden, and by his resurrection, we were eternally saved, and absolutely by nothing else. "So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."—Rom. v. 19. Again, "Much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Man cannot do what the law says, so 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."—Rom. viii. 3. This man the world thinks can keep the law is dead, blind,

and cannot hear what Jesus says. Jesus asks, "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word."—John viii. 43. Paul says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Cor. ii. 14. There has got to be something done for these helpless, lost, ruined God-hating people, and God is the only one who can do what is needed to be done for them, and every time they are told they can love God, and are free to choose, and it is just left to them whether they will serve God or sin, and are free to choose between God and Satan, it is causing them to trust in man, whose breath is in his nostrils. The Bible says, "Vain is the help of man," and, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." No wonder crime is on the increase, when they are told all they have to do to be saved is to say three words, which are, I accept Jesus and that God will save them if they will let him. This causes the alien sinner to say, I will go on and have a good time, but as I can turn round and go to God, and as he is so anxious to save me he will do it, this doctrine is licentious. Let us see what God has promised to do for his people who cannot break away from Satan: They walk "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." Isaiah xlii. 16: "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Did you ever hear anything more glorious than this promise? God has to draw them, because they are under the control of Satan and do not know it, and cannot deliver themselves from the power of darkness.

You say, "God does not want us to love him because he compels us to do so." I did not say God compels us to love him, but his love compels us to do things. His love moves us to action. All men naturally hate God. Paul says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."—Rom. viii. 7. Isaiah liii. 3. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." These men you say ought to love God, hate him, and no man has ever loved God until God has shed his love abroad in his heart. Therefore Paul says, Romans v. 5, "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given unto us." Again, 1 John iv. 7: "For love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God." 1 John ii. 29: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." Every one ought to know that love controls us, instead of thinking we exercise it, and they would were they not drunk on the blood of the saints, and controlled by the wine of the beast, and were not in the school of old Jezebel. So it is written in Revelation, Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel to teach and to seduce my servants, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. It is the power of love that causes people to cast themselves over precipices, and into rivers, and destroy themselves rather than to be separated. Many strong minded men have lost their reason because disappointed in love. The nobleman's daughter fled with her lover. Her father caught up with them at the arm of the sea. The ferryman risked his life on account of her entreaties. The waves were rolling, white caps breaking, when her father saw the great danger, he cried out "Come back, come back, my daughter," but he was

too late, she and her lover and the ferryman went down beneath the awful waves, and to their long eternal home. It was love overpowered her father's anger. If natural love is so strong, what must the power of the love of God be? "God is love." Song of Solomon viii. 7: "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly condemned." If God is love, as the Bible says, it is clear that there is no power equal to the love of God. Paul says, 2 Cor. v. 14, "For the love of Christ constraineth us." "Constrain" means to compel. Let this be quoted, "The love of Christ constraineth us," until it reverberates and resounds over every vale, leaping to every mountain top, reaching back and forth, rolling along in thundertones, smashing the doctrine of free will, scattering its advocates as chaff before a cyclone, resounding as with heaven's trumpet, until every child of God on earth shall take up the text and repeat it, while heaven breaks forth in unison with all the redeemed of God on earth, while spiritual cords in every heaven-born soul's heart tremble with rapturous joy and gladness, while tears of glorious emotion flow down the weather-beaten, furrowed cheeks of the people of God in all lands, while the heralds of the cross repeat this glorious truth in all countries where the glorious gospel is preached; in harmony with Paul saying, "The love of Christ constraineth us," and tell the church of God that the word "constrain" means to compel, and therefore an alien sinner will not turn his back on the pleasures of this world until this love compels him to do so. As Ephriam said, Jeremiah xxxi. 18, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." Let the truth be shouted from every watchtower by every faithful watchman, that "the love of Christ constraineth us," and tell them "constrain" means compel, until all the

denominations learn that the "free will" doctrine of Zoroaster is false, and that it is not left to the heaven-born children of God to do as they please, which is, they can join the church of God or not, come in or stay out as they choose, and that it is left to do as they want to, but that the love of God causes them to want to come, so as to find a place of rest. The love causes them to come, or they are scared into the church by fear of punishment, or some other impure motive. So the Savior says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." Drawn by his love. No one knows this better than your poor, little, sinful brother. Ah yes, down there on the old farm on the river, as wild as ever grew, sinful and profane, until, as I hope, God called me by his grace, turned me, and I was turned, brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, set my feet upon a rock, put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God, and established my goings. (Psalms xl. 2, 3.) Do you wonder I have gone through cold and heat, rain and snow, leaving my loved ones, and am now giving all my time to my blessed Savior? If a man has a child that cannot know his father because he does not know him, is under the control of a party that teaches him that his father is a terrible tyrant, the child believes what he is taught, the father will have to do something to change this state of affairs, so as to cause the child to love him. This is what God does. The first thing God does is to give life, ("I give unto them eternal life") and enables him to see his lost condition, and makes him say,

*"If my soul were sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well."*

Sheds his love abroad in his heart, and he loves his Father with the very love his Father puts in his heart. Now he knows the devil had him, and if it had not been for the love his Father had for him, and

for his Father's superior strength and wondrous power, the devil would have dragged him down to everlasting darkness and eternal woe. No wonder he is willing to serve his Father. That is enough to cause any disobedient, hell-deserving child to be willing to obey.

*"Twas all of thy grace we were brought
to obey,
While others were suffered to go
The road which we chose as our way,
Which leads to the regions of woe.

Then give all the glory to His holy name,
To Him all the glory belongs;
Be yours the high joy still to sound forth
His fame,
And crown Him in each of your songs."*

One of the leading preachers in the south was at my house some years ago, and he told me he was traveling and preaching. He said his shoes were about worn out from walking, and I think he said his feet were sore or blistered, but the impression to go on was so strong he could not stop. Now the question is, Was it the love of God that was compelling him to go, or was it some impure motive? Was the carnal mind the moving power, or was it the power of the love of God? If I knew it was the love of God that causes me to go, I think I would be exceedingly happy. But I am so cold, so dark, so weak, so ignorant and little, sometimes I am alive to my situation. I am past seventy years old and must soon be called to try the realities of a never ending eternity. Have I, poor, weak, unworthy thing that I am, ever tasted of the good word of God, and the power of the world to come, and have all the impressions and power that have moved me been brought about by the love of God, or have they all been from one Paul writes about where he says, 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15, "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose

end shall be according to their works?" It was love that caused the Savior to bow the heavens and come down, and suffer, and die, and save his people from their sins. So Paul says, Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. Then if he loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation, redeeming the time because the days are evil?

Your brother in hope of mercy,
Isaac R. Greathouse.

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Cleavie M. Edwards, NC.....	5.00

*"Pride goeth before destruction,
and an haughty spirit before a fall."
Proverbs 16: 18*

 OBITUARIES

SISTER FLORENCE M. HARBOUR

Sister Harbour was born in rural Patrick County, Virginia on December 13, 1892, the daughter of Andrew Jackson (Jack) Martin and Sarah Tilley Martin. Early in life she began to accompany her parents and some neighbors as they walked out of the mountain on their way to Liberty Church. Somewhere during that time, the Lord softened her heart with love for that Church and for the cause in which it believed, and she never returned from following after them.

In December 1926 she was united in marriage to Carper Alex Harbour, a widower with three children: Elwood, Eva and Henry Harbour. In due time the Lord blessed her and Brother Harbour with three more children: Mary, Sadie and Robert. The balance of her temporal life was devoted to her family, and in her mind and in theirs, she was a true mother to everyone of the six children. She never labored anywhere outside of her home.

On the first Saturday in June, 1969 Sister Harbour related to the Church her long-standing desire for a home. She was baptized by her pastor, Elder Bennie N. Clifton. Thereafter, she attended services as long as she was able, except when she stayed at home when Brother Harbour was unable to come. Brother Harbour united with the Church in September 1970, and both of them were blessed to adorn the profession which they made.

After an illness of several weeks, Sister Harbour died at home on November 5, 1985. All that human hands could do was done for her by her devoted family, both during her illness and long before. Her funeral services were held at Liberty Church on November 7, con-

ducted by Elder John Wingfield, and burial followed in the Church Cemetery, near the remains of several members of her earthly family.

Sister Harbour was survived by her husband, Brother Carper; all six children, Elwood, Henry and Robert, Mrs. Eva Wagoner, Mrs. Sadie Koger and Mrs. Mary Flippen; nine grandchildren, two great-grandchildren; and one brother, Forest B. Martin. She will be sorely missed by all her brethren and sisters as long as our memories remain, but we have the consolation of knowing that she is peacefully asleep in the everlasting arms of our dear Saviour.

Submitted by:
Elder John Wingfield

SISTER ALMA WRIGHT SHORTT

We, the County Line Primitive Baptist Church, feel "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, 46th Psalm, and at the request of the two surviving sisters write this memorial of Sister Alma Wright Shortt, born January 17, 1903 and died December 19, 1985.

Services held at Wood Funeral Home were conducted by Elder Noel F. Conner and interment was in County Line Cemetery, Floyd County, Virginia, on December 21, 1985. She was married to David G. Shortt who died October 30, 1982. Surviving are one daughter, Gearldine, one son, Rural and one daughter-in-law, Berneace. Also one grandson, Gregory, and one step-grandson, Maurice Quesenberry, and one step-granddaughter, Mrs. Joyce Hunt. Three step-great-grandchildren also survive. She had two surviving sisters, Mrs. Mamie Barton and Mrs. Dovie Nolen, both of Bassett, and one brother, Moyer Wright of Floyd-Virginia.

She was not quite one year old when

her father, Mr. Thomas George Wright of Patrick County, Virginia, died. Her mother, Mrs. Emma Houchins Wright, moved back to Floyd and after a few years married Mr. William R. Turner. They both joined County Line Church in 1920, and in 1922 Brother Turner was ordained Deacon. Both saw their daughter's interest and felt she was drawn to County Line, and longed to see her come home. The work of grace in her heart, her step-father saw became heavy on her heart and when she became more afflicted with heart and unstable blood pressure conditions, she while preparing to come to County Line meeting in June 1985, fell and broke a bone near the hip joint. While in the hospital she was visited several times, and in talking with her and in prayer, said "she loved the people at County Line, and would tell them so if she ever got there again." In the presence of her son, Elder Conner endeavored to pray and left. She seemed strengthened but said she was not reconciled about her surgery. We again visited her July 4, 1985, and prayer was made at the bedside again, and asked if she was of the same mind to tell her love for County Line, "and she related how she saw the beauty of God's people at one Association held at County Line, how happy they looked, and desired to live with them," but said, "I do not see myself as I see them, but to live with them is my desire, yet felt too unworthy." We received her into the fellowship of the church and hoped to see her baptized, what her step-father had so desired to see before he died.

She was a lovely daughter, a good wife, a precious mother and grandmother, good friend and neighbor. She and her husband living near County Line Church had a special care for the Church and Cemetery, and they gave time, work, money and cared for many visitors in their home from the church meetings.

She taught five sessions in public schools. All will remember her, and we do miss her. She had surgery after much delay July 11, 1985. She came to County Line meeting once a few minutes, and once to stay the whole meeting, four days later, she suddenly passed away. She gave good evidence that our loss is her gain, and we await the glorious resurrection morn.

One in a dream, several years ago, saw her standing in the water at the usual place of baptism. She was dressed in a beautiful white wedding gown and seemed to be gazing into the heaven above her and us, so happy and rejoicing. In the dream we remember she did not seem to see those standing on the banks waiting to see her baptized. And her baptism was of the Spirit we do feel.

Elder Noel F. Conner, Moderator
Catherine A. Houchins, Clerk

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POEM

Written May 24, 1987

*In Memory of my husband
Elder C.N. Bunn who died
May 24, 1972—15 years ago
today.*

*Peacefully sleeping, resting at last,
The worlds weary troubles and trials
are past.*

*In silence you suffered, In patience
you bore,*

*Till God called you home to suffer no
more.*

*A memory, a tear, thought sincere,
How often I wished you were still
here.*

*Deep in my heart you will always stay,
Loved and remembered everyday.*

*I cannot bring the old days back,
when we were together.*

*But the many days I spent with you,
Will live with me forever.*

*If ever a loved one existed, If ever a
sweet flower grew.*

*If ever a soul filled its mission on
earth,*

Dear loved one it was you.

*Written by Elder C.N. Bunn's
Widow Nellie Bunn*

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EDITORIAL

ISAIAH 61: 1,3.



The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me 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; that they might be called trees of

righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

“To comfort all that mourn.”

Poor sinner this is thy lot. Sin, when revealed, always brings mourning to the children of God. It is much better to be a mourner because of the indwelling of sin, than to be in a class that rejoices in sin. There is no anointing of Christ for your comfort if sin does not cause discomfort. He whose sin has found him out has been signally blessed of God, For he has anointed Jesus of Nazareth to comfort all that are afflicted with mourning because of indwelling sin, Sin is the primary cause of the mourning soul. I say without fear of denial among the family of God, that sin causes lamentation and wringing of the hands in anxiety. If I understand what the absolute sovereignty of God means, then I believe it wholeheartedly, but if there is a man made addition put to it that the predestination of all things makes me love sin; that it does not need cause any morning nor any anxiety in the lives of the Lord's people, then away with it. The sinners that the Bible describes are mourners because that they do the sad things that they would not. There is hope for a poor sinner that groans because of indwelling sin, and there is gracious promise to them in the person of Jesus Christ because I am not afraid to say before all the spiritually minded people of God for us to read into it something that is not there. There is not any condemnation to them that respect the inspired word of God, but the Bible has pronounced woe after woe on them that add to or take away what God has said. However, there is something that is even worse than adding to or taking away.

That is dealing in subtle manner, crafty, artificial in order to deceive.

The Lord did not anoint the Saviour to preach to the arrogant, the scornful, in order that they get to be meek. Any pupil in the earliest year of grammar school knows that the language will not stand up under that kind of strained composition. The hearer has experienced the dealing of the Lord with he or she before the anointing of the Lord to preach good tidings unto them. Before any minister gets to one of the Lord's little ones, the Holy Spirit has already visited them and prepared them for the coming of the Saviour, or, for that matter, the minister of the gospel.

"He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted." As it was with the Hebrew women giving birth to male children in the camp of Israel, they were lively, and before they called for help from the mid wives, the child was already born. That is the nucleus of the Primitive Baptist doctrine. Let us rest right here. We have many lovely things to write to the children of God about our Saviour, and about the deep purposes of our God without spending time in turmoil and strife arguing about such weak and unfounded matters. Such mooted questions as what broke their heart, is well known to every poor sinner that has wrestled with their corruptible nature. The revelation to a poor sinner that they disobeyed their Creator in the morning of time is enough to be broken hearted about.

Any comfort to one broken hearted will only come from One who has been anointed to that end. Meekness is a lovely asset, but it is a blessing within itself and not in order to being

blessed. A man or a woman is already blessed, if they are meek. That is what the Saviour said about it. He did not say, that if one would get to be meek that they would receive a blessing. It is one of the strangest things about the religion of the creature for invariably these beatitudes must be acquired before the blessing comes. Why is this? Why is it that all creature worshippers make the blessings in Psalms I, as conditional blessings? Ask yourself that question. Those three blessings in that verse are bestowed upon a poor sinner, and for that reason only they do not commit the three sins. People that are taught in grammar and in grace know this in both cases. Likewise, in our text, the Saviour was anointed to the meek, to those that have been blessed before hand to receive it.

Christ does not break hearts. He gives new hearts, and He binds up the broken hearted. Let us ponder the question, How did His people become broken hearted. As long as we can cope with any given problem we will never have a broken heart. If we can do it, we will take courage, take a new start, take heart and solve the problem before us. If another, if an unknown power places a burden upon us that we cannot put off, it will break our heart. That is the burden that the law of God placed on all of us. It is a heart breaking burden. No man of the family of fallen Adam has measured up to its unequal burden. Lay down what you are doing, and let us go down to the foot of the fiery mountain of Sanai, and hear the lamentations of the children of Israel to Moses. What was it. What had been said to them that was heart breaking? It was a

denunciation from God. It was simple, but it was universal. It said in simple language, The soul that sinneth shall die. They had been eager to hear God tell them what He required at their hand. Now that have heard it, and the last one of them fled from the presence of God. They quaked and trembled; they implored Moses to go to God in their behalf and to tell Him they could not hear it again and live. If the text does not arrest us, then we may know that our application of it is wrong. How did it effect you? Did you quake and tremble in the presence of God? Did you confess that you could not hear such a strict law as that and live? Now you did not want to die; you did not want to be banished from the presence of your Creator. The consequences were devastating to you. There was not any hiding place. There was not any shelter.

May the Spirit bring to you and to you the comfort of the message of the Lord and Saviour. He is come. The Comforter of broken hearts has come into your soul. It is a personal message from Him to you. Poor mourning soul, you and you that has had your heart broken by the message of God, is now comforted by the Spirit of the Lord. Thanks be unto His unspeakable mercy. He has sentenced us to death by our sins, and has comforted our contrite and broken hearts by the glorious appearance of Jesus Christ our Saviour (2 Cor. 4:6).

“He hath been sent to proclaim liberty to the captives.” That is the gospel message. This message was preached in types and shadows and figures and pointers. The message was not in code, but it being in parables, it could only be heard by those to

whom it was proclaimed. We must ever remember that the things of God both hid and revealed. There is not any trick in the message. The difference between the two is the difference that God makes between His children and those of the bound or law woman. God does not bother her children. They readily tell you that they do not want a salvation that they do not have a part in it. Listen at them talk. Sometimes it has been complained that I have overdrawn the picture. I have not intended to do so, but I have intended to stay by the rule. God’s way of dealing with his creation is to hide the things of God from the wise and the prudent, and to reveal them unto babes. This rule seemed good unto Him, and I reckon as how that it will stay that way.

The Spirit of the Lord was upon the Saviour to proclaim liberty to the captives. Not one less, not one more. There was not the slightest mixup in this undertaking. Every captive was notified of his or her freedom. They were not notified that they had an opportunity to have liberty, but every one was notified that they were at liberty. That is the thorough way that God works. He works exactly according to previous promise. God has not broken any promises. He keeps all that He makes.

“He hath been anointed to proclaim the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” We do not want to forget what the mission of the Son of God was into the world. Isn’t it a lovely doctrine? God is before all things, and the wisdom of that primeval date gives us a glorious insight into the purpose of God respecting the work of His Son. God anointed Him

for each one of these glorious works. Each one of the works were of the kind that no poor sinner could ever do. These were works that none could do save Jesus Christ the great High Priest. Let us repeat this great truth. Let it be our theme song on earth, for, assuredly it is the theme song of that fair land called heaven. God anointed His Son to do all of these wonderful blessings, each of which must be done in order for each group mentioned to be saved.

Have you ever heard such a glorious doctrine among men that know not God? No, no, and such will never be heard only where the Saviour of sinners has wrought. Who would expect the opening of the prison of the bound by the religion of Moses? Who would expect the lawyers and the doctors to set and declare a day for the removal of the bounds that they had set? None can expect that. This is a remarkable opening of the Millennium. What a glorious time it will be, when everything that was against God's children have been nailed to the Saviour's cross and thus put out of the way forever. How glad that I am, and I hope that I am thankful for His having nailed all that was against us to His cross, and that He put it out of the way. Yes, indeed, He brought in the everlasting day for His brethren. He was anointed to proclaim these glorious days. When God anointed Him, you can rest assured that it was forever, for what He does is done forever.

There will not be anymore bound days, for since His anointment by His Father, the message from His charming lips is, All is well. All power is in my hands. Nothing can be against the

people of mine He bore everything. His control is so perfected over everything; so perfected that everything is working together for the good of the children of the kingdom and for the glory of the King. No more bondage from those that would bind you by the barbs of the law.

