

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

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PROSPECTUS OF THE "SIGNS"

The existence, sovereignty, immutability omnipotence and eternal perfections of the great Jehovah - the revelation which God has given of Himself, as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. "These three are one." John 1-8.

The absolute predestination of all things.

Eternal, unconditional election.

The total depravity and just condemnation of fallen man.

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

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

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

That the church of Christ is composed exclusively of baptized believers - that to her are given able ministers of the New Testament; that the scriptures are the only divinely authorized rule of faith and practice for the saints of God.

That there is no connection between church and state.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 2
 Elder Cleo Robertson

CORRESPONDENCE 6

ARTICLES 10
 Jeanette Robertson

VOICES OF THE PAST 14
 Elder William R. Welborn
 Elder Silas H. Durand
 Elder W. D. Griffin
 Elder J. C. Philpot

CONTRIBUTIONS 24

OBITUARIES 24
 Sister Gladys McCool

EDITORIAL

MELCHISEDEC



Elder Cleo D. Robertson

Of this mysterious man, very little is written. He appears briefly in the Old Testament and is gone. There have been many different views on who this man really was. No one feels more inadequate to write or speak on any scripture than I do. Yet, I feel to express what understanding I have been given for your consideration. Based upon the few scriptures concerning Melchisedec, I hope to show who this man was and his purpose

in appearing when he did.

Genesis 14:18 describes Melchisedec as King of Salem and priest of the most high God. In the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, he uses this same description but elaborates more. Paul says that his name means King of righteousness and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace. Now, could any man born after the manner of the flesh be called King of righteousness or King of peace? None, including Abraham, Moses, David, or any other man fit this description. *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."* Only the Lord himself is King of righteousness and King of peace. In I John 2:1, He is called *"Jesus Christ the righteous."* Psalm 11:7 *"For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness."* All our righteousness is as filthy rags. Christ is the only righteousness His people have for He is indeed the King of righteousness.

Christ is King of Salem which is King of peace. You will not have peace in this world; only confusion, strife, and tribulation. But, Christ is our peace. John 16:33, *"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."* He promised His people tribulation in the world, but also comfort in that He has overcome everything you will ever encounter in this life. Therefore, in Him, we have peace. O, what com-

fort in the words of Christ, "Peace I leave with you, *my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*" The King of peace is our peace that passeth all understanding.

The Apostle writes, "*Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.*" In Galatians, it is written that Abraham believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness and that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham. Also, to Abraham was the gospel preached, saying, "*In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*" And the scriptures set forth that Christ came to this earth through the lineage of Abraham. Abraham is called the friend of God. Abraham had just killed four kings and rescued Lot. As wonderfully blessed as Abraham was, he worshipped Melchisedec by giving unto him a tenth of the spoils. Melchisedec blessed Abraham and always the less is blessed of the greater. This king and priest of the most high God was greater than Abraham.

Melchisedec brought bread and wine and there in the Valley of Shaveh, the king's dale, communed with Abraham. Dear ones, hasn't it been in the valley after you have gone through a battle that the Lord came to you and you experienced

such sweet and precious communion? You felt His presence with you and there was such comfort and peace. Dale means valley and this was the king's dale. I believe that you are blessed to commune with your Lord in this valley, the king's dale. This has been prepared for you. Your King and priest has prepared it for you. There in the king's dale the green grass of the gospel is fed to you in the pasture of his grace. There you are fed. There you find rest for your weary, troubled soul. There, the lilies grow. You cannot see the beauty of the flower as it blooms in you as your head is bowed with humbleness and meekness toward the black dirt from which your fleshly body was formed. But, others see the beauty of the image of Christ as it shines forth as gold tried in the fiery furnace of affliction. The fruit of the spirit is manifested.

The bread and wine were setting forth the suffering, shedding of blood, and death that Christ would endure some 2000 years in the future. When Abraham was commanded by God to take his son Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah, on the third day he lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. The third day sets forth the gospel day or day of grace. Abraham saw more than just a mountain on which he would offer Isaac as a sacrifice. It would be on this mountain some 2000 years in the future that Christ would die on the cross. By faith Abraham had been given to see that and could tell the young men with

him, "you wait here and the lad and *I will go yonder and worship and we will come again to you.*" He could tell Isaac, "*my son, God will provide himself a Lamb for a burnt offering.*" Revelation 13:8 says that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.