Heretofore, the sheep were oft-times in bounds, they were oft-times, heckled and annoyed and made sport of because that the terrors of a broken law was ever present. Too, the children had no acceptable year of the Lord. But the dawn of a new and living and wholly acceptable time of the Lord is come. The law of sacrifices, that has served the purpose of a holy and righteous Creator is now folded up, as a garment no longer needed, and is carefully laid away. The acceptable time of the Lord has come to save Zion, and His day of vengeance is now at hand on all that would dare molest or make afraid the poor burdened souls bound by lawyers and doctors.

“To comfort all that mourn.”

Poor sinners heard these things all fulfilled when Jesus met with His followers as recorded in Luke 4:16, 2. Each time that the everlasting gospel of the grace of God had been preached since Jesus has been exalted a Prince and a Saviour, it has proclaimed the same divine truth. Jesus was, and is, anointed to preach this salvation to all that are described in this wonderful passage. It is Jesus that speaks, and it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. It is worthless in making mourners, but it is comforting to all that are mourning because that they cannot throw off the guilt, and the bounds that law worshippers bind the help-

less children of God with.

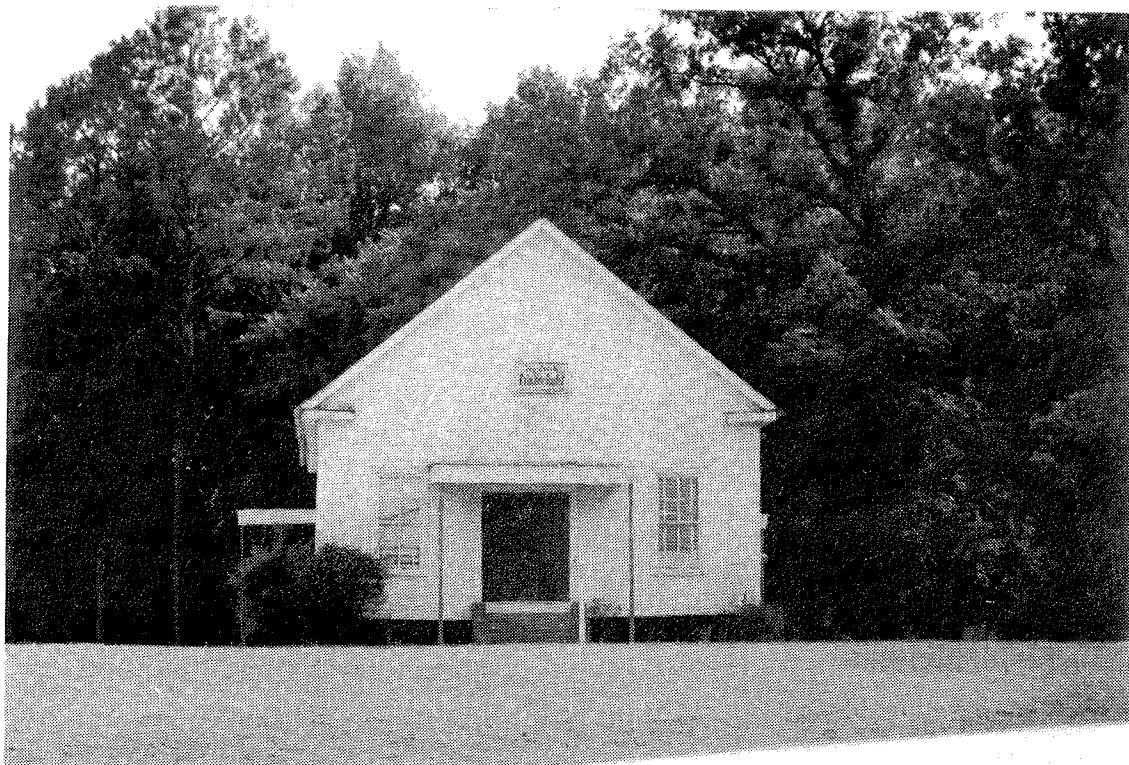
God willing, more later,
Elder W.D. Griffin

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

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



IVY CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Ivy Creek Primitive Baptist Church was established in 1829. It is located in Crenshaw County, Alabama off highway 77, West of Rutledge, Alabama, on a farm to market road 59.

Elder O. Allen Bailey of Westover,

Alabama serves us as our pastor.

Our meeting day is first Sunday of each month at 10:30 a.m.

Communion is first Sunday in July.

We invite you to visit us.

 VOICES OF THE PAST

“he being dead yet speaketh”

EXPERIENCE AND CALL TO THE MINISTRY OF ELDER P. D. GOLD

“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which art written in the law and in the prophets;”

“And have hope toward God, which they themselves allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.”
Acts 24:14-16.



Many have requested me to write my experience and manner of life, but it has seemed to me that my life is so poor and sinful that it is unbecoming in me to make much personal reference. However, it is a fact that what each and every one writes reflects his own character and inner life. If a politician writes in bitter flings at the opposite party, it is because his heart is full of that strife. Should one's writing or talk be of lewdness, it is because his soul is full of that filth, and if you could mirror his heart you would see the imagery of this bestiality ruling in him. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” according to scripture.

The prophets and apostles spoke

and wrote as they were moved of the things of Christ Jesus. For they spake and wrote not by the will of man, but that which they had seen and heard through the eye and ear of faith and their hands had handled of the word of life they have declared unto us. Notice how constantly Paul refers to his own

experience in his writings. Indeed, what could we know of redemption were there no living epistles written by the Holy Ghost in our hearts, and known and read by all men. In that sense the apostles were themselves a savor of life unto life in them that are saved, that is those who are saved could and did behold in the apostles so

sweet smelling a savor of Jesus that was delightful to them, and they glorified God for such gifts. So, the walk of every true called servant will be to so act and conduct himself in both word and deed that all that love the Lord Jesus will be captivated with his good conduct. No one should ever be ordained to preach that has a bad name among them without, (those that are in the world), that is that acts so badly that outsiders have a right to speak evil of him for his dishonest conduct. It is not persecution for one to be talked about because of his defaulting conduct. The enemies could find no fault in Daniel except concerning his religion. He could say like Paul, “I have defrauded no man, therefore receive us.” See II Cor. 7:2.

It is the inner, real life of a child of

God that you desire to know. Hence, the writers so often tell of their own joys and sorrows. The scriptures are made up in great part of the recital of the troubles and deliverances of God's people. It is only in this way or by the fruits they bear that one can see the handwriting of Deity in the life of another. Nor is there any other way for you to have hope that you were saved by His grace only as the Lord works in you both to will and do of his good pleasure, also His working out and making manifest His salvation to others, as well as to your own comfort, so that we will be ready always to give to every man that asks us a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear. For one that loves the truth desires to hear you tell what great things the Lord has done for you, and had mercy on you. Hence, Jesus said to the one out of whom he had cast so many devils, go home to thy friends, and tell them, not what you have done, but what the Lord has done for you, and that is all that we hear of his doing afterward.

Notwithstanding my embarrassment to refer to myself so much, when an aged and much beloved Sister Percy Ham recently said to me she desired to read my experience before she died and earnestly requested me to write it out and publish it, there was a willingness of heart to do so. The text of Scripture at the head of this article occurred to me this morning as embodying the substance of what is in my mind to write.

I was born in what is called Cleveland County, N.C., (then it was in Rutherford County, N.C.) on the water of Sandy Run Creek, almost on a line equidistant between King's Mountain

and Gilberttown, (southwestern North Carolina), places made famous by important scenes and events of the Revolutionary War. When a youth, one of these old soldiers lived near, and this old man is about the only Revolutionary War soldier within my memory. The date of my birth was March 25, 1833, so that the great progress made in modern arts and sciences, such as application of steam to machinery has been done chiefly within my memory. Such a thing as telegraphy was not known then which has so revolutionized business. There was not a railroad in operation in all this country at that time. The name of my father was Milton Gold. My mother's maiden name was Martha Fortune. My father was a farmer and a poor man that never owned a servant (slave), though it was common in the South for men to own slaves. He and my mother with their children did the farm and house work. It was not common for him to hire work done. From early morn to dewy eve it was labor, labor. Seldom did we have a Saturday afternoon even for rest or sport.

Then it seemed hard to me not to be allowed to roam and play or frolic. For they did not allow their children to go to dances or parties. It was only a short while after crops were laid by that we went to school a few weeks. Our winters were spent chiefly in clearing up large new grounds for cultivation. That boys and girls of this day and generation may know how my time was spent in youth, this part is written.

Now the memory of my parents is dear to me for giving me this severe discipline while in my youth. I do

appreciate it now!

What were my habits of life? While my morals were fairly good, as I thought, yet my nature was abominably corrupt. It is not my way of thinking to gloss over crime, nor blacken that which is good. While men in writing memoirs of life or obituaries of those gone on hide the faults and magnify the virtues of their subjects, this is not according to the pattern shown in the mount. The scriptures tell of our first father's sin, and of our first mother's nakedness. It does not keep back the drunkenness of Noah, nor the adultery of David, nor the backsliding of his son, Solomon, nor the faults of God's people. When the Bible records the ugly traits of one, it does not select an obscure person, but the king on his throne, as well as the humble and obscure, is selected. God causes the writers of His book to tell the truth. He is a God without partiality.

While I was never drunk with intoxicating liquor until I was grown, yet since then it has been shown to me that my thoughts were vile and every abomination dwelt in me. It was about the time of my birth and the division among Baptists began on the Mission question that Andrew Fuller and his aids devised in the preceding century, but the progress of Fuller's methods did not spread so rapidly in that country. For in my youthful days there was not a salaried preacher, nor a Sunday School, nor any of the modern machinery of the Missionary Baptists in all that country.

My father and mother were members of Sandy Run Church in my youthful days. Elder Drury Dobbins, "Uncle Drury" as many called him, was the

pastor of that church. Not within my memory or observation either has ever a preacher been beloved or more deservedly so. His grave is dear to me now. Last summer it seemed to me his dust was precious to me as a friend and myself visited it. Elder Dobbins was a predestinarian Baptist by any standard, and preached the whole truth ably. He was wonderfully gifted and his conduct was exceptionally good. His manners were captivating, his wit without slur, his wisdom above guile, his eloquence burning, his speech sublime, his expositions of Scripture were indited by the Holy Ghost. In the memory of the old people, he yet lives in that country.

It was as a youth that my days were passed under that wonderful preaching. Who can tell the power and influence of a Godly preacher on a community, county, state or nation?

Elder Dobbins opposed the new measures of Missions in full as long as he lived. He was not in favor of protracted meetings, and stood as a wall against Mission schools to teach people how to preach, money beggars, and all that hive of modern schemes to control the world so endorsed and practiced by modern missions. He kept those things out of the churches he served and out of the old Broad River Association as long as he lived. These things are remembered by me. Besides they are admitted in a history of the Broad River Association recently written by one of its leading Missionaries, J.R. Logan, Esq., a man that was personally known to me very well and an honorable man. Drury Scruggs preached the funeral of Elder Dobbins about the year 1845. This man lauded Elder Dobbins with all the

force of his speech, (the writer was present). On the next day he went down to Sandy Run, at the church where Elder Dobbins had been pastor perhaps 40 years, and had preached election and predestination or grace so long, and this man Scruggs said at a protracted meeting they had commenced, "As for the doctrine of election and predestination, I stamp my foot upon it," accompanying the remark with that action of his foot on the pulpit floor in a very boistrous, loud, angry manner.

Then Missionism began to sprout up and spread all over that country, and soon it had overrun the entire country and has deluged it ever since.

In my day after these things protracted meetings were common. After crops were cultivated in the leisure weeks of August and September, the preachers would hold their protracted meetings and frighten people with graveyard tales and old wives' fables, and get them up to the mourner's bench to get religion, as they called it.

Such scenes as these have often frightened me, and to escape the awful doom they pictured, the young people generally, and myself among them, would kneel for prayer. Many made a profession of religion at such meetings, and many too that professed afterwards made it manifest that they knew nothing of the truth. What is the good of so reproaching the blessed worship of God by these desecrations? By the lawful and true preaching of the gospel all that are ordained to eternal life will believe. Much scandal is brought on that blessed name of Jesus by such unhallowed measures. It is good to have gospel preachings,

and God will not leave himself without a witness. This gospel of the kingdom has already been preached to the end of the world, and the Jewish world has come to an end.

When attending these meetings many would be seized with paroxysms of such excitement that they would become quite excited and then sink into a semiconscious state for a while. After the excitement would pass off the reaction would bring a calm, which the preachers would tell them was religion. But to me there was no such feelings. Often my desire was to be made to feel my sins as others seemed to feel theirs, but my heart was as unfeeling as a stone. Satan or my evil nature would suggest to me to commit some sinful deed in order to bring on conviction, but still hardness of heart was my lot. What a gloomy state this has since appeared to me. There was no true fear of God, no life toward him, no knowledge of sins, or dreadful estate of a lost sinner. It was a state of delusion and deceitfulness when no truth was preached. If ever the true doctrine of truth was once preached in all that dreary time, it is unknown to me. It was held out by all their preachers that it is left with the sinner to determine about his salvation. The Lord has done all that He can do to save sinners, only He is standing, waiting and waiting, willing and ready, but He has no power over the sinner unless the sinner will step forward, meeting Him halfway, allowing Him to come in and save him. Such a thing, "All that a Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast," (John 6:38), was never hinted. All exhortations were to the

ungodly or chiefly so, and the dead sinner was represented as having the power of himself to accept, and if sinners did not accept these preachers would be swift and willing witnesses against them in the judgment.

When about 21 years of age at one of these meetings, some excitement seemed to get hold of me and my hope was that it was conviction of sin. A few tears were shed and on my way home one night a kind of relief came which appeared to me then as religion. The next day they received me and baptized me soon. But there was no change in my views of faith or doctrine. The same notion that was held by me in all my youthful days, that salvation is attainable as the result of creature effort, were still held by me, though my mother had often repeated these words in my hearing, "Salvation is of the Lord." Nor was there any change in my inner and outward life or my affections. It may have been that more care was taken that my conduct should give no offense to others, for pride would prompt a young man of my views and aspirations to maintain a decent regard for good behavior.

The question has often been agitated in my mind whether such a system of religion, wherein preachers and their theories, and not the love and fear of God, controls the minds of the membership of such churches is any profit to mankind or not. That the converts of this system deny the power of God, yet maintaining a show and form of religion, is apparent. For if you will talk with one of them on the subject of religion, his idea of faith will be that it is first all up to the natural man, and the limit and test of self denial is to pay the preacher and give

a few dimes to save the heathen, and maintain a decent behavior, claiming at the same time that money can send the gospel anywhere. He will tell you that unless the money is sent, the heathen are lost, but that if it is sent, they will be saved, while he may himself be worth his thousands, yet not give ten dollars a year for that purpose. He will not tell you anything of personal experience, knows nothing of being a lost, ruined and condemned sinner, has never felt the power of Jesus in his soul, nor the comforts and guidance of the Holy Spirit, He thinks the doctrine held by the Old Baptists the most dangerous and horrible of any ever held. He cannot endure election and a life of faith. He thinks there is no kind of drunkenness but that of liquor. Education is absolutely indispensable to qualify one to preach the gospel he holds.

Such were my views before and after the time here spoken of. My glorying was in the Missionary Baptist denomination, nor once did ever the question arise in my mind, "Can they be wrong, or myself either?" Occasionally in an encounter with a Primitive Baptist during the Civil War, as we would argue on subjects and differ, did it occur to me what a dangerous doctrine they do preach and hold, what ignorant, selfish and conceited people they must be.

Every part of my natural ambition, when a young man, was to be a lawyer. When between twenty and twenty-one years of age and just before joining the Missionary Baptists, my academic course at school began. As soon as they received me as a member it was remarked that there will be a preacher. This was very distasteful

to me. For amid all my imaginings in my youthful days as to my occupation in after life, it never occurred to me at all that I would be made to carry the name of any kind of a preacher. There was nothing in it of any charm to me. My ambition was to be a lawyer. A few years found me with my legal diploma and damaged morals — damaged not because of the legal profession, but because it was in me before and began to rage. It is not good to charge one's bad conduct to his associates or occupation. The source of the trouble is in the man. If he were right, he would choose good associates and pursue a righteous course of life. Man is weak, morally corrupt, totally depraved, having no margin or reserve force against temptation, and should not presume that he could weather any storm, whether small or violent. Let him choose the safest craft he may and steer in the calmest waters, and even then he may make shipwreck.

Soon my soul was plunged into much trouble in consequence of reckless living. Then it occurred to me that the best way to do was to preach. This was decided upon as the antidote for my troubled conscience. But to be a great preacher was the next step. The Civil War in a few years came on before my course was complete, and I left school. There a new trouble confronted me. Debts to the amount of about \$3000 were on my hands, and nothing with which to pay. For the first time this mountain of trouble stood towering and threatening at me. Such had been my thirst for education that this difficulty had not much embarrassed me until now. For one may be so absorbed in the pursuit of a cher-

ished object that he will quite forget or scarcely notice great dangers even imminent. After leaving school this debt matter greatly oppressed my feelings. My father had always advised me not to make debts, yet my lot so far had been to be in debt from the time of my majority.

During the war (1861-1865) in the town of Goldsboro (N.C.), my marriage occurred. The woman given me of the Lord possessed no worldly goods. In this respect we were equals. In purity of character she was and is yet far my superior. For the Lord has blessed me among many other things with a good wife. During the war and after my marriage a friend gave me \$5000. The Confederate money was used as far as my creditors would receive it in payment of my debts contracted for my education and otherwise, and it liquidated nearly all of these debts which was a great relief to me.

After the war was over for about five years we lived in Halifax County, North Carolina. During the war my troubles began in another and severer form more than ever. While attending my usual course of service as a Missionary preacher and glorying in that denomination, in a manner wholly beyond my contravention or control, it appeared to me that my heart was completely full of sin, rendering me totally unfit to preach to anyone. The people were kind to me, the congregations large and prospects flattering outwardly, but there was no pleasure for me. It increased until it seemed that to be allowed to crawl under the house and not be seen, but merely suffered to hear someone preach, would far better benefit my desperate

case. The thoughts of my heart were foolishness. Sin was an unbearable burden to me. My heart troubled and anguish of soul weighed down hard on me. For months this darkened state of feeling oppressed me. The justice of God appeared so clearly in my condemnation that the words, amen to my condemnation, seemed fittest. God appeared so holy and my nature so vile that it looked to me that no place but hell could be suitable for such a sinner. Sin seemed as a tempest raging in me, and it looked to me that if a great stone were dropped in the atmosphere as it could have no power to resist its own fall, but its own weight would hurl it down, so my own sins were driving me justly to destruction, nor did it even enter my thoughts that this was conviction of sin that would end in salvation for me; for there was no hope for me. In the midst of these awful moments while riding on horseback, suddenly Jesus was revealed to me in a glorious appearance in the heavens, and these words were sounded out as plainly as if spoken to me, "If God give you Christ, how shall He not with Him also freely give you all things." This occurred on the 15th of February, 1865.

It did not then occur to me that this is salvation. My mind seemed to be wholly absorbed in the contemplation of the glorious character of Jesus. The load of guilt and sin was gone, and peace reigned in my happy soul, and self was lost sight of for a time. The glorious character and kingdom of Jesus appeared to me as it had never done before. It seemed to me as a new world, but with my preaching it was difficult. At once Christ appeared to me as the only way of truth .

This in letter or words for years had been held by me, but now in a new spiritual and glorious form it appeared and possessed my spirit, and thus the character of my preaching was changed; for from that time it was that Jesus is the Christ.

New views of the church and way of salvation opened up to me, so that questions arose concerning Christ and His kingdom in a manner so distinct and unmistakable that they were answered in my conscience only by preaching Christ as my righteousness and the righteousness of saints. Jesus appeared to me from that time in power and glory as the Head of the church, having all power both in heaven and earth. There was then nothing else for me to preach but Jesus. All else was excluded from my heart and conscience. Money, Sunday schools, Boards of men, Theological schools, human learning, the force and strength of combinations of men all disappeared, nor was it in my heart to preach them anymore. Jesus appeared to me as the righteousness of saints, and ever since that time, more than twenty-five years ago, it seemed to me there is nothing else for me to speak of or attempt to preach. We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to Greeks foolishness, but to them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

The matter of preaching has been a grave and serious question to me for many years. It was the most offensive thing to my feelings, and never, if this nature of mine had been suffered to dictate my course of life, would this have been my lot. How it came to pass that I was made willing was the most

soul-humblng. It was a crucifying of my nature and caused an immolation of my most cherished objects on earth. But to be made willing to swallow down all that I had endorsed and espoused, to renounce that which had been so dear, namely the institutions and doctrines of modern missionism, and discard all my former associates, and to worship after the way they call heresy was a sore trial, so much so that nothing but divine power could lead me to do this.

They at once began to reprove me for that sort of preaching, and to tell me it was not profitable, and would scatter the congregation of people, and wither the church; that while it would do to talk predestination around the chimney-corner to old women, or to serve old established Christians, it was not palatable to a general and mixed congregation composed in considerable part of unbelievers, and that the experience of their people was that in order to hold the congregations and win converts, the preaching must be adapted to the taste of the hearers. It may as well be remarked here that the more of such arguments as this were advanced the weaker their cause appeared to me. Out of ridicule, it was said that my facial appearance and the construction of my brain made me "a predestinarian," and that my views would land me in the lap of "Hardshellism."

Others said it is the disposition of some men to take this view of questions and see only the Lord's work in operation. But not until recently had it so appeared to me. A great and radical change had passed over me. Once I had believed as they did, and encountered lovers of predestination

with the same arguments they now assailed me, and that which once appeared to me as glorious had been stripped of its beauty. Now the Lord appeared to me as the great operator of all the powers and forces of the universe, and men are but as dust and ashes in His hand.

My search for the true church began, or to find people that held and loved what had been revealed to me, and to find a people congenial to me, for what would the true church be to one that loved it not, nor had any of its truth hid in his inward parts. But if God is in one, then that spirit of truth will lead that soul to cry out for the true and living God, and to seek rest in His habitation, and as soon as that place of rest or the church of Jesus Christ is revealed, there will he see rest and there will he abide.

To suppose that such as God teaches will not love His people and doctrine is an absurdity. No sound of ax or iron tool is needed or heard to change a vessel of mercy brought into this temple to cause it to fit in the building.

Many and painful were my perplexities, and long and bitter were the trials that for about five years beset me in this search. I became thoroughly convinced that the people of my early choice and myself could not agree. They could not see things as they appeared to me, nor could I be in fellowship with them. My soul thirsted for a people of simple manners, that loved electing grace, that rejoiced in the power of Jesus, that lived in hope, that walked by faith, and contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, a people that worship God as the fathers did, relying alone

on the word and power of God, and that believe that all things that God hath spoken by the Psalms, the law and the prophets or in the Scriptures, shall assuredly come to pass, or teaching none other things than the law and the prophets did say should come to pass, that Christ should suffer and should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people (Jews) and to the Gentiles, having hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust, which they themselves also allow. For there are some things which all denominations of the world allow to be right.

But the great question is, "What think ye of Christ?" Of old they rejected Him in totality, but in modern days they preach a Christ, but not the Christ the Lord. They preach a Christ that has no power until the sinner helps Him, or becomes willing for Him to save him. They preach a Christ that died for everybody and rose again for their justification, and still many will not be saved by reason of their own neglect for whom He died.

It appeared to me that Jesus is King in the holy hill of Zion, and that He has all power both in heaven and in earth, power over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as God has given him, and all the people of God are taught of God and, therefore, great shall be their peace.

When my affection was turning to the strangest people on earth that I had so opposed, I had an interview with Elder John Stamper, and in the conversation I said in substance, it appeared to me that the child of God is not under law but under grace, that if one is under the law of Moses as a

rule of life, he must be under its penalty also, for a law without a penalty has no force, and, if one is no longer under its penalty which is death for any transgression, then there is an abounding love, abiding peace and salvation for a believer in Jesus; but He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, and a believer is now under law to Christ who is our Law-giver, our Judge and our King who will save us; for He hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. The old brother replied "that is our doctrine, that is what we believe." How good it seemed to me to find a people that believed as I did, and my soul loved them.

But with the idea of going to that people, my pride rebelled. But the more my researchers were pursued the more the Primitive Baptists appeared to me as worshipping as the fathers of old did, or as God's people had always worshipped and served God from time immemorial.

Entangled in the wilderness, what hard fare I had, no peace, no rest. The question between peace of conscience and self-interest, the fear of God or the snare of man, whether to forsake all for and follow Jesus, or remain with those I was with and enjoy prosperity and wealth of the people I was then with, whether to unite, if they would have me with a poor people, few in number and despised, hated and evilly spoken of by all nations, and be ostracised by my former friends for renouncing all I had ever confessed, and contending for the doctrine that

never will be popular with the world, or remain as I had been, was a most distressing question. For it is no easy matter for one to be made to change his church relations. One that has never traveled in this way can never know the sorrow and distress it will cause. You will have to experience it and those who have traveled this road well know what I am talking about.

It was said, "If you go to the Hardshells they will ram you down in a corner and not help you any, and you will starve for bread." It did look that way. This Scripture was much on my mind:

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake, and the gospel's shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren and sisters, and mothers, and children and lands with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." (See Mark 10:29,30.),

which has proven true in my case, and the God who begins to delight is able to finish the matter.

Another Scripture was on my mind for months whenever I would attempt to fill an appointment, yet I dared not use it as a text, for its meaning was too plain to me.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, said the Lord Almighty." II Cor. 6:17.

There was no agreement or fellowship between myself and those I was with. Many of them were dear to

me and we were good friends, but on doctrine we would not see together. Was it right to them or me for me to stay with them? We could not walk together because we were not agreed; but how hard to leave them and give this offense. When I left them, they would have no more dealings with me, for they called it heresy. It often seems to me now that it would be a great pleasure for me to visit their congregations and preach to them, (if enabled) Jesus and the resurrection.

Then the question would arise, how do you know that you are right? The answer to this would rise up in my deliverance. How did you receive Christ? By works of the law, or the hearing of faith, or was Jesus revealed to you according to or for your works?

Then the question would arise, how will you live if you go? and the words in that Scripture, "I will be to you a Father, etc.," would ring and sound as if He commanded the universe, and, therefore, would supply all my need.

The question would arise, "What about Sunday Schools? Are they not doing great good?" Look at the numbers that advocate them and how they get people into their organization that way when they are young and thus they mold and shape their lives as they please and bring them up as they wish. Are they not thus doing a great work? Without Sunday schools how can we get along, they would say. They are the greatest institutions in the world. Well it appeared to me if they were really so important as all this, would there not be some words in their favor in the Bible? For that is the book to decide all such questions,

and the Bible thoroughly furnishes the man of God unto all good work. But on looking into and searching that book it is seen that Sunday schools are not once named in that standard authority, not even once named. So it was with other pet measures of this denomination. None of them are once named.

I asked Elder C.B. Hassell about feet-washing, for it was on my mind that it is right to wash feet. He said that Primitive Baptists washed feet — that some washed all together after the Lord's supper and others did not wash at that time, but they would wash at sometime whenever it was on the mind of any member to wash and he would ask others if they would join in with him, and thus they would engage both in the spirit and in the literal act of feet-washing. I well remember the first opportunity offered for Christ's given example after being received by the Primitive Baptists. It was at a brother's house. He brought his basin and water and girded himself with a napkin at night at his own house, and washed my feet and I washed his feet. Since then I have a number of times washed feet with the church after the Lord's supper, and to me there is no difference in the answer of peace in each and every case. Nor is there ever a sweeter feeling of peace received after my experience in the participation of Christ's example of humility. If brethren have this humility in their hearts and are given to perform it, they are happy in the deed.

The question of reform has been much on my mind. What is true zeal? Jehu boasted of his zeal for the Lord, and asked one to come with him and

look at his zeal. He was raised up to kill a wicked king and others, but ah, himself was wicked also in some things.

To not condemn another in that which you allow in yourself is moderation. To require in another more than you render yourself in anything while you offend at all is making yourself a judge of evil thoughts.

Whenever a brother pushes his zeal so far as to destroy churches for a point of order, beware of him. There are many things crooked that we cannot make straight. The great place for a reformation to commence is in one's own life. Some would be great reformers, but alas, they do all their work on others, and see no fault in themselves. If you are with a people you cannot fellowship, withdraw from them and let them alone. If you say, I cannot leave them, there is no other place for me to go but to stay, then try to correct evils mercifully, not by tearing up churches, or wringing the nose to force blood. Take care if you use violence and smite and tear up churches that you yourself are not smitten in turn.

I am satisfied to have forbearance and the spirit of feet-washing. If Jesus or any one of His disciples had ever said that a church must wash feet every time they commune, thus making feet-washing a test of fellowship among the brethren, or if there is a single example where the church in the days of the apostles observed feet-washing in connection with the Lord's supper after the resurrection of Jesus, then we should require it thus done now; but as this does not appear in the scriptures, it is not wise to enforce this to the destruction of

churches. The reason I engage in feet-washing at the Lord's supper, or at other times, is because it is plainly taught that we should wash one another's feet and the time or place is not so important as the act being done in the right spirit.

Washing feet is taught in such a way as to show and make manifest the very spirit of feet-washing or humility, and so it was impressed on me in those days of affliction and famine wherein the things I am recording were taught me by the Hand of God in the furnace of affliction, and my views were cast and molded in the molten sea of trouble, and searching inquiry, when deep called unto deep at the noise of His waterspouts. Do not tear up churches because they do not wash feet literally; may our God bless us to wait and show the spirit of forbearance and brotherly kindness by washing feet literally and long suffering towards our brethren, remembering God's long suffering to you.

On the question of my rebaptism some trouble arose, but I felt that if the Primitive Baptists were the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, and, therefore, they kept the ordinances and possessed the true baptism. For Christ is not divided. It is not, as believed by the world, that one denomination has one part of the ordinance of Christ, and another denomination has another part, or one denomination is the head and another the hands, and another the feet of the same body, and you have to get all those together to make on body. But the body of Christ (The Church of the true and living God) is

one and fitly framed together. All the members hold one and the same thing, for there is one Lord, one faith and one baptism, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

Finally, all objections to the Primitive Baptists were removed. Myself was in the way — my unfitness, but still I loved them so that it was my desire almost every moment to be with them.

It was on Saturday before the second Sunday in March, 1870, at Old Kehukee Church, and at the old meeting house that I went and told them but little, for I have never been able to express my travail in full. They received me into that church, and on the next day Elder C. B. Hassell, a most precious brother to me, baptized me. It was in the same stream of water and the same place that I had baptized many when a Missionary Baptist, and many of them were present to behold the stoop, as they viewed it. The time had been when this would have been an intolerable disgrace. But that day it appeared to me that I was a dead man, so quiet and peaceful and so restful. Glory was everywhere and peace and love. It was on that day that the words that had been burdening my mind so long "Wherefore come ye out from among them," etc., were used by me as a text. It did not seem to me as preaching, but it was the sweetest ease and relief, as the long pent up matter was emptied and I felt so refreshed. That text has never since burdened my mind.

After being received into the fellowship of the church, I visited my father's section, and there was a little church of the Primitive Baptist faith in the neighborhood (back in Cleveland

County, N.C.) in which Elder Drury Dobbins had lived and died. A seed had been sown and a remnant was preserved. My mother heard me speak, though she and my father had both gone off with the New School or Missionary Baptists. When she heard me she said, "Son, you preach as they did when I was baptized, and I desire to live with you." She was received there on a confession of faith and her former baptism. Some time after this, she and my father were in Wilson, N.C., and when he heard the preaching and saw the order of worship of the Primitive people here, he said it carried him back to the days when he was first baptized, for it was like that, and he desired fellowship with us and was also received on confession of faith. My grandfathers and grandmothers on each side of the family were also Primitive Baptists, and thus my fathers' God is, I hope, my God. "My father's God and I will exalt Him." Ex. 15:2. Who is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Lord of our fathers? It is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, and the God of all comfort. Him only do I desire to worship and serve. What a blessed mystery to have that blessed hope that one is a child of God, born of God and identified with and related to the whole house of Israel.

There was then another matter that was unfolded in my experience. It was the case of what is called the prodigal son. I was that prodigal that had come home, been brought home, and, the fatted calf was slain, the ring of love was put on my hand, the garment of praise had covered me, then was feasting, music, and dancing in my soul. This lasted for months. Why

cannot one remain in that blessed estate of love, feasting and obedience for life? What a sweet life it looks like it would be. But, alas, as we leave our first love, coldness, doubts, barrenness and trouble set in.

One very prominent question that much exercised my mind for years was the nature and extent of the atonement made by Jesus Christ. The Arminians claim an unlimited general atonement and say they preach free grace and free salvation which they charge the Primitive Baptists in not doing. The Primitive Baptists truly believe and preach an unlimited atonement, and the Arminians can scarcely be said to preach any atonement. God's people here believe that no power on earth or in hell can prevent the salvation of the sheep for whom Christ shed His blood and laid down His precious life. For all power both in heaven and on earth is in His hands, and He has power over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. But those who preach that many for whom Christ died are eternally lost do certainly limit His atonement. While those that preach that Christ hath forever perfected them that are sanctified by the one offering of Himself once, do most certainly preach an unlimited atonement. That is, we hold that so effectual and perfect is the atonement of Jesus, the price that He paid down for the redemption of sinners, that nothing shall ever prevent the coming to Him of any or all these for whom Jesus died.

The Arminians preach what they call an universal atonement, that Christ died to save everybody, every human being or all mankind, but it is

really no atonement at all. It is dependent on conditions to be performed by man that so fetter and clog their so called atonement of Jesus that many man-made things, controlled by man, as they say, may defeat it, or render it ineffectual and powerless. It is left with the creature entirely and altogether whether he will repent or not. If he does not, although Christ died as much for him as He did for any other person that was actually saved in the eternal covenant, that person never will be saved. They hold that Christ died as much for all that are finally lost as He did for any that are in His election with His Father before the world began, He died for all, they say. The man must act !

Whether the heathen are saved depends on many contingencies such as whether covetous man will give enough money to send the gospel here and there, and then whether any go to preach to them afterwards, and then whether the heathen will repent and believe, and, further, whether they will live a Godly life and none of these things are at all made certain by the death and resurrection of Jesus; but all are dependent on the creature (so called) effort. Now according to this belief, where is any guarantee or certainly in the atonement of Christ in the shedding of His Blood or the salvation of anyone? Is this not a most limited and uncertain atonement? Indeed, is it any atonement at all?

The Primitive Baptists preach it is the power of God that quickens the dead, and that Jesus, having all power, quickens whom He will, and makes sinners willing in the day of His power, and that He saves and calls them with a holy calling, and not

according to their works; and that all that call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, and that everyone that thirsts shall be filled, and whosoever drawn by God's Spirit will come to Jesus and shall be saved, and that all that are weary and heavy laden are among the redeemed; also, they believe that salvation is free and given without money or price or previous goodness of the creature; nor is it based on his good works foreseen, but contrawise it causes the sinner to perform good works and lead a Godly life.

Salvation is a "gift" in every and all senses of the meaning of the word "gift."

Preaching too is a gift, and those that the Lord calls to preach receive their qualifications and preparations of Him.

It is through much tribulation that we enter the Kingdom of Heaven. My trouble is not with the people my lot is cast among, nor with the doctrine they hold, as Ruth said, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee," and the feeling of my desire and heart is "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. (Ruth 1:16).

The Primitive Baptists have faults and know that they are sinners. Nor do we occupy the land or live as we should. The strength is decayed, and burden-bearers are weak. The strength and force of discipline is much wasted, and we have departed from the living God in many things. Still, they come nearer to the ancient landmarks than any people within my knowledge. They are blessed to know the truth and rest in Jesus alone in Him for salvation.

My trouble is concerning myself. My unbelief and disobedient conduct give me more trouble than anything, and yet it seems to me that it does not grieve me deeply enough or I would be given deeper repentance. Daily nothing but grace can reach my case. As I look back and can see my life, how abased I am made to feel. Persecuting the church, reckless in manners, and if called to preach, it is in such a way as to humble me for life, having been brought from the land of Moab. If a child of God at all, having only a fleshly experience, I was taught the depths of Satan by going through its cheats and practicing in its pretensions; if there is one that can truly say by the grace of God I am what I am, it is myself.

Still after so much that should humble me, I am yet a sinner, no better, but rather worse.

If others have whereof to glory in works, I have the Lord Jesus to glory in who had mercy on me and saved me. If others may seem to glory in salvation by works, it does seem that none could blame me for loving the doctrine of salvation by grace. For nothing else could save me.

I can never ascertain to a certainty that I am a child of God. We are saved by hope, and we walk by faith. In this faith is the giving of diligence to make our calling and election sure. The true calling of God is a life time matter, nor is it finished while we are in this mortal state.

As to the matter of preaching it has never been clear to my mind that I am called of God to preach, as we know things naturally. It appears to me if I could know that God had called me to serve thus in the gospel of His

Son that it would, next to my own personal salvation, be the greatest thing to know; and if I could know my services thus rendered are of the Lord and to the profit of His people, then it would be the sweetest and best of all labor.

When I was received among the Primitive Baptists, I was made to lay my services at their feet, and said on the day that I was received that if my services were not of the Lord, my desire was to cease, and that if I could quit, I would like to do so.

But with me it is not a matter of choice, nor am I able to keep my mouth shut or hold my peace; yet, I am not able to decide fully without any fear that I am a gospel preacher, and still I am afraid to try to stop, nor dare I do so.

This is a soul-humbling life, a life of trial and straits. The question is never with me, "what money shall I receive," but it is "What will God bless me to give, if anything?" It is more blessed to give than to receive. Have I anything of the Lord to give? Has He blessed me with the truth to His people? I am poor in this world's goods and expect to be as long as I live. Yet, the Lord supplies my need. He has cast my lot as an editor, and by my own labor I earn my bread for myself and those that are with me, and this is in harmony with my views of labor and natural obligation. For a preacher or an editor is in harmony with my views of labor than others, and labor is ennobling, and if by word of pen or writing I am blessed of the Lord to serve Him, it is enough for me. It does appear to me that money and the love of it is degrading and that the best employment of man is to seek

nobler things than worldly gain. While some suppose that gain is Godliness, it does not occur to me that a soul is ever redeemed with money, or any such corruptible things as silver and gold, and, therefore, money nor the giving of money can ever atone for sin, nor save a soul, either in this land or in any other country or world for that matter.

The maintaining of these principles, or those that the Primitive Baptists hold, render one necessarily unpopular with the world. If ye were of the world, it would love its own. We must be crucified to the world, hated of all men for the sake of Jesus, and our names cast out as evil.

It was in 1871, contrary to any and all my expectations or thought that I was requested to move to Wilson, North Carolina, where my room has been ever since. A contract had been made for me to live elsewhere and teach school. This contract was cancelled by mutual consent.

Soon after moving to Wilson, Elder L. I. Bodenheimer, who was then Editor of this paper, requested me to become Associate Editor, and pretty soon afterwards it came into my hand. All of this was unforeseen by me, unthought of and unsought, but as the way was opened, I found myself willing, if enabled of the Lord, to serve in this way. Though feeling incompetent, yet it seems impressed on me thus to serve, and if it is profitable to the household of faith, that is reward enough for me. This too seems to be the way Providence has prepared and opened for me to support my family and self with food and raiment together with the little help otherwise received. But it is mainly, indeed, nearly

all, obtained in this way.