Melchisedec is described as "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life." In other words, he was not born into this world. In the fullness of time, Christ was born of a virgin as the Holy Spirit came upon her and she was overshadowed by the power of God. He came under the law in order to satisfy it to a jot and a tittle to redeem His people. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, to condemn sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Christ as the savior of His elect must suffer, die, and rise again. The Lord came in the form of Melchisedec and appeared unto Abraham to establish that the order of His priesthood was an everlasting one. His priesthood had no beginning and it has no end. It was not descended in any way from carnal man. Melchisedec appeared unto Abram before God changed his name to Abraham; before Isaac was born; before Jacob and the twelve tribes of Israel existed; and before the Levitical priesthood was established. The Levitical priesthood had a beginning and an

end. It was established under the law covenant and was but a type and shadow of the everlasting priesthood of Christ. The high priests were all descendants of Aaron and were to serve until death and another would take his place. He went into the second tabernacle, which was the Holiest of all, once a year with blood which he offered for himself and for the sins of the people. God commanded that special garments be made for Aaron and his sons and God decreed the garments as holy. Aaron as high priest was not holy and therefore he must wear these holy garments when he ministered unto the Lord and entered into the Holy of holies. He must wear a plate in his mitre upon his forehead engraved with HOLINESS TO THE LORD. He would die if he entered in the holy place before the Lord without any of these garments, because he had no righteousness of his own. Also, the breastplate of judgment had twelve stones with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel so that all the people would be included when Aaron entered the holy place and ministered unto the Lord. The priests of the Levitical priesthood were made priests without an oath. Christ was made priest with an oath, "*The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*" Christ as the high priest of spiritual Israel does not need any garments designated as holy because He is holy himself. His people are in Him.

As their high priest, He is mediator between them and God. He died once and is now entered into heaven itself to appear in the presence of God for us. He who is without sin bore the sins of all His elect that they might have life and have it more abundantly. Christ did not come through the tribe of Levi but rather through the tribe of Judah; He lives forever; therefore, His priesthood was after the order of Melchisedec.

Christ only is the high priest of the most high God. Melchisedec appeared unto Abraham to establish that the order of the priesthood of Christ was an everlasting one. Psalms 110:4, *"The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."* The Apostle Paul refers to this scripture several times in describing the priesthood of Christ. That the Lord took the form of Melchisedec was not unusual. Another time, He appeared unto Abraham when the Lord and two angels came down to deliver Lot from Sodom and to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 18: 1-2, *"And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground."* On another occasion after Christ's resurrection, He ap-

peared in another form to two of His disciples as they walked, St. Mark 16:12.

The Apostle wrote that the sum of all of this is that "we have a high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Dear ones, aren't you thankful that we have a high priest who *"is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercessions for them."* Isn't it comforting to you that your high priest can be touched with the feeling of your infirmities and was in all points tempted like as you are, yet without sin? You are called a royal priesthood. You are royal because you are of the family of the King of kings. *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."* You are a priesthood because as the priests of old offered up sacrifices so you offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. These spiritual sacrifices are your prayers and praise.

May you taste that the Lord is gracious and experience the com-

fort and peace that only He can give.

May brotherly love continue,
Elder Cleo Robertson

CORRESPONDENCE

The first weekend of October showed us blessed to meet with this peculiar bunch of people in the state of North Carolina known as the Primitive Baptists. The Primitive Baptists are called this because of the great doctrine they advocate. The Primitive Baptists are a selected group who deny the power of flesh through sovereign grace, and gives God the praise, glory and honor for any salvation. This salvation is the deliverance of God's goodness in the hearts of the believing family at his discretion from the courts of glory, according to his sovereign will.

While I do not feel worthy to partake in these holy events, my hope is that a day will come, in His precious will that I will be enabled by His grace to come forth from the pits of this darkness and be made to see, and understand some of the great mysteries of his precious will.

We fully realize that the Baptist people who advocate the doctrine of predestination are the worst criticized people on earth. The Primitive Baptist are the only ones who deny the power of the flesh, giving God the praise, glory and honor for this great salvation. Realizing that all this

comes through channels of precious grace, through his precious love.