It has been the disposition of my mind or according to my feelings to serve churches. But seldom do I take any trip otherwise than as a pastor, visiting the same churches I've been endeavoring to serve for years, though it would be a pleasure to me to often visit other churches.

The brethren have borne surprisingly with me and my infirmities, while they are accused as sinners and selfish. I know there is one sinner among them and that one is myself. They are kind and loving people and have shown me much kindness.

For about twelve years my health was very poor and it was unusually much of an effort to keep going; but within the last year or two it is better. It was the Lord that healed me, for in Him we live and move and have our being. Having obtained mercy of the Lord, I continue to this present time, testifying repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

My hope is toward God, if not a deceived soul. Many are my heart sinkings and heart searching at times. Heavy burdens of a sense of vileness and friendlessness pass over me; yet, the Lord delivers and I trust and hope He will yet deliver. There is hope that when our brief stay on earth has passed, then we shall be partakers of the glorious fruit of the resurrection.

To this end I press on, sincerely desiring to be found in Christ. To have a conscience void of offense toward God and man is the best of all living. There is no such living amid all the wealth and honors of earth. To be so exercised in the truth so that God will keep our bodies under subjection and live to Him in peace and in good will

toward men is the best of all living.

If God be for us, who can be against us? If by the faith of Jesus I am enabled to live in truth, dwelling with Israel in peace, and having good will toward men, this is a good exercise.

May peace be upon Israel and the blessings of the Lord rest on and direct my labor and may it be to the Lord.

Brethren, pray for me that my faith fail not. To be dead to the world and all worldly institutions, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord, and to live the life I now live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me, and be found unto praise and honor and glory at his appearing, is my desire.

P. D. Gold

Elder P. D. Gold wrote the above experience about the year 1895. Elder Gold died in the year 1920 at the age of 87 years. Editor.
(Reprint from Zions Landmark. June 1987).

MEETINGS

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The Lord willing, the Staunton River Union meeting will be held at Strawberry Church the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in November 1987. We invite all who have a mind to come and meet with us. All ministers of our faith and order are especially invited.

Elder Thomas Solomon, Pastor
Sister Gertie Holley, Clerk

SAINTS REST PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH at DALLAS, TEXAS

Saints Rests Primitive Baptist Church, 2710 Engle St., Dallas, Texas invites all Brethren and friends to meet with us in our annual fall three day meeting.

The Lord willing, the meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m., Friday November 27, 1987.

Elder Carey C. Morris
Moderator and Pastor

Telephone number for contact:
Elder Carey C. Morris, 214-298-3269
Deacon Frank. D. Richards,
817-467-0005
Deacon Dean G. Connell,
214-298-8068

HOPEWELL ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the Hopewell Association will convene with Mount Zion Church on Friday, October 16, 1987 and continue through till Sunday noon. The meeting house is located on Alabama Highway 159 near Mileage Marker 18, North of Gordo and South of Fayette. All lovers of the truth are welcome. For further information call (205) 556-5157.

Leverett Howell, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JUNE

Mrs. Novaline Stewart, NC2.00
Mrs. Marjorie Cook, TN25.00

Hardy Hill, TX	2.00
E. R. Graves, AL	3.00
Orville R. Beatty, PA	2.00
Bryan L. Shockley, MD	8.00
G. R. Slate, VA	2.00
Wade & Mary Poff, VA	2.00
Mrs. Pattie Krewatch, DE	40.00
Noland Lanier, NC	7.00
Mrs. Jessie Ray, NC	2.00
A Friend, NC	2.00
Mrs. Ella M. Merrill, AL	2.00
G. W. Carter, NC	2.00
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Simpkins, VA ...	7.00

OBITUARIES

VOLLIE T. SOWERS

Vollie T. Sowers, born June 11, 1899. Son of the late Elder Frazier T. and Flora Martin Sowers. He was married to Grace Moran February 29, 1920. To this union was born four children. Three sons, Marvin, Arnold and Norman; one daughter Lucille.

He was afflicted with cancer nine years. Was in and out of the Hospital many times during his illness. When at home he was lovingly cared for by his son Norman and his wife Christine and daughter Barbara. Also a part-time nurse and other family members. He desired to be at home as much as possible, therefore he appreciated the care the family gave him, to enable him to stay at home.

Surviving are the three sons, fourteen grandchildren, twenty-six great-grandchildren, two step great-

grandchildren. Also three sisters, Mrs. Mary Conner, Mrs. Ora Conner and Mrs. Velvie Agee. He was preceded in death by his wife and daughter, Lucille S. Coates.

Brother Sowers was a firm believer in salvation by the grace of God; yes, the grace of God that bringeth salvation to the poor, helpless sinner, both for time and eternity. Therefore he could witness with the Apostle Paul 1 Cor. 15:10 *"But by the grace of God I am what I am. 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. Deut. 33:27 "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.*

*May I speak of thee dear Lord,
Of thy mercy, grace and love,
That we know in part on earth
But shall know in full above.*

We grieve not for him as for one who has no hope. He is our hope, our all in all. O what a blessed people are God's people! He departed this life February 15, 1987. Funeral services, Salem Church, Copper Hill, Va., conducted by his pastor Elder Hale Terry, assisted by Elder Lane Carter. Interment church cemetery beside his wife, to await the second coming of the Lord. Brother Sowers was a dedicated member at Salem Church for many years.

May God's richest blessings rest upon the family and all who mourn and may He enable them to say, "Gracious Father thy will be done."

Submitted in christian love, by request of his sister, Velvie.

Gaye A. Thompson

Signs of the Times

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STRING OF HOPE

*In nature I'm a sinful wretch
Sometimes I fear that I'm a goat
But I thank God, that He has let
Me have a little string of hope.*

*I have no confidence in my flesh
With trials sometimes are hard to cope
When in confusion I'm a mess
But I thank God for the string of hope.*

*By the Grace of God, I'm what I am
In worldly things I'd win no vate
But I thank Christ the precious Lamb
That He gave me a little string of hope*

*I'm weak and needy in this life
So many times I've felt the jolt
But through my Lord and Saviors strips
I'm thankful for a string of hope.*

*Some troubled times have cast me down
I groan within me, prone to mope
But through the blood of the precious Lamb,
I'm thankful that I'm given a little string of hope.*

Kate Mathews

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EDITORIAL

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

Matthew 25 : 1-13.



Elder J.L. Hamrick

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold,

the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”

his parable should be of utmost importance to us all and should be taken very seriously. The meaning that I trust the Spirit has given me to see in this parable may be different from the views of some others; if so, may our difference be truly in love and not with any ill-will. Every person has a right to their own views; therefore I can only bring forth what, I trust, I have been shown to be the meaning of this parable. I believe that the main intention of this parable is to show forth the condition of the visible Church state here upon earth at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This parable continues with the same thought concerning Christ's second coming as found in the preceding twenty-fourth chapter, which says, “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of

heaven with power and great glory. 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 the other. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24: 30, 31, 42, 44. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins."

A parable in the gospel sense of the term signifies a similitude taken from the ordinary action of men (as shown in this parable), and made use of to inform in one or more points, spiritual doctrine. It is said that our Saviour spoke many things to the multitudes in parables concerning truth under similitudes from ordinary actions as were done by men. When "his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?" He said, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." Luke 8: 9,10. In studying parables, the first and principal thing to be conscious of is its scope and end.

This parable might be better understood by knowing a little of the usual rites and customs concerning Jewish weddings before and during the time of Christ here upon earth. When a young man and woman became espoused to each other as Joseph and Mary did (this is referred to now as being engaged), the young man with some help from others would go to build a home for him and his bride. The progress of the work would be known to the bride, and

when it was almost complete, the bride would begin to make preparation for the wedding. Ten virgins were chosen by the bride to accompany her before and during the wedding. The bridegroom also had his ten men to accompany him. Their marriages were most always at night. The bride and her ten virgins would be waiting at her father's house. When the cry went out that the bridegroom was coming, the ten bridemaids who were attending the bride went forth to meet the bridegroom with their lamps lighted to conduct the bridegroom and his young friends into the house and unto the bride. When they were all in with their lighted lamps, those who had been invited, the door was shut to all others and the marriage proceeded. It seems now that the spiritual meaning of this parable is based upon the customs and rites of Jewish weddings. I will now, the Lord willing, bring forth what I believe to be the spiritual meaning of this most important parable.

Verse 1. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins." The kingdom of heaven, as used in this parable, refers to the condition of the visible church state on earth at the second coming of Christ. It is called a kingdom of which Christ is king, and in which the saints are subjects to him. It is styled the kingdom of heaven in distinction from the kingdom of this world. We would think that subjects of it would strictly be heaven-born souls, however, the devil at times sows tares among the wheat. "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." "The enemy that sowed them is the devil,

the harvest is the end of the world: and the reapers are the angels." Matt. 13: 25, 39. The kingdom of heaven as used here cannot mean the kingdom of glory for there will be no foolish virgins in it, nor in the internal kingdom of grace. Do not feel that this parable will not include us if we die before his second coming. This parable is not considered just simply to that period of time of Christ's second coming; but respects and affects us all. As we depart this world in death, we shall be classified as either wise or foolish, and as such will be found at the night of his coming, it concerns all ages of time.

"Ten Virgins." The term ten virgins as presented in this parable must not be given a spiritual significance as denoting pure Christians, for five of them do not represent true Christians. Being a virgin is surely a commendable state to be in, and some were virgins as far as good morals in the flesh is concerned. The Apostle Peter speaks of some who have escaped the pollution of the world for awhile, though later they are again entangled therein and overcome. . . . II Peter 2: 20-22. This parable shows the difference between nominal and real Christians and just how far persons may go in a profession of religion and yet at last be shut out of heaven. They had much in common as far as their outward appearance was concerned. They were all, no doubt, sincere in their worship, and in their purity, at least in appearance. They were not corrupt in their conversation and were looked upon by the religious world as being sincere Christians, yet five of them had only a form of godliness. The office of these virgins is to

go forth and meet the bridegroom at His appearing; and one of their chief concerns was to have lights in their lamps.

"They took their lamps." I believe that "lamps" as used in this parable, is a symbol that signifies a profession of religion. They all had their lamps, they were all professors of religion, but not all of them were possessors of true religion. They all had a lamp of profession; but not had the Spirit of grace in their hearts. Some were like the stony and thorny ground professors and five were of the good ground professors who were also possessors.

"Bridegroom." The bridegroom here mentioned is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. The true church is His bride.

Verse 2. "And five of them were wise, and five were foolish." They are not distinguished into good and bad, but unto "wise" and "foolish." We find in Matt. 7: 24-27 where the wise man built his house upon a rock, and the foolish upon the sand. Salvation by grace is the lamp of the wise, and the law is the lamp of the fool. The wise virgins mentioned here are heavenly and spiritual virgins. They are elected and chosen in Christ and given to him by the Father before the foundation of the world, and were espoused to Christ from all eternity in God the Father's purpose. Christ accepted them and calls himself their husband. "For thy maker is thine husband: the Lord of hosts is his name." Isa. 54:5. The wise virgins may not be so wise in the things of nature, or of this world, but having been taught by the Holy Spirit, they are wise unto salvation. They are taught that their own right-

eousness, wisdom, strength, and works are as "filthy rags in the eyes of God." They are blessed to look to Jesus Christ for justification, to his blood for pardon, to his amazing grace for saving a wretch like us and to his righteousness for a hope of eternal life with him in heaven. They are blessed to see Him and Him alone as "the way, the truth, and the life." The beginning of true wisdom consists in the fear of God. "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." Prov. 9:10. "The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness." Ecc. 2:14.

"And five were foolish." The foolish virgins may not be foolish in natural knowledge or a head knowledge of the scriptures; but they were foolish concerning themselves and the impurity of their hearts. They did not realize the imperfection of their own self-righteousness and they are strangers to the spiritual teachings of the Holy Spirit. True religion consists in true wisdom; but the foolish were left in darkness. "Therefore I said, surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord." Jer. 5:4.

Verse 3. "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them." "Oil" as used in this parable, I see, as being the Holy Spirit. The foolish took their lamps but without the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Here their folly is fully exposed by depending upon their lamps of professing religion and without having the indwelling Spirit in their hearts. They felt no need of it until it was too late; this no doubt will be the fate of thousands at the end of time, or when they come to die.

Verse 4. "But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." The "vessels" as used here, I believe, means the heart. We must have the Holy Spirit in our hearts which is also referred to as a kingdom. "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:21. We must be born again of the Spirit of God before we can worship Him in spirit and in truth. To be wise, we must have light, and by this light, God reveals his Son in us, the hope of glory. "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." Psa. 31:9. If we only have a profession of religion, and draw near him with our mouth and with our lips do honor him while our hearts are far from him, we worship him in vain as the foolish do. The hearts of the wise are near him because he dwells in them. Where there is no heart of the Spirit in religion, there is no faith, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.

Verse 5. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." The space of time referred to here as the bridegroom tarrying is not the time set by the Father for Christ to come; for that time will not be hastened, nor will it be delayed: but it is speaking of the time concerning the general expectation by the people who will be living on earth before his second coming. Though Christ will tarry past the time expected by many people, he will not tarry past the due time. He will not come until all his decrees are fully accomplished, and until the restitution of all things. "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heavens must receive until the time of the restitution of all things, which God

hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:20,21. All his elect among both Jews and Gentiles must be gathered into the fold.

"They all slumbered and slept." What does this slumber and sleeping consist of as concerning the wise virgins? The truths of the word concerning God, Christ, heaven, and hell have not such a lively influence upon them. Faith is fallen asleep ready to give place to the flesh and they are concerned more about worldly things than heavenly things. The soul is taken up more with carnal projects than it should be (Are we guilty of this?) They live too much to themselves for it is a feeble, sleepy love which does not direct our actions to the great end which is the pleasing and glorifying of God. A cold and careless hope may exist when there is not that earnest and desirous expectation of blessedness to come, which may draw us away from the things of God. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed." James 1:14. Peter experienced this after he said unto Christ, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Matt. 26:33. But alas! how soon were his wings clipped, and he taken in the snare of the devil? Peter did not realize his weakness, do we? The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak; therefore the degree of grace which the best attain unto in this life if mixed with imperfection. The wise were blessed to sleep as possessors of true religion, and slept with the Spirit of grace in their hearts. Their faith being of a natural source, consists more in a form of knowledge

than a lively assent to the truth of godliness. The word of God comes to them in word only, not in power, nor by the Holy Spirit. The foolish trust in a profession of religion. "He that lusteth in his own heart is a fool." Prov. 28:26. "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" I Cor. 1:20.

Verse 6. "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." When all the events ordained of God come to pass, the bridegroom will come. There will be a tremendous cry when Christ comes in his amazing glory. The wise and godly are reserved to future glory, and the foolish and wicked are reserved to future punishment. The body that houses the soul that has been quickened by the Holy Spirit, and the body that houses the unregenerate soul, will be co-heirs with the souls, and will share with them either in glory or in torment. When the bridegroom cometh, he will deal with the whole man. The body will receive the same glory or punishment as its soul. The bodies of the quickened souls at death, as "sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." I Cor. 15:44,42. All living on earth will hear the cry and all professors, as well as possessors of religion, will go out to meet him. Just as sure as Christ came the first time, he will come again to receive His bride unto Himself.

Verse 7. "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." The arising and trimming of their lamps shows that both groups believe in the second coming of Christ. The foolish think they are as prepared and ready for Christ's coming as the wise. They

trimmed their lamps to make their light of profession by works shine as bright as possible. The wise by trimming their lamps show their actual preparation for the Lord's coming. They were looking to the Spirit of grace to make their light so shine.

Verse 8. "And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." The light from a profession of religion will not shine when the Lord comes to claim his jewels. The reason why the lamps of the foolish did not burn was because the Spirit of God was not in them. They, no doubt, had a zeal for godliness, but denied the power thereof because they did not go to Christ for their supply. When the foolish can no longer go with the lamp of profession, they desire to have it from any source rather than Christ. They betrayed their folly by asking the wise for it. Why did the foolish ask for oil from the wise? To show that they were foolish, for who would go to men, to saints, or to ministers for the Spirit of grace? Only a foolish person. You notice they said that their lamps had gone out. This was not a light that shines forth by the Spirit of God in their hearts but a light of profession as imitating real Christians. Their lights being out show the lack of the Holy Spirit being in their hearts. Their consciences might be enlightened to some degree and their affections moved with some seeming heat and zeal, but were never thoroughly converted. We find many instances like these in the Word of God.

Verse 9. "But the wise answered, saying, not so; lest there be not enough for us and you, but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for

yourselfes." The wise, as all of God's children, desire more grace from the Spirit; surely those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, desire more. We hope that what we have will be enough to stand before the Lord, but none feel they have any grace in excess; and those whose hearts God has touched, earnestly desire more. You cannot have too much faith, too much fear, or too much love unto the praise and glory of God. The authority of giving grace has been given to the Son by the Father. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." John 17:2. Therefore none can be sanctified, justified, or saved, by another man's grace. Now the wise could not help the foolish, nor the foolish the wise; but every man shall be judged according to what is within him. "Go to them that sell." This denotes they must go out of themselves because their vessels, or hearts, are empty, leaving them in complete darkness. If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness? "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness." Luke 11:35. The foolish did go to buy oil for their lamps to give them light; but this light could be a light coming forth out of a profession of religion consisting of works. We see, no doubt, thousands today who seem to be in company with the foolish virgins. Spiritual grace and spiritual light comes only from God. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." II Cor. 4:6. If we are void of the Spirit of grace in our hearts when the

bridegroom cometh, or at the time of death, we will forever and ever remain in darkness. "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk in darkness." Psa. 82:5.

Verse 10. "And while they went to buy the bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the wedding and the door was shut." The Lord Jesus Christ is to come at his second coming as a bridegroom. Then will come the dreadful separation of those who have been waiting for his appearing. The foolish and the wise were parted, the one from the other. The wise had been prepared by the Holy Spirit being in their hearts causing a spiritual light to shine forth; while the foolish had not the Spirit, but had gone to buy. Notice that the entrance of the wise virgins into the marriage was not only immediate, it was also intimate. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." Our Lord Jesus Christ left it in his will that his bride is to be with him in glory. "Father I will, they also, whom thou has given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." John 17:24. Our Lord shall escort his bride to her place in glory. My dear brethren, how else could we expect or hope to go into the marriage if we did not go in with him? We must be wearing his robe of righteousness as our wedding garment and must be washed in his precious blood from all uncleanness. No one will object to the entrance into the marriage to all who go in with him, for all the requirements of the holy law and all the demands of divine justice will have been met by him.

This parable is meant to teach certain lessons and it seems to explain them very clearly. It shows those

who will be prepared and those who will not be prepared. Be it ever remembered that, though we are all sinners, and utterly unworthy of so distinguished an honor, yet God says to every spiritual believing soul: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband." II Cor. 11:2. This will be forever and ever. "And I will betroth thee unto me forever, yea, I betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies." Hosea 2:19. Marriage should be between parties of the same kind, as in the first marriage, Adam called Eve, "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." Gen. 2:23. So Christ came to fit himself for that relation of husband to his Church by taking our nature upon him. And the Apostle Paul in speaking of this marriage between Christ and his Church uses the same name which Adam uses: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." Eph. 5:30. When Christ was in the world, he made a way for the marriage. He went back to heaven, it is true, but there was an interchange of tokens; he took our flesh, and left us his Spirit.

We know what a marriage on earth is like, but a marriage in heaven, who can describe it? Earthly marriage is contracted between two sinners; but this heavenly wedding is the marriage of One, who is all pure and holy, to another whom he has purified from every stain of sin, or spot, or any other such thing, and are made ready for this everlasting union. They that went in with him were at one time in the Lord's vineyard, toiling against the burdens of this world. They had some-

times felt the Lord's presence for a short season, and mourned over his absence. They had wandered from him in their minds and feelings. They experienced many trials and tribulations, with only a touch of hope in their hearts, yet they went in with him to the marriage.

Then comes this sentence, which is so terrible to the foolish, but oh, so sweet to the wise! "And the door was shut." It shut in the godly and shut out the wicked. The following two declarations of our Lord stand side by side. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. 25:46. Notice that these who went in with the bridegroom were a prepared people, a people who had been made ready. We must be made meet by our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to be ready to go into the marriage. A great change has to be wrought in you, far beyond any power of ours to accomplish before going into the marriage. You must be washed in his precious blood, justified in his righteousness as our proper wedding garment or we will not be ready. No child of darkness can go into that place of marvellous light.

Christ speaks of those that live under the dispensation of pure Christianity, some will be found true believers, other common professors. Even among the members of the visible Church here on earth that make a profession of the gospel, all will not be found prepared to abide the day of Christ's appearing in judgment. Even in Abraham's family there was an Ishmael as well as an Isaac. In Isaac's family there was an Esau as well as a Jacob. Even among Christ's disciples there was a Judas (called

the devil) as well as the other eleven true disciples. When the door is shut, the exclusion is final.

Verse 11. "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open up to us." The foolish now realize all the consequences of their past folly. These were only virgins in the flesh, not spiritual virgins in the Spirit as is plainly brought out in this parable because they were foolish ones. Notice they acted in much the same way as the wise, up to a certain point. They seem much like real Christians having some outward marks of the election of grace, yet they were not for they had not the Spirit of grace in their hearts, no indwelling of the Holy Ghost, no supernatural operation of him who worketh in the saints to will and to do of his own good pleasure. They said, "Lord, Lord" and, no doubt, they could have said, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works? "But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." Luke 13:27. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and on whom he will, he hardeneth." Rom. 9:18. Some who were strong professors of religion, without being possessors of it, shall cry out, "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay, but, O, man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" Rom. 9:19,20. The potter has power to make one vessel unto honor and one unto dishonor; one fitted to destruction and one fitted for mercy, and who questions him except the foolish? The door to the wedding

ceremony will not be open for the bridegroom never knew them as the objects of his love.

Verse 12. "But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." Christ knew their persons, conduct, and sad state, knew they were foolish virgins, graceless professors who had depended upon their external profession of religion. He never knew them as being chosen in him before the world was. He never knew them as his bride. He knew their names were not written in the Lamb's Book of Life because he says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Yes, they follow him right through the door to the marriage; and when they are all in, Christ will close the door against all others. It will be a dreadful misery to be disowned by Christ at his coming. May God bless us to be found when he comes *Wise Virgins*.

Verse 13. "Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." He will come is certain, and when he comes, it will be quickly. The time is fixed, therefore it becomes us to be on the watch. Study what the Scriptures say will be before his coming. Why are we to watch? "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such and hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 24:42, 44. We should watch to our present state and safety. This is twofold: a watching to avoid evil, (as much as in us is) and a watching for the careful performance of that which is good. Every man has a little garrison to keep, and he himself is the watchman of it. His conscience is to

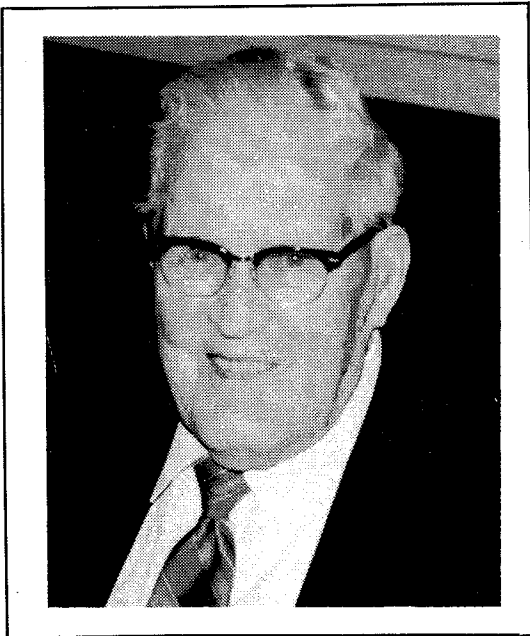
sit as watchman at the door, to examine whatever cometh out and entereth in, as the watchman used to sit at the gate of a city to watch what entered in and went out. All the thoughts, affections, words, actions, and so forth are to be examined as to what they consist of lest a temptation be let in or a corruption be let out. "He that has no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls." Prov. 25:28. Man needs no devil to tempt him; we have enough in our own bosoms to prompt and urge us to sin: "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." James 1:14. There were but two Adams, and they were both tempted. Adam in his innocency, and Christ in his human nature were tempted; so can we hope to escape? If we neglect our watch, we become a ready prey to the devil. "When the servants slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." Matt. 13:25. Therefore we are commanded to watch. "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." II Cor. 2:11. We may ask, how can we watch for and combat against these evils? By the oil which is the Spirit of God in our hearts. Our flesh cannot; but the Spirit of God within us can. "And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." II Cor. 12:9. Yes, the inbred corruption of our nature is ready to betray us to most temptations, and to open the gates to the enemy without, for the thoughts and imaginations of our hearts are evil continually.

Watch and pray. May we not live as if there was no God to come, no

punishment to render, no dreadful charge to give, no account to be given. Joseph was tempted but by the grace of God by being watchful, he did not fall. May God set a watch upon the door of our conscience. Therefore let us not sleep as others, but watch and pray. "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." I Peter 4:7. May we watch, may we be prepared, by the Spirit of God, is my prayer.

In love,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

CORRESPONDENCE



ELDER TOM TURNER — 102 YEARS OLD

Elder Turner was born April 17, 1885. His parents were Robert "Robin" Turner and Sarah Ellen Martin Turner. He was married

November 20, 1912 to Ida Susie Stone who is now deceased. To this union was born nine children, four boys and five girls. All living now but one, nineteen grandchildren and more than 50 great grandchildren.

Elder Turner and his wife joined the church on the same day in 1922. They were baptized the following Sunday in a river by Zanda Cahill. Several years later he felt a call to the ministry and was ordained in 1938. He has been preaching now about 50 years and is highly esteemed among his yoked brethren in the ministry and is loved by all who know him.

Elder Turner has lived a good life, and worked at a good many jobs in his lifetime. He has farmed, blacksmithed, owned and operated a merchantile store for 18 years and worked in a furniture factory several years. He operated a shoe repair shop for fifteen years before he retired at the age of sixty-nine. He believed in working for a living and for the support of his family and has remained active ever since his retirement. His many jobs and work never hindered his work in the ministry. His church was always first and he was ready to lay down all else and go when called and needed. He was a workman who needed not be ashamed.

Elder Turner at the age of 102 still goes to church and enjoys having his friends visit him. He loves to talk about the scripture and tell of the things the Lord has done for him. He loves his Lord and has a precious hope his Lord loves him. His natural vision is growing dim, but he has a clear vision of the work of the Lord and looks unto Him as the author and finisher of his faith.

When he was young and his brother had died he said he would like to live to be 85 years old. When he was 84, he thought, "Well I think I'll make it to 85." A small voice spoke to him over his shoulder, and said, "Eighteen to go." There was no one near so he knew it wasn't anyone talking to him, and he thought, "Why that will make me 102." Through the past several years he has related this experience to many of his friends. Now that he is 102 years old he says it must have been a voice from above talking to him.

Family information, pictures and dates above were furnished by his daughter Clara T. Bryant.

We love you Elder Turner and pray for Gods richest blessings to continue with you.

The Editors

Route 4 Box 21 A
Winnsboro, TX 75494
January 8, 1987

Dear Brother Cannaday;

You have been on my mind some since meeting you before and during the Pigg River Association. I hope the Lord is still blessing you with a submissive will toward His dealings with you, both naturally and spiritually. "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 8:28.

Even thou your sufferings may be great and painful, I trust the Lord is still visiting you from time to time with

some sweet manifestations of His love and mercy toward you. You are among the number of those whom the Lord, as a loving Father, is pleased most graciously to exercise with pain and suffering. This cannot but produce grief, but it appears you are kept from murmuring and complaining. This is sweet grace: for this you cannot be sufficiently thankful. You have the sweet assurance that the Lord is your helper in time of need. In all your pains and sufferings He can support your mind and lift up your soul above and beyond all your sufferings. He does this by refreshing you with some blessed views of His everlasting love and mercy to you in Christ Jesus; and by sending His Holy Spirit to take the things of Christ and revealing them unto you. It is the very crown of patience to bear up under bodily pain and grief, looking to Jesus as our only comfort. The Apostle says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." It is great indeed with us when we have no will of our own, but can say, "Thy will be done." May the person of Christ; the love of Christ; the righteousness of Christ; the sacrifice of Christ; the salvation of Christ; the whole of what he hath been and done, suffered and finished, as set forth in the everlasting gospel on behalf of His people be a relief to your mind, and all-sufficient to refresh your spirits and fill you with everlasting consolation.

We cannot run away from the cross, we cannot cast it off. But remember your cross, whatever it may be, is appointed to you in covenant love; it is the portion allotted to

you by the heavenly Father decreed in weight and measure, to an atom, and you will not have to bear it one moment longer than He has determined, and many precious fruits will it produce. Though the burden of your cross, He is only bringing your mind from earthly things that He may increase your communion with the Father, Son, and Spirit. You can carry your cross only in the strength of almighty grace. There is no feeling of mind, no sigh, no tears, no groans or pain that you are subject of, but what Christ sees and knows. His everlasting arms are underneath you. He says to you, "Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands: I will remember thee with everlasting kindness." All may fail, nature may fail, life, strength, flesh and heart; but Jesus will not, Jesus cannot fail you.

My dear brother, in Christ you have everlasting life, and I believe by your experience, this is manifested in you. your being in Christ is the highest instance of God's love and mercy toward you, all other blessings are but the effect of it. Remember that nothing can take place either in life or death which can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. The scripture says, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer." He will be with you: He will comfort you with His precious peace. He will refresh you with the water of life; He will feed you with the hidden manna and will work deliverance for you in his own time and way.

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 blessings of heaven yet, nor can we till death siezes us; but I trust we, in the Lord's own time concerning us we will know.

May the Lord Jesus be present with you. May He give you to enjoy great nearness and much free access to him, may He sanctify every sorrow. May He so influence your mind, that while the outward man decayeth, the inward man may be renewed day by day, that your light affliction which is but for a moment may be working for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. May your heart and mind be exercised more and more on Jesus. May your understanding be filled with the true knowledge of him and may you increase in real personal communion with Him is my prayer. Amen.

Our prayers are with you and yours.

In Christian love,
Elder Joe L. Hamrick

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 11/87
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



LITTLE CREEK PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Little Creek Primitive Baptist Church was organized in 1802. It is located on the Smith Mill Road, 3 miles east of Dual Highway 13 between the towns of Delmar and Laurel, Delaware.

The church is presently without a pastor but is blessed to have service each month with elders of our faith

from various areas.

Meetings are held each 2nd Sunday at 11:00 a.m. and Saturday night before.

Some of the former pastors who were widely known and served faithfully were the late Elders: A.B. Francis, H.C. Kerr, Harold M. Bennett and Arthur R. Warren.

ST. LUKE 11 : 1-4

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

And he said unto the, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in

heaven, Hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

Give us day by day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

 VOICES OF THE PAST

 "he being dead yet speaketh"

**THE CREATURE MADE
SUBJECT TO VANITY.**

(Romans viii. 20.)

Who is this creature which "was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope?" It is the same creature spoken of in the preceding verse, whose "earnest expectation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," and which in the following verse it is said "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." It belongs to the same spiritual creation referred to in verse 22, which in former dispensations groaned and travailed in pain together, and which now in the gospel day is manifest, as it ever was, by suffering, even in the apostles and early saints, who had the first fruits of the Spirit, "who groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body."

This creature is the same spoken of in 2 Cor. v. 17: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," and also in Eph. ii.:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." This workmanship of God whereby we are created in Christ Jesus, is experienced by a man, a sinner of Adam's fallen race. Before that work of God was experienced this man did not know himself as a sinner, and therefore did not have that kind of suffering which comes from

such knowledge. In the first verse of this chapter the apostle speaks of those who are in Christ, and in the ninth verse we learn that to be in Christ, or in the Spirit, is to have the Spirit of God, or of Christ, in him. It is not until we have this experience of Christ in us that we can know that the body, which means the natural or earthy man, is dead because of sin. (Verse 10.) Let it be here noted and remembered that when the body or flesh is spoken of by the apostles in this sense, as dead because of sin, reference is not made merely to the physical body, for that cannot sin, but to the man, who is "of the earth earthy," the man who sinned and was condemned. The sin, the sinfulness, the depravity, are felt by the Christian to be in his mind, in his heart, and not in the literal flesh.

The life that is now ours is the Spirit of Christ, "The Spirit is life because of righteousness." "Christ is our life," and that life is all the light we have by which to see the deadness of our body, or the living beauty and glory of Christ, and of the kingdom of God. (Verse 10.) "In him [the Word] was life, and the life was the light of men."—John i. 4. The giving of this divine and ever holy life to the sinner is the creative work of God. It is not that the divine life or Spirit of Christ was created, nor is it that the Adamic man is new created, or made over again, but the bringing of the man forth in this new life, the causing him to be thus born of the Spirit, the manifesting of "the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh," (2 Cor. iv. 11) this is the workmanship of God; this is creating the man in Christ Jesus, and causing him to be a new creature.

This man who has been born again (from above), who has been brought forth in the life of Jesus, was first born of the flesh, brought forth in the life of Adam. In neither birth was any change of nature effected. In the first birth the life and nature of Adam were manifested. In the second birth the life and nature of Jesus were manifested. In being given the life of Jesus the life of the flesh was not changed in its nature, but remained a sinful life. Therefore David says, "My soul cleaveth to the dust;" and Job says "My soul is weary of life;" and Paul says, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." And throughout the Scriptures holy men have mourned on account of the felt sinfulness of their own life, and rejoiced in the evidences that the Lord was their life, and such is the experience of saints to-day. "Except a man hate his own life," Jesus says, "he cannot be my disciple." The two natures, the two lives, the mortal and the immortal, are both in the one person, but the spiritual or immortal is the stronger, and shall control and prevail.

The creature spoken of in the text is not the spiritual life in itself considered, nor the man who has experienced the new birth in himself considered, but it is the spirit or life of Jesus as manifest in the flesh, and it is the man considered as having this divine life, the man as being thus "in Christ." The man himself, regarded in his Adamic nature, is a sinful man, and his heart is deceitful above all things, and there is not enough goodness in his nature to cause one throb of

sorrow on account of sin, or to excite the least hunger after righteousness, and the Spirit of Christ, considered separately from the flesh, can have no sorrow or pain. It was in the flesh that Christ suffered. It was for the purpose of suffering that he came in the flesh, and those who have the Spirit of Christ suffer with him. It is this suffering of the people of God with Jesus that the apostle is considering in this connection. He explains to them the cause of their suffering, and enters into the depths and heights of doctrine as he traces the exercises and describes the feelings of the little children, and thus points out and designates the humble followers of Christ.

The apostle in various places speaks of the one person in his relation both to the flesh and the Spirit. While there is an essential distinction between the flesh and the spirit, and this distinction is maintained in all the teachings of the apostles, yet they are both in one person, and there is an experimental sense in which they must be considered as together, though separate. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and will remain so until the change shall come, "and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit," and will ever remain in unyielding opposition to the flesh. But the christian is possessed of both of these opposing natures, the human and the divine, and the apostle uses the personal pronoun when speaking of both. "For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." He speaks of the flesh as "me." "That which I do I allow not." "The good that I would I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do." "I am crucified

with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

Thus it is the same I who realizes death in Adam, or in the flesh, and who realizes life in Christ. It is the same I who may at one time be experimentally in Christ, and, sowing to the Spirit, reap life everlasting, and at another time may be living after the flesh and die to spiritual things; may be sowing to the flesh, and of the flesh reap corruption.

But the apostle is considering here the unchanging, unvarying inclinations of the Spirit or life of Christ which is in all his people, and the consequent suffering of the child of God because of the vileness that is thus discovered in us by the light of the Spirit. And he is intent upon declaring and showing the certainty of the glory that shall succeed that suffering in every one who has been born of the Spirit, and who is therefore a partaker of the divine nature. "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. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." How wonderfully connected the apostle's argument is. How one thing follows another, just in the order that keeps along with the exercises and travail of the Christian. Observe how many of these verses begin with the word "for," connecting

it with what was said before.

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Son of God." This earnest expectation is entirely of the Spirit. It is the view of faith, looking to things not seen by mortal powers. It is the expectation of things promised in Christ, and revealed to the faith of God's people. Faith makes no guesses, but sees eternal realities. Concerning these things it is said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Therefore, while there is deep suffering because of the corruptions of the flesh, there is at the same time, down in the depths of the soul, a calm and confident waiting for that which the quickened soul so earnestly desires, to see in ourselves the manifestation of that relationship as sons of God. We cannot see it in ourselves now, but we long for it, hunger for it, have been made to expect it, and quietly wait for it. We are saved by this sweet and sure hope. All this earnest expectation is in the Spirit; not in the Spirit of Christ considered in itself, but in that spirit as given unto us, and as living in our poor hearts, and as able to turn our thoughts toward heavenly things, and to set our affections on things above.

Now the apostle shows against what great and dire obstacle the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for such a wonderful and holy manifestation. That obstacle is the vanity of our fleshly nature, which he afterward calls the bondage of corruption." This is why we do not see in

ourselves evidences of sonship, such as we desire. Though to our faith may come assurances at times that "we are now the sons of God," yet "it doth not appear what we shall be;" and we are often left to doubt that we bear such a relationship because of the vanity of the flesh.

But now the apostle shows us that in the wisdom of God in creating his people in Christ, in giving them the life of his Son, he made them subject to the vanity of this nature. He could have caused them to be at once freed from sin and depravity, and to enter into a holy and sinless state. But it was his will that the new, divine life, the Spirit of Christ in them, should have this opposition to contend with, that this new creature should be subject to this vanity. "Every man in his best state is altogether vanity." "All the goodness and glory of man is as the flower of the field." As soon as the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it, it fades away. (Isa. xl. 7.) And because of this the workmanship of God is the more clearly manifest, and the power of the Spirit more clearly displayed, as the enduring quality and value of gold are shown more clearly when it comes in contact with fire.

For our comfort we are told of one things that we would not have thought of without being told, and yet which we see at once to be true: "Not willingly." The Spirit of Christ is essentially and forever opposed to sin. That life of Christ which is within the poor sinner's heart is just as pure and as much opposed to vanity there as it is in himself; as the sunshine is just as pure when it falls into a polluted atmosphere as when it leaves the sun. We can as times see

that there is a principle within us that is opposed to all the vanity and corruption of our natures, and which makes us long to be perfectly free from it. Thus with our minds we serve the law of God, (we have the mind of Christ) while with our flesh we serve the law of sin. (Romans vii. 25) The apostle had no reference here to evil deeds, against which we would admonish his brethren, but he referred to that corruption of the flesh to which we must always be subject, feeling it as a bondage while we remain in this mortal state.