I would like to stress here before I go into detail of the events transpiring in the Association, that these remarks are made possible because of the generosity of Naomi Coker, who furnished me with the footnotes of this meeting; and I appreciate her very much. Ms. Coker is the clerk and Hassel Allen was the moderator for the meeting. Both are to be commended for a great job in taking care of the business as well as setting the rotation of preachers during this two day event. The entire church rolled out the carpet for us, who traveled from West Virginia, with open and loving arms.

The harmony and the precious love that existed these two days besides, being beyond comprehension, was also beyond words for my natural mind. This manna from God's table seems to have been meted out according to God's will and time. All these purposes will ripen in his season.

Elder Henry Jones was scheduled to preach the introductory sermon. Due to his confinement in the hospital, he was not able to fulfill this appointment.

Elder Joe Sawyer who was Elder Jones alternate, came forth and began with hymn, and the prayer was by Elder Raymond Goad. Elder Sawyer chose for the introductory sermon Titus 1:12. Elder Sawyer was lifted up and made to bring forth

a message that was for food and consolation to the recipients of God's love. He expounded on several things of interest to the household of faith.

The next one called to the stand was Alan Terry. Incidentally, the Terry name was well represented. They all came forth in harmony declaring God's sovereignty, giving God the Praise, Glory and Honor for this great salvation saying that puny man was excluded from being *a partaker of these Holy events. Elder Terry chose for his text Isaiah 63:1-9.* Elder Terry expounded on Jesus Christ our Lord being a perfect man with no guile in his mouth. He compared him to the man in which is a sinner by nature. All this comes in the Adam tree. This is all inherited in this Adam generation. Mankind being the receiver of this inheritance. His remarks were very interesting and well received.

The next one called to the stand was Elder Hale Terry. He chose for his text John 17: 1-10. He gave a very moving discourse that was well received.

The fourth preacher called to the stand, is very able when blessed, to declare God's sovereignty in a graceful way. He chose for his text Genesis 2: 8-9. Elder Robertson, not only is able to set forth a sovereign God, but he is a very able writer who writes some highly gifted articles.

Elder Mark Terry a cousin of the Terry preaching brothers was called on to preach in the afternoon ses-

sion. To me I thought he was blessed to bring forth one of the best messages that I had ever heard him elaborate on. He took his text from Hebrews 12: 1-2. He was highly favored to bring a beautiful message from this text.

Elder Jimmy Gray was the sixth brethren called to the stand and took his text from John 6:40-47. Elder Gray was highly favored to bring a message of comfort to the highly favored few. When one is lifted from the pits of darkness and made to rejoice in these messages from the Master's table, we hate to see this come to an end.

Sunday morning's meeting was opened with a hymn, then a prayer by Elder Joe Sawyer. Elder Junior Conner was the first one called to the stand on Sunday morning, taking his text from Colossians 1:9-15.

Elder Conner is a highly gifted favored servant of Israel's God to preach the unsearchable riches of God's grace. Elder Conner was elevated up in that good land to bring a message of comfort to this little flock who came to feast. This feast of rations, stored for this highly favored few. I think all present were made to rejoice in this message.

Elder Raymond Goad was the second called on Sunday morning. He took his text from Revelation 16: 17-21 and chapter 17: 1-9. Elder Goad elaborated on the deep rooted subject about the devil and his angels, and this bottomless pit. Elder Goad was blessed to bring a great

message of comfort from the deep rooted subject. Revelation is a deep rooted book, the contents only being interpreted through God's sovereign grace.

Elder Joe Sawyer came forth with some closing remarks. In closing these remarks, I would like to say if not deceived, that all of the Elders that came forth in a preaching way, were partakers of that heavenly manna which is stored up to be meted out, to the recipients of his love—to feast upon at God's appointed time. Blessed be his holy name for favoring us all to be partakers of what I feel to be this holy event.

In bonds of love I hope,
Riley Justice

426 Lilly Rd. N.E.
Apt. 133
Olympia, WA. 98506-6932
November 3, 2005

Dear Sister Mildred,

I'm sorry I have been this long in getting a letter off to you; but at my "age and stage", I'm slower than usual and have to rest too often, I think.

My dear, your letter was one of the sweetest treasures I have ever received.

First of all, it was a surprise to me "out of the blue"; but I can know it was another proof of what the Lord keeps doing for those who love Him

as we do. I never feel alone; and I know, with the evidence because His words have been spoken out loud in answer to a prayer twice. You spoke of Mother's facial expression and I must relate to you that I came out of a grocery store recently just walking along, and a young, person in her 30's walked right up in front of me, stopped; and said, "I surely like your hair" and I said, "It's the same old wig: I've had for 96 years." Then she said, "It's not your hair, you're a Christian". My reply, "So you're one too!" and she was.

My thoughts were of my sweet Mother, because her face radiated with God's love and it has been my lifelong hope I could be like my mentor and loving person like Mother. My son Stuart and daughter, Carole are so special and loving God as I do, I'm so happy for them.

It touched my very soul to read your letter and know you are the Spangler's daughter; and to also know you were here when I asked for acceptance with those dear ones in The Primitive Baptist Faith.

And, my baptism was so special having Elder Spangler and Elder Ben Preston baptize me. What a blessing that was for me and I feel and know I have been blessed every day of my whole life by "my" Lord. Praise His Holy name!! I will always keep your letter. I shed tears to read it – as I was reminded of all you mentioned.

It's hard to realize the changes there are in one's lifetime. I was saddened when your mother and dad

passed away. They had so much to do with my spiritual life; and now, I worship alone. The Yakima Church Group are all gone and the closest church is with Brother or maybe Elder Lloyd Spikes over in Weiser, Idaho. Anyway, I have the Signs of the Times and Zion's Sentinel to read; and Brother and Sister Wells sent an assortment of cassettes of the church's singing which I love. I can sing along because I have a hymn book, too. I feel a loving closeness to you Sister Mildred so I'd like to keep in touch with you; at least as long as I can call you by phone or write a letter.

To describe me now, I'm sending this picture with Stuart, who still remembers that trip to the Eastern churches with his grandmother, our Sister Josie Mitchell. My! They had such a wonderful trip. Your letter says it all and it pleased "Stu" to have me read your letter to me and mentioned their trip.

I'd like to hear from you again if you feel able. I'm concerned that your age has covered illnesses or is it true?

For my 96 ½ years I have been unusually well. No arthritis, diabetes, cancer, or any lingering illness; but at my age, my nerve endings are eroding so I have neuropathy (numbness in my fingers and toes and legs. I'm ready for the Lord's call when my time comes; but I have a happy spirit and except for a back pain or two, I'm fine. I have so much to be thankful for.

So, let me hear from you; and my heartfelt love goes to you today. My telephone number is 1-360-456-3561. I'll have your phone number and will call you. Thanks a million for your precious letter, the Lord willed you to write!

I love you dearly
Alma Coate-Wilson

Mary B. Weber 11-13-05
2162 Standiford Rd.
Union Hall, VA 24176

Dear Elder Terry,

I have finally moved to Smith Mountain in Union Hall. I enclosed a check for a one year subscription to the Signs of the Times.

I am a member of Gills Creek Church. We had our meeting today. It was a wonderful meeting, we had a very large crowd. Elder C.B. Davis was there. I had not seen him in 21 years. He baptized me at Lebanon Church at Bracey, VA. In 1984. He left us in 1987. It was good to see him and his wife again. They remembered me. I was received in Gills Creek on relation. The Lord has been so good to me. May He bless and keep you in His loving care. Forgive mistakes as I will be 79 years old the 27th of this month. Writing not too good and memory not too good.

Love for Jesus sake,
Mary B. Weber

11-15-05

Dear Elder Terry:

Enclosed check for "Signs".
You editors are doing great job.

I sure enjoy all the good writers telling some old (truths) sure good.

I'll be 97 on 11-29-05 I believe. My days will soon be over here.

The 23rd Psalm sure sounds Precious,

With love,
Jane Carroll

ARTICLES

THY ROD AND THY STAFF THEY COMFORT ME

As you have traveled with me during many severe trials and afflictions, I would like to share with you a blessing I received from God's majestic throne of grace, if I am not deceived, in the night hour at the beginning of the new year of 2005. I was given a dream of seeing a bed lifted down into water. The following week, I was given another dream about this bed. In the second dream, I was holding on to two posts of the bed that were in the water and the two posts came off from the bed. I thought the bed would surely decay because there was no way to get the bed up out of the water since the posts had been removed. Immediately, I sought the Lord for interpre-

tation and the words were spoken to me: *"This is salt water. This bed will not decay but will be preserved."* I then walked on top of the water with the two posts that were removed from the bed.