Not willingly. This is why we suffer in the flesh. This is why we can find no permanent rest in this mortal state. This is why, when we are spiritual, we hate not only evil deeds, but the vanity of even the most exalted and the purest of earthly things. This is why our days on the earth are a shadow, and there is none abiding. This is why we hate our own lives at times, and count this world a wilderness of woe. And it is because the new creature is not willingly subject to vanity, that exhortations and admonitions have a place and power. For this creature is ever seeking the honor of God, and desiring to follow Jesus, and to show forth his praises, but ever feels the hindrances of the vanity of the flesh, and so can never do the good it would do, but is always dissatisfied with even our best works. And no matter how far one may have gone astray, it is always right to exhort, when we can do it in meekness, for though we cannot make the word of exhortation effectual, the Lord peradventure may give repentance to the acknowledging of the truth:

Then how sweet and comforting

the assurance that this subjection of God's gracious work in us to vanity is in hope. We cannot see in ourselves now what we wish to see, (verses 24, 25,) but we are given good ground to hope for it. For the apostle by inspiration positively asserts that we, the new creature, shall be delivered from this vanity, from this "bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." This we are given faith to believe shall be. We long for it, and in the Spirit we expect it, and thus we have that hope which saves us from being overcome and brought down to the gates of despair by this vanity. "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." No child of God can see himself as he wants to be, therefore he can never be pleased or satisfied with himself while in the flesh. He must see himself compassed with infirmities, held down by a bondage of corruption, therefore he cannot see himself as a son of God now, cannot see himself without sin, cannot see in himself, that is, in his flesh, any good thing. Therefore he is not only subject to vanity, but is subject to the temptation with which Satan tempted Jesus, "If thou be the Son of God."

But here comes into view the preciousness, and the saving power of that hope, which the Lord, who subjected the new creature to vanity, has given to light up the darkness, to cheer the heart, and to be "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," holding the vessel of mercy securely against all the adverse tides and terrible storms that

must be met with on the ocean of time. This good hope is through grace, and does not depend for sustenance upon goodness in ourselves, or in our works, which every child of God longs for but can never see, but upon the revelation of Jesus Christ as "of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." At every new revelation of the blessed Savior to our souls, our hope seems to be renewed and strengthened. So we continue to hope for that we see not, for goodness, sinlessness, perfection; for the manifestation of the sons of God, for deliverance from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God, for "the redemption of our body," which shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Jesus; and for all these blessed things so surely promised and assured unto us, we patiently wait, wait in the enduring and unflinching patience of a living faith in Christ.

"Not willingly." Still more and more blessedly does this wonderful expression shine out from the sacred page of inspiration, with assurance of hope, and with heavenly comfort, to the afflicted and poor people of God, who are still ever struggling on against barriers which present impossibilities to them, who are daily tried and are daily dying, and yet "who against hope believe in hope." What a comfort it is to see this "not willingly" in their own poor hearts. When they have to acknowledge that they do the things they would not, and do not do the things they would, how glad they are at times, in the midst of their infirmities and under the bondage of

corruption, to remember that they would not do an evil thing, and that they would do good things.

*“But if indeed I would,
Though I can nothing do,
Yet the desire is something
good,
For which my praise is due.*

*By nature prone to ill,
Till thine appointed hour,
I was as destitute of will,
As now I am of power.”*

How comforting to find that the apostles are with us in this experience of infirmities which the Spirit only can help. How glad we are that Paul, as well as we, had to confess, “The things that I do I allow not.” Not referring to a course of wrong conduct, but to the fact that sin is mixed with all we do, so that we cannot do the things we would, but feel “sentence of death in ourselves,” tainting all our works, only as we are given faith to do our works in Christ, to look to him for the goodness, and not to ourselves.

“Not willingly.” This is the holy Spirit of God from which this “not willingly” comes. There is no half way will here, no uncertainty about this will that is ever and eternally against all sin. This is the will of the Father that was done in and by the Son. There is no weakness in this will. It is not even the will of Jesus, as a suffering man, which caused him to cry, “If it be possible let this cup pass from me,” but it is the will of the Father which caused and enabled him to say, “Not my will but thine be done.” His own will was the will of a pure and sinless man. This will he did not come to do. This will must be crossed, denied, crucified, for it would have turned

from suffering. The Father’s will was done in and by him, and by that will he was crucified; by that will he gave himself to the smiters, and became obedient unto death. By that will he was raised from the dead, and by that will we are saved. That is the will concerning which that Holy Spirit teaches us to pray, “Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven.” It will be done in the children of God, and through its power and exercise within them they will all eventually be brought into perfect conformity to the image of God’s Son by the mighty power and working of his holy Spirit. He works in his people to will and to do of his good pleasure. In his own time, and in his own way, each of them will be made fully to know his own vanity, his own inability, “his own sore and his own plague,” and will then be brought forever away from sin and weakness into the liberty of the sons of God, and will be prepared to give God all the praise of his salvation for time and for eternity.

Those who the apostle says are groaning and travailing in pain together until now, are not the natural creation, for it is not true of either man or beast. He is showing the sufferings of the Lord’s people from the beginning. They were distinct from the legal worshipers, though they were among them. They all had faith in every dispensation, and by that faith they saw Christ as their Savior, and we trace them through all the Old Testament Scriptures by their groanings, complaints, self-loathings and bitter self-reproaches, as an afflicted, suffering people whose sufferings are on account of sin in the flesh. And the apostle joins himself and all the saints

under the gospel with the holy men of old, who were as much the creative workmanship of God as we, showing that although the gospel saints had received the first fruits of the Spirit, yet they groaned within themselves, looking for no comfort from the flesh, but looking for the promise of Jesus' coming, when the adoption would be fulfilled in the redemption of our body from corruption, and the inheritance into which we were adopted, (using adoption as a legal figure) would be received, which is to become sons of God. This name, Son of God, Jesus received by inheritance in his resurrection. (Heb. i. 4, 5; Rom. i. 4; Acts xiii. 33.) We are heirs with him of this sonship, and when the manifestation of the sons of God shall be complete in the redemption of our body from corruption, and in fashioning of it like unto the glorious body of Jesus, then we shall be manifest, not as adopted children, for the purpose of that legal figure is attained when we come into the inheritance, but as the real "children of God, being the children of the resurrection."—Luke xx. 36. This inheritance unto which we are begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, is not a corruptible, defiled and fading inheritance, as was the sonship we inherited from Adam, but it is incorruptible, and undefiled, and it fadeth not away, and it is reserved in heaven for all who have received the Spirit of adoption, for all who feel themselves to be poor, helpless sinners, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and who long to be like Jesus; and all the heirs of this blessed inheritance are kept by the power of God unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter i.

3-5.)

I have written upon this subject by the request of my dear brother, Elder G. E. Mayfield, of Elgin, Oregon. I wish I could do better with it, and write more clearly, but I feel more and more from day to day my ignorance and inability with regard to spiritual things. I often feel as though I ought never to try to write upon such things, or speak, either. It sometimes seems as though I know nothing as I ought to know, and it depresses me greatly. I am of late in the depths much of my time, but sometimes I hope I am enabled to cry unto God out of the depths. If it were not that those to whom I write know these things by a personal experience of them, and are therefore able to judge of what I say, I would not write. What I have written is what I have felt and tasted in my own soul, and so I feel free to submit it to the saints.

May the Lord direct our minds into all truth.

SILAS H. DURAND
SOUTHAMPTON, PA., July 15, 1901.

MEETINGS

DAN RIVER CHURCH

There will be a special worship service, the Lord willing, at Dan River Primitive Baptist Church on Thursday evening, November 26, Thanksgiving day, at 7:00 p.m. Elder J.T. Prescott of Swansboro, N.C. will be the guest speaker. We invite all of those who love the truth to meet with us.

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Pastor
Brother Boyd Minter, Clerk

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY

Pursuant to the request of Rocky Mount Church. A Presbytery met at Rocky Mount Church 6/27/87, for the examination of Brother Ira Powell if, found qualified in accordance with the written word of God, at the satisfaction and discretion of their judgment, ordain the above mentioned to the full work of the office of Deacon.

The solemnity was begun with prayer by Elder Julian Williams. All Elders of our faith and order present constituted the Presbytery. Those present were: Amos Hash, Leonard Key, Thomas Solomon, Noel Conner, Willard Cox, Haywood Wray, Denver Simpson, William Holland, and Julian Williams.

Deacons present were as follows: Jamie E. Cooper, Chester Hagood, W.R. Bernard, Clay Brown, Jessie Tyree, Jr. Dent, Nelson Bryant, Hassell Hale, Claude Johnson, Fred Murphy, Edwin Dyer, Joseph Cahill, Nelson Nester, Woody Young, L.C. Akers, Harden Walker, Jimmy Holley, Harry Cannady.

The Presbytery was organized by electing Elder Amos Hash as moderator and Jamie E. Cooper as clerk. Elders Haywood Wray and William Holland was chosen to lead in the examination of the candidate Brother Jr. Dent having been duly appointed by Rocky Mount Church in conference as spokesman for the church, delivered Brother Ira Powell to the presbytery. Examination was made by Elder William Holland, and all present Elders invited to participate. The presbytery being satisfied by examination and answers given by the cand-

idate, administered the laying of hands, with the ordination prayer being delivered by Elder Willard Cox. The charge was delivered to the candidate by Elder Julian Williams.

The moderator asked presbytery if they were satisfied with the work of the presbytery, which was answered in the affirmative.

A certificate of ordination was presented to Ira Powell and the right hand of fellowship and brother given. The ordained brother was delivered back to the Church as an ordained Deacon of the Old School Primitive Baptist Church at Rocky Mount Church. The minutes consisting of the work of the presbytery were read and approved. The presbytery was dismissed with prayer by Elder Leonard Key.

Amos Hash, Moderator
Jamie Cooper, Clerk

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The Staunton River Primitive Baptist Union meeting, the Lord willing, will be held at Strawberry Church the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in November 1987. We invite all lovers of the true church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to meet with us, all ministers of our faith and order are invited.

Elder Thomas Solomon, Pastor

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union will meet with Big Meadows Church on the fifth Sunday in November. Big Meadow Church is located

approximately 12 miles south of Graham, N.C. Take highway #87 south until you cross Cane Creek bridge. Turn right at the top of the hill and go four miles to a cross road. Turn left and go 1 mile to church. We invite all ministers of our faith and order and all who love the Truth to meet with us.

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Pastor

OBITUARIES

MARY JANE (HILL) BRAKE

God has seen fit to remove from our midst one whom we loved as a sister in Christ, Sister Mary Jane Brake.

Sister Brake, born March 18, 1897 was married to Willie G. Brake February 4, 1914. To this union was born seven children, Mrs. Mary Lee Strickland, Mrs. Lillie Mae Collie, Mrs. Emma Jane Williams, Mrs. Elizabeth Landin, Percy, John, and Willie Brake, all of whom survive.

Sister Brake lived a humble life, devoting her life to her family and church. She was not a person to visit the churches at a great distance, but the brethren of her home church at Pleasant Hill, where she joined July 25, 1926 were sure to watch the door for her appearance.

As long as her health permitted, unless providentially hindered, she was at Pleasant Hill on each meeting day with the devoted help of her family who was faithful to provide her a way to her meetings as well as looking after her welfare through her latter years. Due to declining health during

her last three or four years, two days attending meeting was too tiring for her, but if she wasn't present on Saturday we almost knew she would be there on Sunday.

Sister Brake was called home on Wednesday morning, June 10, 1987 making her stay in this world 90 years. Her funeral was conducted at Johnson Funeral Home, Rocky Mount, N.C. on June 12th by her pastor, Elder Henry C. Jones assisted by Elder Lester Eason. She was laid to rest in the Hill family cemetery, Edgecombe County, N.C. to await the second coming of her Saviour.

We, at Pleasant Hill Church, bow in humble submission to the Lord's work as we extend our sympathy to the family left to mourn her passing. We will miss her as a loving member of the flock.

Written at the request of Pleasant Hill Church, in conference Saturday, June 27, 1987 by

J. Carroll Williams
Elder Henry Jones, Moderator

SISTER LUCY JENKINS (95 Years & 4 months.)

The Church at Bordeaux Nashville, Tennessee mourns the loss of a dear and loving Sister, Lucy Jenkins. Who departed this life July the 10th, 1987.

Survivors one daughter Kilra Allarie Evans and four sons Clayton, Wilson, Gilmor and Grady, and grandchildren, nieces and nephews. I was requested to write her obituary and send it to the Signs of the Times.

So here is the note I placed in our Church Minutes.

Since our last meeting day our dear and precious Sister Lucy Jenkins has departed this life on July the 10th, 1987. So she is now free of the trials and tribulations of this world. We feel she is asleep in Christ Jesus, to await his coming back to claim all that the Father gave him.

She was a strong believer in the Doctrine of Salvation by the Grace of God through His mercy and the blood shed of his Son Jesus Christ, who died on the cross that through the shedding of his blood. All that the Father gave him. Would have Eternal life. We will miss Sister Jenkins sadly, yet we feel our loss is her eternal gain.

Written by her niece and church clerk.

Rebecca Moon.

their blind employees. She retired at the age of 65.

She was very faithful to her belief and had been a member of Little Creek Old School Baptist Church for many years. Attending the meetings and visiting with various members was her greatest joy as long as she was able to do so.

She was an invalid for several years and had looked forward to her death as a great blessing. She asked for none to mourn at her passing but is missed by those who loved her.

Funeral services were conducted in Little Creek Church by Elder Reeves Smith, and interment was in the adjoining cemetery.

Written by a sister,
Elsie R. Huston

MARY E. MCGEE

Sister Mary E. McGee was born Aug. 31, 1893 and died Oct. 22, 1986. She had lived the greater part of her life in the vicinity of Laurel, Delaware.

She was the oldest of 10 children of Jacob B. and Emma G. McGee who were believers and members of the Primitive Baptist doctrine for many years. Out of this family she is survived by 3 sisters, Martha F. Morris of Delmar, Del. Sara M. West, Bethel, Del. and Elsie R. Huston, Seaford, Del. A host of nieces and nephews also remain.

Sister Mary never married and had been blind for many years. At the age of 50 she went to work at the DuPont Nylon plant in Seaford, Del. as one of

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PREDESTINATION

God made a journey for His child to trod,
Filled with weeping, sorrow and pain
But through all the rough spots, our
gracious God
Has carried them, upheld them and
sustained

Our souls need both joy and sorrow
As the earth needs the sunshine and rain
Tribulation works patience for tomorrow
As we're led through the valley of shame

Ofttimes we view our wretched sins
As we go along life's weary space
The furnace is often the place we have been
But we're taught by the school of His Grace.

Our afflictions so often come into view
But God had a purpose in mind
He has chosen life, the way and the truth
As His way His gold to refine

As we walk through this pilgrim journey
In our hearts God's love shall arise
And tells us the lessons we're learning
Are just sweet blessings, shown in disguise

So we follow our Lord, where He leadeth
And knowledge of truth shall be seen
God gives whatever is needed
For His child has nothing to bring

Soon shall the end be of this earthly life
Our troubles then shall cease
No more sorrow, pain or strife
Just God's Love, Joy and Peace.

Kate Mathews

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EDITORIAL

GALATIANS 2:20.



Elder J.L. Hamrick

“I am crucified with Christ : never the less I live; yet not I , but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God , who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

In this text we find the Apostle Paul professing a close and blessed union with Christ Jesus. He is enabled to do this by a most sacred experience that he has felt in his heart and conscience by the Holy Spirit. If we have not experienced to some

degree a union with Christ, it must be a sign that we have not been born again, and if we are religious, our religion is bodily exercise and will die with our body. Scriptures similar to our text are important because they set forth a standard for us to measure our experiences by. May we be given grace to look at this text even if it condemns us.

“I am crucified with Christ.” Crucifixion is usually a slow and painful death. Has the Holy Ghost made a personal application of this to us that we may experience what our religion is made of? Do we know anything about being crucified with Christ? If we do, how much have we lost for Christ’s sake? The Apostle Paul was so crucified with Christ that he suffered the loss of all things and did count them but dung that he might win Christ. “Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” Phil. 3:8. If our religion has not cost us anything, can we feel that it is similar to that of the Apostle? If we have union with Christ and have been given an interest in His great salvation by the gift of His faith, will it not be made manifest to some degree in our experience?

We shall never be crucified with Christ until after we are born again of the Spirit of God. Has the law come to us as a killing letter? Paul says, “For I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God.” Gal. 2:9. “Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not

covet.” Rom. 7:7. Have we in our experience been reduced to nothing, yea less than nothing? Were we able at one time to say by our feelings, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Rom. 7:24. Can we say in our past experience: ‘For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.’ But thanks unto the word of God which says, “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.” II Tim.2:11. I trust we have felt in our hearts that in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good things. Why is it necessary for the Lord’s people to experience these things in our consciences? That Christ may (by the Holy Spirit) become precious to our souls. Do we not feel that by the law we were taught something of our undone, fallen sinful, and corrupt nature, and being helpless to do anything of ourselves to render our terrible condition? Therefore, we find that the law acted as a schoolmaster to teach us through the Holy Spirit to look out and away from ourselves for any hope of salvation. “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” Gal. 3:24.

‘I am crucified with Christ.’ How does this come about? When does it begin? It begins after one is quickened by the Holy Spirit. The Lord sets His kingdom up within you and His Holy Spirit rules from this kingdom. “The kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:21. We know that being crucified does not mean being literally crucified; for how could this give us a spiritual change of

heart? But it is, as I see it, the worldly spirit in a believer’s heart, the selfish, proud, self-righteous, carnal “I” is crucified with Christ. It kills the believers to many things which we were much alive to while in our natural state. Do we not find this true in our own experiences? When the world within us is crucified, does it not have some effect on the world without? “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” Gal. 6:14.

It seems that Paul is saying when Jesus Christ hung upon the cross, he did not hang there as a private person, but as the representative of all His chosen people. The dying of Jesus Christ upon the cross was the virtual dying of all His people. It seems that Paul believed that by virtue of Jesus Christ’s death, he had himself paid the law its due, satisfied divine justice, and found reconciliation with God. Do we have a hope that this is true for each of us? If the law has killed up inwardly, and spiritually speaking, cursed us, slain us, we are therefore free from its power because in the person of our Substitute the whole that the law could do, by way of condemnation has been executed upon us for we are crucified with Christ. Can we look back to a time in our lives when we can say many things reigned over me: I was self-righteous, full of lust for the things of the world, proud, conceited, and filled with pride? Do these things now have a place in our hearts they once occupied? If we are crucified with Christ, surely many things that we once delighted in, we have been

crucified to. Remember that crucifixion is sometimes a lingering death. God forbid that we should now glory in the things that we hope to be crucified to. May God give us grace and strength to say: Come world with all thy charms, pleasures, come wealth with all thy temptations, what can you do O vain things, with a crucified me? We preach personal election, personal calling, personal regeneration, personal perseverance, personal holiness, and do we know any word of grace which is not personal to the professor of it? Whenever the true Christian religion is truly in the soul, it soon leads to a personal consecration to God.

“Nevertheless I live.” Those who die in Christ are the only people who do live. If we live, there should be living sensations in our experiences. We shall hunger and thirst for the living God. If we have spiritual life shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, this new life will have an appetite for the Bread of Life, a hungering and thirsting for the living God. If we have been made alive, “I live,” there may be times in our lives when we feel a sweet, secret, living communion with God. This communion with God may come and make itself manifest in your solitary moments. You may be reading, writing, walking, or whatever, when some unaccountable living sensation will so possess your soul under the influence of eternal things as translate you from the things of time and bring you into sacred communion with our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” If this also applies to us, it is because life is produced in us by virtue of

Christ’s being in us, and our being in Christ. Jesus is the source of the Christian life. The sap in the vine lives in the smallest twig on the vine. So in every true Christian, though he may feel to be insignificant, and possessed of little faith, Jesus lives in him. The life which keeps our faith, our hope, our love in existence comes from Jesus Christ and from Him alone. We would cease to be living saints if we did not daily receive grace from our covenant Head. As the strength of our lives comes from the Son of God, so is He the ruling and moving power within us. If we call Christ “Master and Lord,” we must be His servants; therefore we are not to serve another, for no man can serve two masters. The life of a Christian is a life which springs from Christ, and it is controlled by His will. Do you ever feel Christ opening your hands in liberal charity to help the brethren who are in need? To visit and correspond with those suffering bodily affliction? Truly we who are blessed to live unto God feel to some extent, the life of God within us. Christ lives in the believer’s soul by His Spirit and grace; being formed in his heart the hope of glory; by blessing the soul with His presence and power; by communicating and shedding abroad in the heart, His love. Thus, it is not the believer, but the Spirit of Christ in him, by which he lives unto God. If we are blessed in our soul to pray with any feeling and power, it is the Spirit of God praying in us. If we are blessed to speak or write with faith, it is the Spirit of God speaking in us. Anything that we do, spiritually speaking, it must come from the Spirit of God which is in us.