I believe this was the bed of affliction in which I must endure yet another trial. When the two posts came off the bed, there could not be felt the presence of the Lord; destruction seemed imminent and no way for recovery. One encounters an experience of being helpless, weak, lost, and absent from the presence of God. But the Lord said, *"This is salt water."* Salt water sets forth His grace that preserves His people. The two posts, the rod of His strength and the staff of His word, would sustain me during my affliction and I would be lifted up in His spirit and given to trust in Him for all my help. The Lord would be my *"refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."* David writes in Psalm 110:2, *"The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies."* The staff of the word is what we lean upon in our journey through this life, and it is especially comforting in times of afflictions and troubles. *"By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."* Therefore we will not bear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." Psalm 46:1-5.

My Oncologist told me that the middle lobe of my right lung which was dead must be removed to prevent suffocation when coughing up blood. Two days prior to surgery on February 3, 2005, I was home alone resting in bed when suddenly I was overcome with prayer, if I am not deceived, that poured out of my heart from that heavenly throne. My mouth was moving but the words from within were pouring forth so fast that they could not be spoken but were within begging the Lord to watch over me during my surgery and guide the doctor and those who would care for me. I believe, if not deceived, this prayer was given to me from Him above and would not return unto Him void; for after this miraculous experience, if I even attempted to start to ask for something pertaining to the surgery, I was shut up and these words were given, "*I have heard thy petition.*" I could ask no more. My trust was in the Great Physician and I felt His peace and comfort and that all would be well with my soul. I recalled when Hannah spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not

heard. The Lord remembered Hannah's petition when she prayed for a man child. She conceived and bare a son and called his name Samuel because she asked him of the Lord.

The words recorded by David in the twenty-third Psalm became so precious to me. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." I felt, if not deceived, I was given faith to believe that the tender hand of God would watch over me, protect me and provide grace sufficient for this time of affliction. "He maketh me to *lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*" I desired to be fed upon the green grass of the gospel, rest in the pasture of God's love and be led by the Holy Spirit to be still and know that He is God. "*He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*" My cry was as David's, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." It was my hope that the Lord would again reveal the promises of His word to me and lead me in the paths of truth and holiness for His glory and not for the praise of men. "*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.*" Though I was compassed about with a great time of affliction, I feared not that one who would try to destroy me but felt the power of God's love which casteth out all fear, and was com-

forted by the rod of His strength and the staff of His word which would be sufficient for that which I would experience. As Christ told Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

The Lord prepared me for surgery to remove the middle lobe of my right lung which was dead. The inner man experienced peace and comfort as the outer man endured much pain and suffering. The surgery was successful and the doctor said it was the first time he had ever had someone to go through lung surgery and have only a teaspoon of blood drain after surgery. Even though the middle lobe of my right lung was not functioning at all, the doctor told me that I had the lungs of a 30-year old when my age was twice that. The Lord strengthened the healthy part of my lung to compensate for that which was unhealthy. That is how it is with the natural man who is blessed with the spirit of God. The flesh is weak but the spirit in him is strong.

I felt to witness with Hannah as recorded in I Samuel 2:1-2: "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord: my mouth is enlarged over my enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there

any rock like our God." Our praise is exalted in the Lord when He hears our cry and blesses us to feel His omnipotent power. It is joy unspeakable even in the midst of the greatest trial. Hannah said her horn was exalted in the Lord. She was praising the Lord from the depths of her soul. Her mouth was enlarged over her enemies because she rejoiced in the salvation of the Lord. The Lord commanded, "Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:10-12. Those were Hannah's enemies and the enemies of the Lord's people today.

But God protects His little ones. He commands and it stands fast. He says, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer

and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel." How precious a scripture the Lord has left on record for His people to receive comfort. I love this scripture, for I believe if I am one of His little children, there will never be too great a battle for me to fight if I am clothed with His armour. If I am not deceived, this armour has protected me in many trials and afflictions. Those posts in my dream, the rod and staff, carried me through yet another battle where I felt to have reigned with Christ.