“And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me.” True faith arouses the soul to action. Faith is a gift from God through His Holy Spirit. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” James 2:26. Faith does not allow us to sit upon the stool of do-nothing, but is a very useful and necessary gift in us, in the labor and travail of our mortal lives. Faith makes life to appear real and earnest, and so girds the loins for the race that is set before us. Our blessed Saviour set the example and was there ever one who worked as Jesus did? In His latter life here on earth, it was His meat and drink to do the will of Him that sent him. In his early life, he said, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” Luke 2:49. And He says, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” John 5:17. Jesus worked and toiled until He could say, “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou hast given me to do.” John 17:4. Does it not seem that whenever faith is shed in our soul by the Holy Spirit, even in a small degree, that it suggests activity? When the life of grace and faith begins to gleam in our spirit and soul, is not the first effect, the confession of sin? The younger son cries, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” Luke 15:21. But he desires to do something, faith is producing, for he says, “Make me as one of thy hired servants.” Luke 15:19. Faith leads us to look to God and God alone for our help in our ordinary walk

of life. We are not to trust in our own judgements, but by the gift of faith, may we wait to hear the Voice behind us saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Isa. 30:21. Faith helps us through all our trials, tribulations, and sufferings. Faith teaches us all to wait and see the salvation of the Lord, to make us feel that in whatever state we may be brought into to endure, looking unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith. Faith teaches us this humility.

“Who loved me and gave himself for me.” Jesus could not give any more than Himself. He not only gave His sufferings, His death, His merits, He gave Himself. It is not possible for us to measure the unknown depths of Christ’s sufferings. He gave Himself for us (if we be His) in the everlasting covenant when He stood as a Surety and Representative for His people. He gave Himself for us when He assumed our nature and became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He gave Himself for us through a life of toil and righteousness while here upon earth and He gave Himself for us as our Substitute when “Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” I Peter 2:24. There is a limit to most things, but not to the love of God. If we are partakers of this love nothing can ever destroy it or separate us from it. “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.”

Rom. 8:38, 39.

We may wonder sometime when we are suffering under certain trials, does He really love me? He does not send trials and pains for nothing, but it is for a purpose we may not at the time be able to see; but "He loves us and gave Himself for us." We may be very poor and under hard circumstances, but say to yourself, Lazarus was a poor man and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man died and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment. Remember that He says, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for his sake." Phil. 1:29. If we can find in our experiences things similar to what this text involved, then may our hope be strengthened by His words which say, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:6. When you come to die, and you have experienced the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit, you will not dread the grave for Jesus loved you and gave Himself for you.

In bonds of Love,
Elder Joe Hamrick

Heavenly Visions of the Gospel Star,
the Tree of Life and Gifts of Love

Bessie Mae and I wish to share with you during this holiday season the exceeding great joy, glorious peace, and unselfish love experienced as the streams from God's River of Rich Love flood our souls. We

wish we had the glorious tongue of Heaven so that we could use the perfect language of the Spirit to convey to you these angelic messages we are now receiving.

Natural things are erased from our minds as we stroll with you into that special room where you have placed the evergreen TREE. We also view with you the STAR that crowns the tree and the GIFTS that adorn it.

As we look at the STAR we become as the shepherds on that memorable occasion when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. We hear the angels sing,

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST,
PEACE ON EARTH,
GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN."
(Luke 2:14)

There was a NEW STAR placed in the heavens unlike the multitude of stars already there:

This new star was next to the earth -- not high above.

This star went straight forward -- not in a circle.

This star gave light in daytime -- not just at night.

This star led the shepherds to Jesus Christ.

The gospel becomes our five pointed STAR that leads us to Jesus Christ. It becomes our TULIP:

"T" is for Total Depravity or total ruin of man through the fall.

"U" is for Unconditional Election, ONLY BECAUSE HE LOVED US.

"L" is for Limited Atonement: Christ atoned for the elect only.

"I" is for Irresistible Grace to be realized by all the elect.

"P" is for Preservation and Perseverance of all the elect unto glory.

The five pointed STAR becomes the five points of doctrine as expressed in Romans 8:29-30:

God FOREKNEW His people by choosing them in Christ Jesus.

God PREDESTINATED His people to be conformed unto His Son.

God CALLS EFFECTUALLY all whom He did predestinate to save.

God JUSTIFIES COMPLETELY all whom He calls.

God GLORIFIES each and every one who He justifies with immortality.

An ANGEL whispers, "The birth of Jesus did not depend upon the STAR. The STAR depended upon His birth. The Gospel does not bring the birth of Jesus in your heart; but because Jesus is born in you the gospel becomes your STAR." We are loathe to leave the STAR and its beauty.

We are amazed at the glorious circle, or halo, which is throwing rays of heavenlight upon the STAR as it is encircled. This luminous circle gradually lowers itself from the STAR that crowns your TREE until it brightly beams on the EVERGREEN. An Angel whispers, "This TREE is an emblem of the TREE OF LIFE spoken of in the Bible from the book of Genesis through the book of Revelations. Once you have Eternal Life you shall always have it."

We hear another voice from the Halo which encircles the TREE comfortingly say, "The sap of the TREE is life. This is why you cannot see Eternal Life in yourself because you cannot see the life-giving fluid in this tree. I ask the Angel, "Why cannot I see Jesus in the tree?" The Angel replies, "Jesus is the ROOT. The SAP of ETERNAL LIFE comes from Jesus, the life-giving ROOT. Jesus is hidden

from the wise and prudent as the root of natural trees are hidden in the earth. Your enemies cannot destroy you for your life is hidden in Christ Jesus."

As this voice stirs my soul I exclaim, I want to see Jesus NOW! The Angel explains, "You are finite. You cannot NOW stand the unveiled LIGHT OF HIS GLORY. This is but a fleeting moment that you hear HIS melting tender voice, and feel His presence. You cannot stand the full view of Jesus NOW. You must wait for your change into immortality"! You celebrated His birth when He was born in you the HOPE of Glory. Your flesh has Him so veiled that you can only catch a glimpse of Him as through a darkened glass."

The halo disappears and we find ourselves viewing the tree as a whole. The words of Joyce Kilmer become sublime:

"I think that I shall never see,

A poem lovely as a TREE.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree."

We become conscious of being in your room with you viewing your tree, its many lights and decorations. The halo re-appears encircling you and the Gifts at the foot of the tree. We see the LOVE of God beaming from your faces. We are caught up with you in the Spirit and see you as you shop for these special gifts for the special ones who are the objects of your love.

What great concern you have in selecting a proper gift. You want to give something that will not only surprise your loved ones, but will bring joy and happiness to them. We see you select these gifts carefully and so wrap them that the one who

receives the gift will have no idea what the package contains. We see the name of the one to receive the gift written plainly even before the receiver has any knowledge of it. We think this is exactly the method God uses. Your name was written on the gift of Eternal Life and all of its blessings before you knew anything about it.

Gifts of God's LOVE surprise you when the gifts become yours. It is so wrapped in God's Providence that even after you receive it, you do not know what it is. The wrapping of time must unfold before you can know what it is. When it is in view it is something NEW. You have never gotten anything like this before. You want to select for your special loved ones something New: Something which they have never had before.

This very special hour has come in your home as we see you approach the TREE for the opening of the GIFTS.

We see and hear these expressions of LOVE, JOY and HAPPINESS as the recipients of these gifts unwrap the packages. We see surprised looks and hear joyful acclamations as the real gifts are revealed. We see them embrace the givers proving that the LOVE OF THE GIVER is more precious than the GIFT OF THE LOVER.

Memories of this visit flood our souls. We give you our LOVE and wish for you the greatest spiritual gifts. If we could give one encouraging word to the despondent that would bring comfort, we feel, it would be a good Gift. Visit us. Write us. Pray for us. Remember us kindly.

Thanks for such a glorious visit in your home,

E. J. Lambert and Dessie Mae

CORRESPONDENCE

Route 1
Copper Hill, VA 24079

Dear Brother Kenneth:

Sometime ago I visited our precious Brother during his stay in the hospital and he told me of a dream that he had had of me. He said in his dream he wanted so much to comfort and help me. He said I asked him to write his experience so I told him there in the hospital that I couldn't think of anything that I would love more than to be able to read his experience and encouraged him to write if he could. So a few days ago he came to see me and brought his writings, saying that I could do as I saw fit with them. I have enjoyed reading it so much and want to share it with others, so I'm sending them to you for the consideration of the Signs of the Times.

I feel to be so unworthy of the sweet love that Brother Harry and other brethren have shown me and yet I know that our Heavenly Father gives that wonderful love through His precious Son. I spend so much of my time wondering, "Am I His? If I am, Why am I thus?" When I can feel that love that flows from breast to breast (with all of our faults put aside) it gives my heart hope that maybe I am one of His.

It is through this love and hope that I send this to you and beg that you will do as you see fit.

An Unworthy Sister
Mary Poff

Having been requested by some of the brethren to write some of the experiences I hope has been the dealings of the Lord with me and what I hope the Lord has done for me a helpless sinner.

After having a dream a few months ago that I saw a precious sister (Mary Poff) standing alone in this large field where she looked so forsaken and alone. It seemed I walked slowly up to where she was at desiring I might say something to her for comfort. I asked if there was anything that I might do to help. Her reply was you can write your experience and I am now trying to attempt to do that. Somehow I feel I must try to make this effort. I feel to be so insufficient for this task yet I feel I must try to make the effort to write with the feeling that if anyone would find any comfort in it that God would be praised. Here trusting that God will reveal to me some of the things, and the joys I have received by His mercy to a helpless hell deserving sinner as I feel to be.

When but young around 13 or 14 years of age, I can't remember dates as some are blessed to do, because I thought at first that the thoughts I was having and concerned about were imaginary. I remember my brother Roy and myself were spraying apple trees. Our stepfather Charlie Sutphin had passed away leaving three young boys 3, 4, and 5 years of age. Roy and I were trying to help Mother make a living for us. I also had a sister (Hazel) approximately 11 years of age. While I was pumping the sprayer which was a hand pump in a 50 gallon barrel fastened on a sled, there was a terrible condemned feeling that came

over me. That I was a great sinner before a holy and mighty God. It seemed that I had mistreated everyone and I was in a miserable condition. I thought as soon as we quit for the day it being later in the afternoon that I would seek some secret place and try to beg God to forgive me of my many sins which came up before me they being so great, they seemed to be as mountains.

That evening I sought a secret place not to be seen of anyone to try to beg God to have mercy upon me a great sinner. It seemed God wouldn't hear one such as I. I made promises I would quit doing some of the things I was doing and do better. I found out that I couldn't keep the promises I would make that I only became worse. I think this was about the year 1938. We all had to work close together to stay together and we were all very close to our Mother and each other. I stayed in this condition until about the year of 1942. We had moved to Floyd County on a little farm and one night I awoke, and a great light came down through the house and it carried one away very close to me. As the light went upward it seemed it was taking this one so close to me away.

Odell one of my three half brothers had to have an appendix operation and the thought of this light was the first thing that entered my mind, but he got along alright. In 1943 my wife had to have a serious operation and I almost lost her but she recovered and I was so thankful still thinking of this vision I had seen.

One day my brother Roy and I were cutting corn and he said that he couldn't see. I had to lead him to the

house. We brought him to the Gill Memorial Hospital where they run a series of different tests, but it seemed they couldn't find the trouble and we would have to take him to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

I got my uncle Talmadge Young, who was always so willing to help any way he could.

When we got to the Doctor appointment in Charlottesville, Virginia the Doctor said there was no doubt in his mind that he had a tumor on the brain. We were heartbroken, and we had to leave him down there. In those days it seemed to be a long ways to us. He was operated on in a few days and he lived approximately 2 years from that time being completely blind. When he passed away it seemed I had lost part of myself. I felt a great comfort feeling he was the one God took in the vision. I couldn't wish him back for the Lord gave him a beautiful hope and I feel he is at rest. He desired a hope so much or some evidence that he could feel some assurance when he passed away of a better home when he was gone. One Sunday Elder John P. Helms came from Paynes Creek to see him and he told Elder Helms some of his feelings and how he desired a hope or some evidence that he was a child of God. Elder Helms told him when the desire of this was there that it would come in time. Not long before he died he was on his bed in the daytime and he said a voice spoke to him "Open your eyes and you shall see." He said he opened his eyes and saw the most beautiful place he had ever seen, everyone was dressed in the prettiest white that he had ever seen and so

peaceful. He was so happy that he called me from my work and told me, and Mother that he wanted me to take him over to Elder B. O. Thompson who lived not far away. So we took him and he wanted to join the church. Elder Thompson told him some of the brethren and himself would come over which was in a night or so and he could tell the brethren his desire. He told me if I had not taken him to Elder Thompson's that night he believed he could have driven himself. The brethren received him into the fellowship of the church and when he was baptized; there was ice on the water but he said it wasn't cold to him. He was most of the time rejoicing what he hoped the Lord had done for him,, and desired to meet with the brethren until his death.

Before he died I had been in such a state of condemnation it seemed I couldn't live. I couldn't understand what was wrong with me. If I was losing my mind or if I had a dreadful disease. I now believe it was the worst disease you can have and that is a state of sin and condemnation. I being the only one to help support the family at this time it seemed that there was a continual prayer in my heart to God that he would direct my mind in a way that I could make a living for I realized that my life, mind, breath, and everything was in God's hands, that without him I could do nothing. I would work long hours and at night it seemed there was a burning bottomless pit, the most terrible place I had ever seen was around me. I don't care what anyone had done to me I couldn't wish anyone to go to this horrible place. It seemed that I was condemned to be cast into this place. I

was afraid to go to sleep, afraid God would cast me into this place for I knew He would be just in doing so. But how I did beg Him for His mercy and to spare me. My pillow would be wet with the tears each morning when I would try to thank him that I had been spared another night. Yet through the day I would feel so heavy and a groaning in me that God would spare me. I felt so cast down when in the fields plowing it seemed I couldn't make it from one end to the other. I would at the ends leave the team and hide behind the bushes to try to beg for strength to continue and that I might have strength to work to provide for the family. Sometimes I would become so heavy that I would stop in the middle of the field down in the furrow, and try to beg God for strength to continue.

I went in this condition for some-time. It seemed I had come to my end. I had spent most of the day more time among the bushes trying to beg God for his mercy and for strength than I had worked. It seemed I had come to my end and that night I must die and be forever lost; there was no hope for one such as I and I would go to this terrible place prepared for the wicked. That evening I went to the house and my Mother had supper ready, I sat down but I couldn't eat. My burden was so great. I couldn't hold back the tears not wanting anyone to know I was in so much trouble.

The thought came to me, I will try to go one more time and try to beg God to have mercy upon me, for this night I must die. There was a large oak tree just away from the house where no one could see me. I thought

I would go there. It seemed I had just enough strength to get to this oak tree. I fell to the ground with my mouth in the dirt. It seemed I had not strength to open my mouth to say a word but there was a groaning in my being to God to save me, I perish. All at once something wonderful happened to me. I arose clapping my hands, I seemed so light and great joy filled my heart and I was praising my God for such a great deliverance from this great condemnation. This great condemnation has never returned. Somehow I believe we are delivered from something (sin and condemnation) to something (a hope of eternal life when this life is over) and we have a desire to be with ones (our brethren) which have been through their similar trials and have been brought along in the same matter.

The Lord having been so good to me and delivering me from such a horrible condition I so often doubt if I am mistaken. Yet I know such blessings as these can't be purchased with or be compared with such things as silver and gold or anything in this world. Not long after I felt I had been delivered from this death I started to bed one night and there was such a heaviness upon my heart that I can't describe the weight that I thought I couldn't live. A still small voice spoke into my very soul (please be still) and all this weight was gone. I was singing the hymn.

I know that my redeemer lives,
 What comfort this sweet sentence gives,
 He lives, He lives who once was dead,
 He lives My everliving head.

At this time I believe if anyone had

asked me if I was saved, I would have said yes.

This feeling didn't last long and I was doubting if this could be for one such as I. I would take my Mother, Roy and at times the rest of the family to church most every weekend. We would often attend a little church at the top of Bent Mountain at that time call Union Church, where Elder John Wood preached every third Sunday afternoon. Often he would tell how I was getting along and I wondered how he knew so well my feelings. It seemed he was preaching to me and the tears would stream down my face. I didn't want anyone to know I was interested in the Old Primitive Baptist. I wondered what few friends I had would think. It seemed people would make fun and criticize them. I wanted to be popular and have a large farm and be important. Sometimes I would enjoy the preaching so much I would wish I could just get under the floor and hear this preaching and no one would see me shedding tears. About this time I had become so heavy again. I was a stranger to myself and I thought to everyone else. How sweet the hymn seemed to me at this time. I am a stranger here below and what I am tis hard to know. This hymn seemed to fit my case.

At this time we had a little farm close to Paynes Creek church where Elder B. O. Thompson ran a mill. I had to go through the mill lot to get over to our place. One day as I drove by the mill I was in such a condition and so heavy I stopped my truck and went inside the mill, and seeing Elder Thompson I went and put my arms around his neck weeping and told him I would like to talk to him. I requested

that we go down in the basement. I didn't want anyone to see me in this condition. After telling him my feelings he told me there would be a baptizing in the mill race a certain time and for me to bring my clothes that he felt I was burdened to join the church. He was so kind to me I felt relieved after talking to him. Then a little later I began to feel so bad I had bothered him with my troubles. I thought he wouldn't have anything to do with me anymore. When the time came for the baptizing I was afraid not to take my clothes as Elder Thompson had asked me but at that time there was no way I could offer to the church. My mind was so far away.

Not long after this I was at the Mt. Union Church and Elders J. P. Helms and B. V. Helms held services at this time as Elder John Wood had moved up to Manassas, Virginia. I enjoyed the preaching so much not thinking anything about joining the church.

When they closed the meeting and had published an open door for the reception of members, as they were singing and shaking hands, there was such a great love that filled my heart before I knew what I was doing I was up at the pulpit asking for a home with these dear people. (I hope this was the love of God that drew me to the church.) They received us into the fellowship of the church as candidates for baptism. Not having any thought of joining the church but when they asked me the question, it seemed the answer was present and I said Paynes Creek. Then they asked who we wanted to baptize us and the answer was present Elder J. P. Helms.

I seemed to be lifted up with

rejoicing but when I started to open the car door to come home the feeling came upon me what is this you have done, I thought I deceived these people. I went home feeling very low. Certainly not telling or boasting we had joined the church. At this time I was 20 years old, and it seemed I was certainly going through life the opposite way I had planned. This was in the year 1944. In the year 1945 the church chose me to serve as assistant clerk and a t a later date was chosen clerk. Being unlearned and not knowing anything about church business I didn't think there was anyway I could perform such a task. Yet I had a desire to be submissive to the brethrens wishes. I had such a hard task trying to write the minutes of a meeting and I couldn't read it for crying when the business meeting came. Elder Thompson was so patient with me and would just wait until I was given grace to continue.

In the year 1946 the church asked me to serve them as deacon. This I thought to be another impossibility. Yet desiring to be submissive to the church, I told Elder Thompson if this was the request of the church I would do as best I could as God would give me strength. I could not refuse feeling I had a great burden, and such a stranger to myself and I didn't know what it was for. A presbytery was called in 1946 and ordained me a deacon for Paynes Creek Church. Oh how I tried to beg the Lord if I wasn't called to such a sacred place that he would manifest to me and my brethren to not go through with this work. It seemed I was praying in my heart continually and would seek secret places to beg the Lord to guide

me and to keep me.

I hope this has been a easier task for my brethren who have been ordained to this work.

I have now tried to serve the brethren at Paynes Creek for over 40 years. Sometimes it seems I am made to take inventory of myself and the requirements of a deacon and it seems I have not filled the first requirements or qualifications but yet I am blessed to press on by God's grace. The church has given me a wonderful home and have looked over my imperfections. The Lord has been so good to me.

David says when trouble came I remembered the Lord. When things seem to be going along smooth how we do forget Him and what we are but when afflictions arise and troubles come we know there is only one that can save us and we do beg Him for His mercy. Now justice, if we got justice God would have destroyed me long ago and banished me from His presence forever. Never to feel His presence or have any hope of eternal life when this life is over.

I have been brought to realize and I will say know that parents, kinsman friend or anyone on earth could or cannot help ,my helpless condition but the only true and living God can.

Twice in later years, one night in my home and once in a motel in Bradenton, Florida, I was blessed to feel I hope and believe that I felt the presence of Jesus was around my bed and this great love filled the room. It seemed I knew it was Jesus and I desired so much that He wouldn't leave, for the peace and love seemed to fill the room. My pillow was wet with tears of joy. Feeling that He would

leave but oh, that He would stay and I could feel this peace and love forever. My hope is this is a taste of heaven on earth also meeting with our brethren when we are blessed to feel His presence in our meeting and His love manifested. It is my hope that in the resurrection morning He will raise this body and change it into a body like unto His own glorious body to praise Him in perfect praise forever. Then we will come into possession of our hope that He has given us.

Oh to think that this will last forever no day or night there. No sorrow or pain. No afflictions, but all will be peace and joy in praising God forever in perfect praise. Then we will come into possession of hope that He hath given us. It seemed in my early life after I joined the church that not anything was important to me. I only wanted to know I was a child of God. One day I was reading in Romans 8:24 and it reads "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 there do we with patience wait for it." After reading this scripture I felt so highly favored to be blessed to hope in the Lord. Who is our only hope and I am so thankful I am blessed to hope in the Lord. So much of my time I wonder if I have been taught of God, or if all these things that I have experienced have been imaginary. Sometimes I don't think so this way being contrary to our carnal nature. I don't think any flesh would nor could follow or choose to come through these great afflictions as His lot but God brings His children through great afflictions to show them how weak and sinful they are and

without Him they can do nothing. There are other experiences I have had in life I would desire to write but it seems I can't at this time write them. Hoping that if there be any comfort to you Sister Mary that you will be blessed to give all the praise to Jesus who suffered, bled, and died upon the cross that sinners must be saved. Written by a sinner saved by the grace of God if I am saved and not by anything I can do or have done. God chose a special people in Christ before the foundation of the world and He came willingly. He was born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Ghost to do the Father's will and when He said "It is finished" I believe He saved everyone that the Father gave Him in the beginning. For He said all that the Father hath given me I have lost none, but the son of perdition that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Not one will ever be added to this number, neither will there ever be one taken away or lost but it is all fixed eternally. I feel I must quit. I hope you will pardon all errors and come to see us when you can.

A brother in Christ, I hope,
Harry Cannaday

Dear Elder Key and Sister Key,

I am sending in my remittance for another year of the Signs—The one in October of this year is truly wonderful. When ones own experience of Grace so closely identifies with the writer it is comforting indeed.

I sometimes hear one tell of how they were led and I have not been brought that particular route to re-

ceive the Truth. I feel to wonder about my hope and often fear, "Has mine been real?" and sometimes it sends my mind going back a while, fifty or more years and try to live again the time (tho short) that I thought I knew I'd been born a new creature. The song 215 in the little Goble book tells of that earliest love, and when I'm blessed in the Spirit, I feel every line in the song is truly my experience of grace. And many times (if not mistaken in it all) I feel to have been brought to the banqueting table, and His Banner over me was love.

But there are dark threads woven in the pattern of our lives that must be endured while we live here in time. But God being the Weaver, the Author, and the Finisher knows it will be beautiful in His time — for He and His works are perfect.

Sincerely asking your prayers,
In love and I hope a sister,
Lucille Young

Dear Elder Key,

I have been wanting to write a few lines on the following subject for some time, finally got it done. I am sending them to you to do with as you wish. Hope this finds you in good health, both you and your family.

If you think these are worthy of space in the Times I would feel deeply honored. I sure enjoy reading the Times, I hope the Lord will bless you and the others who are doing all the work to continue to be able to get this magazine printed, along with all those who furnish the material. I feel the Times gives honor and praise to God and abases man, that is my belief and

I enjoy reading it.

Thanking you very much, from a very unworthy brother, if one at all. I feel mighty low at times, but the little hope I have is mighty precious to me.

Frank C. Hunt
102 Lake Ave.
Salem, VA 24153

Acts 4:27 and 28

For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

The preceding verse (verse 26) tells us that the Kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together, then verses 27 and 28 tell us why they were gathered together, "to do what thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Brethren I believe in a God who speaks and it is done, who knows the end from the beginning, with whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning I believe all prophecy will come to pass and all promises are just as sure as day follows night. I believe in predestination, or things being predetermined to carry out or fulfill the will and pleasure of an Almighty God. I believe this doctrine because I believe the scripture, and this doctrine is surely set forth in the scripture. I believe I have been shown the meaning of some of these scriptures, and not by or from man, which surely strengthens my belief of this doctrine.

Now this scripture Acts 4:27 and

28 says the people were brought together to do what his hand and counsel had determined before to be done. Now we may ask the question, is this the only place in scripture where this has happened? Many people say the things pertaining to the death and resurrection of Jesus was predetermined because they had to be. But I say that all other things are just as predetermined. I believe that God's foreknowledge is absolute, he sees and knows all things that will ever come to pass regardless of how far in the future they may be. Let's look at one example of his mighty works.

I have heard Elders remark at meetings that members are there because they couldn't be anywhere else. I have also heard others say they certainly didn't believe that. I most assuredly believe that the brethren were there because they couldn't be anywhere else. Take any given meeting. God in his foreknowledge has seen the people there before the meeting ever took place. So on the day of the meeting the people had to be there or his foreknowledge would be wrong, which is utterly impossible. He works all things together in order to have you at the place where he in his foreknowledge has already seen you. Have you never been ready to go to meeting and been undecided about where you were going. I believe in such cases you were trying to go where you couldn't and God was working your mind so you would go to the very place, He in his foreknowledge knew you would go.

Brethren, I believe this is the way it is in all things. I believe you are free

to go your own way, according to your own will. But, remember the scripture, God works in you both the will and the do of his own good pleasure. The first meeting day after you read this, (if the Good Lord blesses you with health and a desire to go to meeting) you will be able to go to the church of your choice, but I truly believe that God will have worked with you and in you to the extent that your choice will be the very meeting house where He in his foreknowledge saw you ten thousand years before.

Some will say, "I know God does these things but what about the wicked things"? I say that God is almighty in his deeds and true and holy in His ways. There is no way man can rightly accuse God of being the Author of sin. When Joseph was sold into slavery, his brothers meant it for evil, and a evil act it was, but God meant it for good. Joseph was by every indication a good moral person, who suffered much in order to fulfill the things that God had proposed. When Patiphar's wife wanted him to go with her, he chose the right way instead of the sinful way. Man's way of thinking would dictate that he surely would have been blessed for that, but he had to serve years in prison. He was falsely accused, to be sure, but who knows how much suffering he went through. I dare say prison there and in that day was much worse than the ones we have here now. Don't you believe that God's will was being carried out. There was a purpose in it and it served its purpose. Joseph at that time probably couldn't see or understand why these things were happening as they were, although later he may have understood them

better. The same is true of us today. Often times we may have cause to wonder, but some things we are not supposed to see and understand. We see through a glass darkly. We live by faith at the present, but thanks be to God, for he says someday we will be with him, see him as he is and be satisfied.

As for Joseph's suffering for a while, rest assured that all is well with Joseph. Paul says eye has not seen nor mind ever thought of the pleasure laid up for God's children.

It is written throughout the scripture that these things have happened and I believe they all come to pass exactly as God had planned and proposed. He is the same today as he was when he had the scripture written. His word declares the scriptures will be fulfilled, and they will be fulfilled. I don't care how many "smart men" of the world and unbelievers scoff and laugh at creation and things being as they are. These people were around at the time of Noah also. After hearing news items about people being killed in various ways, you always hear someone say, How could God have allowed that to happen? God put every living soul on this Earth and he will be the one who takes them away. If one of us picks up a gun and kills someone, it would be murder. But at God's time, he calls someone to leave this old earth, it is surely his right to choose the time and method.

This is something to cause one to stand in awe at the wonderous work and ways of God. Surely it is hard for a poor mortal man to believe or understand how God can work his way and his will with man while at the

same time allowing man to move, act and think in such a way that he is working as he thinks and as he desires. But you have to remember that God's ways are higher than our ways. Certainly we could never even consider holding God's ways down to such a low point that we could understand them, we are talking about the one and only God, not some would be king.

Acts 2:23 Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. According to the scripture the crucifixion of Christ was done by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. It was something that was predetermined and had to come to pass. The prophets foretold of the many things that would happen, and many things that would happen, and the prophecy was fulfilled. I believe these men who did these things were carrying out the work of God. They were doing exactly the things He wanted done and the way he wanted it done. I don't believe anyone of these men could have refrained from doing this no matter how hard they may have tried. While they were carrying out God's will they were acting willing, doing so of their own lustful desire and feeling in no way that they were being driven, led or forced to do it. So you see they were all guilty and could have no excuse, nor could anyone blame God or make God the Author of sin.

Psalms 76:10 "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath thou shall restrain." The wrath of man was doing exactly

and precisely what the determinate counsel of God wanted done. They fulfilled the scripture, concerning this deed, to a jot and tittle, but was allowed to go no further. Through the ages we can see from the scripture how the wrath of man has brought persecution on the church. In most all cases it has strengthened the brethren causing all to grow in the faith and praise God more. All these things are carrying out or fulfilling the very will of God, in His wonderful way. He has seen that all things work together for good to those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose.

But see also that the remainder of wrath He restrained, God will allow the wrath of man to fulfill his purpose but he will and does restrain it from going so far as to block or stand in the way of His will. In this old world, with all the wicked men and works of Satan, sometimes we see and hear many wicked things, that sometimes in a moment of weakness we are apt to wonder what will happen next. But the blessed Lord once more whispers to us, fear not. We are blessed to see, feel and believe that God is still at the reins of his government, working all things after the counsel of His will. So we know that in this old world Satan is a subject to the will and command of God. God says fear not him who is in this world for I am stronger than he. We have been blessed to feel, hear, see and believe, therefore we know that we are kept by the power of God. During our pilgrimage in this life we need to be at our brother's feet, but in the weakness of the flesh we are oftentimes led astray. But God in his tender love and mercy knows our need. He knows when and how to

bring us down. At times we are given such love for the brethren that it is something to see and feel. Then we feel for a while like John did when he penned these words. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." I believe when we are blessed with this love we know what we have, the world doesn't know, can't see or understand. But God's little children can say praises to a God who has blessed them all with a finished salvation, the promise to keep and protect them, and the power to keep his promise.

Frank C. Hunt

Thanks to Sister Peggy Osborn for sharing with us this most comforting letter from Sister Frances Jarvis.

Editors

Dear Sister and Friend,

My thoughts have been with you since talking with you last night. It brought back many memories of the fear, pain and thoughts of the future to come. But, we know that it is all in the hands of one greater than we. And how thankful we can be, that He knows all things, cares for all things with love and mercy. How often I have tried to guess the future, worry and fret, but only when I have felt my Lord's loving presence, saying, "Fear not-- my grace is sufficient" have I "let go" and given it all up to Him. Then I can rest and find peace in leaving it all to Him.

My prayer for you, is that you will feel the presence of our Lord. That He might enfold you with the everlasting arms, reconcile you to your state and

give you strength and grace to meet each day.

I know you are aware of all these things, and more. But since I have been through this, I can feel for you, and only wish I could say or do something to make the trial easier. But then, you don't need me, when you have a greater and loving friend, Jesus, the Comforter of all. Just know that I am here for you, if you need me.

I was glad to hear you sounded reconciled. And I really feel you will come through with flying colors. It sounds as if it was found in time, and your recovery will be fast. I think the word "cancer" frightens us more than the condition, especially when it is in a place that can be removed like ours. But there are much worse things than cancer. At least, I have always thought so. Try not to dwell upon it as I feel sure you will recover completely.

You have gone through much in the past few years, you and Gene. My heart goes out to you both. But you have been given the strength and faith to stand fast in what you believed. That is really what matters. I pray that my faith will not fail, and wish it was as strong as yours. In this world we will have tribulation, if we are His, which gives us hope that we will endure until the end. Have hope, my dear Sister, your trial of fire is burning the dross, that you may come forth a shining vessel. Our sufferings of today are only a tiny bit of our Lord's sufferings.

I do wish we lived closer so I could visit you. Maybe I'll try to get up soon, after you find out if you have to take therapy. Will be anxious to hear your report.

Don't think strange if you get depressed. It goes with it. I have

plenty -- but it passed. Remember I love you.

Frances

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Editors

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ECCLESIASTES 7:1-5

A Good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.

Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



Dorsey Creek Primitive Baptist Church



Elder H.C. Moon

Dorsey Creek Primitive Baptist Church organized in 1875 in the Five Mile Creek Association.

Located in Cull-

man County, Alabama on Highway 69 about 17 miles southwest of Cullman.

Pastor is Elder H. C. Moon who has pastored this church for 39 years.

His father, Elder Lonnie A. Moon pastored this church approximately 40 years.

PSALM 89: 1-4.

I Will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.

For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou

establish in the very heavens.

I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,

Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

 ARTICLES

DOCTRINE

Acts 2:42. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Acts 2:44. "And all that believed were together and had all things common."

Eph. 5:11,12. 'And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." Can man improve on what is given by God's inspiration?

Rom.3:4 "God forbid: yea let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

Psalm 116:11. 'I said in my haste all men are liars." Psalm 117. "For his merciful kindness is great toward us: And the truth of the Lord endureth forever. Praise ye the Lord."

Gal. 1:8,9. "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before so say I now again, any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

II John 1 - 10. "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

Gen 1 - 31. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good. And the

evening and the morning were the sixth day." Gen. 2:1,2. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them." "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." Was this a finished work with God?

Isa. 14:24. "The Lord of hosts hath sworn saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and I have purposed so shall it stand." Do we believe the Lord on oath?

Eph. 1:4,5. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Do we believe what God thought, purposed, and predestinated caused anything to happen or come to pass?

John 7:16. "Jesus answered them, and said, my doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me." The question is do we believe his doctrine?

Troy Rhoades
Athens, Texas 75751

 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 des-

perately 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).

J.C. Philpot

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR AUGUST

Frank C. Hunt, VA	20.00
Mrs. N. Hunt, VA.....	2.00
Mrs. W.L. Simmons, VA.....	2.00
William Midkiff, VA	7.00
Miss Ruth DuBois, NY	5.00
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OBITUARIES

HOWARD WAYNE ADAMS

The Church at Weatherford feels it has suffered a great loss in the death of Brother Wayne Adams on January 20, 1987, at the age of 39. He died in Community Hospital in Roanoke, Virginia. May God reconcile us to his will. He was given hope and joined Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church on March 28, 1982, and was baptized by Elder Raymond Goad on April 25, 1982. Wayne was sincere in his convictions and loved the Doctrine of Salvation by Grace and was blessed with many marks of Grace. To know him was to love him. When visiting in the Adam's home, much love was manifested.

Wayne bore his afflictions with patience and never charged God foolishly. He was blessed with a loving companion, who stood by him and did everything a human could do for him, loving parents who cared for him patiently during the day when his wife was at work, also a loving Brother and two Sisters who did everything they could for him. He enjoyed the visits of his Brethren and his friends, which were many and rejoiced in Godly conversations.

Wayne was retired under disability for the The Southern States Cooperative, Roanoke, Virginia.

He is survived by his wife, Deborah (Kitty) David, his parents, Brother

Delmas and Sister Ora Adams, all of Roanoke, Virginia; one Brother, Percy Adams of Gretna, Virginia; two Sisters, Mrs. Melvin Dalton (Martha) and Mrs. James Worley (Hilda), both of Hurt, Virginia.

His funeral was conducted at 1:00 p.m. on January 23, 1987, at Oakey's North Chapel, Roanoke, Virginia, by Elder Raymond Goad and Mr. Wayne Grinnel. His body was laid to rest in Liberty Christian Church Cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the Glorious Resurrection.

I feel Wayne fought a good fight and has finished his course and has kept the faith and henceforth there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give him at that day; not to him only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

The sweet memory of Brother Wayne will remain with us and may we be given Thankful Hearts that we were given fellowship and friendship with him.

Written by: Phyllis Goad

Elder O. K. Tench - Moderator
 Elder Raymond Goad - Assistant
 Moderator
 Phyllis Goad - Clerk

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.

JAMES RAN PERDUE

This is written in memory of my father, James Ran Perdue, who died April 27, 1987. He was born November 2, 1912 to John A. Perdue and Mary Susan Perdue. He is survived by his wife, Lucy D. Perdue; son, Billy; daughter, Betty; four brothers; two sisters; and four grandchildren.

There is only one word to describe my father and that work is Love. He said that there is good in everyone.

He was a faithful attender and supporter of the Primitive Baptist faith. He was the building contractor for Weatherford Primitive Baptist church and helped everytime he was asked with Springfield Primitive Baptist.

I feel within my heart that he is asleep and resting just waiting for Jesus to come for him.

His funeral was held at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church, April 29, 1987, by Elder O. K. Tench, Elder Raymond Goad, and Elder Denver Simpson. He was buried in Altavista Memorial Park.

Written by his daughter Betty

EDNA CATHERINE JONES RADFORD

Sister Edna Jones Radford was born June 7, 1908 in Floyd Virginia. Later, she moved to Danville in search of work which she found in the Spinning Dept. of Dan River Mills. A few years later, she met and married James Eddie Radford, who predeceased her December

24, 1931. Sister Radford Departed this life February 10, 1987.

Sister Radford joined Dan River Primitive Baptist Church in 1940 and was baptised by her beloved pastor, the late Elder David Spangler. Although Sister Radford was physically unable to attend services the later years of her life, she avidly looked forward to receiving her "Signs of the Times" until she was no longer able to read. She remained staunch in her faith until the end, although she never considered herself anything but a lowly sinner.

Sister Radford is survived by one daughter, Mrs. Mary Ann Radford Kingery; one son, James Melvin Radford; four sisters, Mrs. Lula Mae Beal, Mrs. Alma Jones Graham, Mrs. Dora Bradshaw, Mrs. Sarah Wimmer; two brothers, Thurman Jones, Brown Jones; and one grandson, Victor Kingery.

May our Heavenly Father reconcile and sustain all who feel the loss of her passing.

Graveside services were held for Sister Radford February 12, 1987 at two o'clock in Schoolfield Cemetery, Danville, Virginia by her pastor Elder Kenneth R. Key. May we at Dan River Church be given to feel our loss is her eternal gain.

In Christian love,
Sister Phyllis Snyder

IS IT TIME TO RENEW
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION?
IF YOUR EXPIRATION DATE
IS 12/87
IT EXPIRES WITH THIS ISSUE.