Psalm 119:75-77 reads, "*I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.*" Precious also are the words spoken by David in Psalms 40:5, "*Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.*" What a loving God! May His name be praised forever and

may we witness with David when he wrote, "*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.*" The child of God desires that the love and mercy of God will endure with him continually each day that the Lord has made for him in this life; and when he must depart from this life, to dwell in that house whose builder and maker is God, a house not made with hands but eternal and in the heavens for all eternity. The hymn writer expresses it so beautifully:

*Sovereign Ruler of the skies
Ever gracious, ever wise!
All my times are in thy hand,
All events at thy command.*

*His decree, who formed the earth,
Fixed my first and second birth:
Parents, native place, and time,
All appointed were by him.*

*He that formed me in the womb,
He shall guide me to the tomb;
All my times shall ever be
Ordered by his wise decree.*

*Times of sickness, times of health,
Times of penury and wealth;
Times of trial and of grief,
Times of triumph and relief:
Times the tempter's power to*

*prove;
Times to taste a Saviour's love:
All must come, and last, and
end,
As shall please my heavenly
friend.*

*Plagues and deaths around me
fly;
Till he bids, I cannot die:
Not a single shaft can hit
Till the God of love sees fit.*

*O thou Gracious, Wise, and
Just,
In thy hands my life I trust:
Have I somewhat dearer still?
I resign it to thy will.*

*Thee, at all times, will I
bless:
Having thee, I all possess:
How can I bereaved be,
Since I cannot part with thee?*

*"Many are the afflictions of
the righteous: but the Lord
delivereth him out of them all.
He keepeth all his bones: not one
of them is broken. Evil shall slay
the wicked: and they that hate
the righteous shall be desolate.
The Lord redeemeth the soul of
his servants: and none of them that
trust in him shall be desolate." Psalm
34:19-22. How precious it is to be
blessed with grace and strength to
endure the many afflictions that are
our lot to encounter in this life. As
Job said, "Though he slay me, yet
will I trust in him." "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."*

Love in Christ
Jeannette Robertson
April 21, 2005

VOICES OF THE PAST

EXPERIENCE OF ELDER WELLBORN

I was born 31st July, 1859, in extreme poverty. My father's house was of that rank that is meanest and most despised of all the families around in this part of North Carolina; wherefore I have nothing of rank to boast of as others have, neither do I desire it; but instead thereof, I glory in my infirmities and low state according to the flesh, that I may the more abundantly exalt my God. I was born and reared in about eight miles of where I now live, in the most obscure part of Surry County, N.C. I was the oldest child of my father's family. My next brother was nearly two years younger than myself, and was dumb and perfectly helpless, and he lived to be about fourteen years old and died. I have two other brothers, the next in birth, and they are about grown young men, and are very wicked; and many times have I bowed in prayer for them; and O, may all who read this unite in prayer with me for them. The fifth child of my father's is a girl, now nearly grown, and is my only sister,

and is yet out of the Ark of Safety. O, that God may bring her tender soul in. The sixth and last child was my infant brother who died in infancy, and is therefore better off than any of us yet living in time. My dear mother died when I was at the tender age of ten years, and left an old log cabin nearly full of little children, none of whom at that time were able to do any labor but myself; for all were too small to do anything, except my oldest brother, and he was helpless, and my father was a weakly man, being diseased from a child. I had been brought up, until this period, without any education, or any knowledge of religion; for my parents never had any thought for religion, as it seemed, for they never went to any kind of meeting; neither did they seem to have any thought for reading, as they had no Bible or any other kind of a book in their possession.

I was reared in perfect obscurity; for I lived until I was about eighteen year's old and had never been at any public gathering, never been to school, nor heard any one speak in public. As I have said, mother died and left me at the age of ten years to take care of a pitiful and helpless family; but my little infant brother in a few weeks followed his mother. My dear reader, I cannot tell the trouble, turmoil I have undergone since the death of my dear mother; and if I were to write for days and days I could not tell half of the many hardships, troubles and trials I have had

in this world of sin and sorrow. I had to work out of doors in the day time in summer, to try to make something for us all to eat; and also had to prepare our meals three times a day, and had to carry those little children with me to the field. I also had to chew everything my little helpless brother ate, and had to strip him three times a day, and many times, oftener. I had to wash and patch for them (my three little brothers, father and one little sister) of nights; for my father was gone from home the most of his time. O, the lonesome hours I saw; for no one came to see us, though there were two dwellings just across the small stream from where we lived, both in sight; and after I had become a grown man, I visited those houses and they did not know who I was—even those people who lived in sight of where I was raised did not know me when I went to their houses, for they had never seen me, only at a distance, since I was a little fellow and nobody ever came to see whether we were dead or alive. Now the general excuse that they (the people in the neighborhood in which I was raised) put up for not visiting us was that my father was such a wicked and sorry man; but my notion is different from that; I think that the cause was they lacked charity.

Now, dearly beloved in the Lord, I cannot describe what I have suffered during those cold and stormy winters; for I never wore a coat or vest, nor anything else, save a shirt and pantaloons of domestics, until

after I was eighteen years old. How piercing those sharp winds felt to my thinly-dressed body when I had to leave my little brothers and sister and sometimes father, and go to the woods for wood to burn, to keep them from freezing! When I would return with my turn of wood on my shoulder, I would be so cold that I would be benumbed all over. When I look back over my rugged road, I am made to wonder that I am still alive. But my wonder ceases when I consider that the omnipotent hand of a loving Father has led me through this terrible desert and preserved me from its numberless dangers. O, was it not the loving hand of Jehovah that kept a poor blind (spiritually blind) boy from having childish ways and from the carelessness common to children. For if I had been of the disposition common to children, I would not have striven to maintain my father and his helpless family, but to the reverse. I have often thought if it had not been for God's kind providence we would all have been burned up together in our little old log cabin years ago. But, thanks to His holy name! he watched over us and brought me to manhood without any help of man, and without any of the luxuries of earth. Then does he not work all things after the counsel of his own will, and out of the sight of poor, finite mortals?

After my helpless brother had died my labor was not so severe. Well do I recollect when he died; it was one evening during a thunder-

storm. I was sitting by his side, rocking him in his cradle when the thunders were rolling and the sharp lightning were flashing, and it was almost as dark as night. I looked my little brother in the face and saw the hand of death there; his eyes were turned into death. How awful I felt! While looking on him the tears rolled down my cheeks, and I called to my father, for I could not endure to gaze alone upon that dying boy. Time moved on with me and still I knew but little, and thought less, of a Supreme Being. I knew God only by these names, "The Good Man," and the "Lord." This was all I could learn of God by my father. When I would ask him what caused the thunder, etc., he would say that it was the "Good Man" that thundered. When I was a little boy I remember that my mother told me the same, and that he (the Good Man) would destroy all that stole, told lies, etc., in a pit of fire. So sometimes I would be much afraid of these things, and dreaded frightful dreams. But my disposition was dreadfully wicked. I will mention a few of my many wicked thoughts and intentions while in a state of death. I had heard of the many pleasant (to me then) sinful practices of mankind from my father telling me of them. So I thought that I would work very hard and lay up, and when I became a man I would buy a suit of clothing and fix up and go out into the world and take my pleasure in all the sins common to wicked young men; for I thought as I had always

been a subject, of obscurity and sorrowful privations, that when I became a man I would see some pleasure. But all my expectations were cut short by the hand of Omnipotence; for I became greatly burdened, and my troubles were very great, for I felt myself to be the greatest sinner on earth. O, how wretched I felt! I was ashamed of myself. There were some black people who lived near us, and I was ashamed of them, so that when they came about I would hide from them. O, how wicked I did feel! I often went and tried to pray, though I knew little about what men or women did when at prayer; what position they occupied, or what words they used, for I had never heard anyone pray. So when I went out to pray I would some times, and most of the time, fall on my face. So finally I concluded that I was going to die and sink down into a lake of fire unquenchable and everlasting, and that because of my sinfulness. I viewed myself as nothing but a great mass of corrupted wickedness, and that the Good Man, as I knew, was going to sink me into irretrievable woe and misery on account of my sin. Then I began to examinee myself to see why it was that I must sink down into hell, and why it was that I was the worst being on earth, and could not solve the mystery; for I had never been as wicked as I had heard of some being. I had never acted the thief, neither had I been a liar, nor had I been guilty of any big crime. Then what is the matter? I could not tell

why I was so guilty. But when I had viewed sin in all its deformity, then I could solve the mystery; for I then saw that it was that original guilt and my total depravity in nature that condemned me. But all my reasoning about not having been guilty of any great crime did me no good; and finally sleep fled from me; and one evening I watched the sun go down, and as he sank below the horizon I bade him farewell, and never expected to see the sun rise again. O, how dreadful I felt! for I thought I would soon be dead, and no sooner dead than damned. When night came on and all my father's family were asleep, I arose softly and went out and going a considerable distance from the house, I fell down upon my face to pray. I thought I must now sink into eternal woe and misery, for what hope have I? I had never heard anything of such a being as Christ Jesus, or Saviour; neither did I know anything of the New Testament at that time; but just at the moment when I thought I was gone, saw Jesus as it was a bright star descend from heaven and the next I saw to that superior bright star was a little infant lying in a very shabby-looking stable, and I thought, or it was revealed to me, that this shining light left heaven to become a way for my redemption from death and hell, and became an infant to that end. I then had a view of the whole life of Christ, even to his crucifixion. I then saw Jesus suspended between the heavens and

the earth, as an outcast of both. He was hanging, I thought, about half way between the heavens and the earth; his feet were crossed a large iron about the size of a forty-penny nail pierced through them both, his hands were pierced with smaller irons, and his side was pierced open, and a great stream, of bloody water was pouring or gushing out of it; and I saw that his whole blessed body was streaming in blood, every part being bathed, and the blood streamed unto the earth. Then I heard a voice say, Fear no longer, for this will overcooled and overspread you from all harm, from the thunder storms, etc. This voice was sweetest melody to me; my whole being; was filled with sweet and holy melody, and I felt as innocent as a little new-born infant; for all my load of sin and guilt was gone. Now it was right here I saw, or it was revealed to me, just how Jesus came into the world; for I viewed that he lived for me a perfect life of obedience in the flesh, and that he died for me, or died in my stead, and arose for me a victorious conqueror over death, hell and the grave; and then ascended to heaven for me. I also had the same view in regard to the whole church in her triumphant state. Now this heavenly view and divine revelation was so great to me that in after years when I had gotten in possession of the New Testament and began to read it, it seemed as though I had always been acquainted with its readings.

Now I have never gone to school but about two months in all my life, and that during the winter of 1878, and during this same winter I borrowed some clothing and went to Rock Springs meeting house and heard Elder B. E. Caudle preach, which was the first sermon I ever heard preached in my life. So time passed on with me in many ups and downs, doubts and fears, until the 18th of May, 1878, when I went to the church and told some of the great things which I hoped the Lord had done for me.

In June following I borrowed clothing of Brother C. W. York to be baptized in, and walked to Mitchell's River meeting house, about eighteen miles, and was baptized by Elder B. E. Caudle. Now, I never had heard anyone tell an experience, or join the church, nor had seen anyone baptized until after I was baptized myself. I moved on in poverty's vale in many severe trials, and was favored with many rich blessings of God's grace, as I some times hope, until the second Sunday in August, 1878, when contemplated trying to preach. When I commenced trying to preach I did not know a tune of any song in the world; neither could I give out a hymn correctly, for I could scarcely read. So I passed on in my trials, having to toil yet very hard for my father, and he was all the time opposed to my religious exercises; but I would beg him often to let me go and try to preach, which he would sometimes consent to. So

I would go in my rags and walk for many miles to preach to the people. Yes, I would go through the dark as well as the daytime; going through wet and dry, cold and heat, preaching to the poorer sort of people.

On the 25th of August, 1880, I was married to Miss A. L. Moody, a beautiful girl seventeen years old. She was a very poor girl, for she had nothing but her clothing. We leased a piece of land in the woods and built a little log cabin and moved in it., and we got shingles for a sustenance during the fall and winter, working day and night; for I would some nights dress or draw three hundred shingles after supper. But when summer was come we rented stock and land and made a crop, and have been doing that way ever since. The first meal we ever ate in our little log cabin was in one teacup and one saucer; I ate out of the saucer and my wife out of the cup; and she had one old knife, made in the shop, to eat with, while I used my pocket-knife. We had to go in debt the year we were married for bedding and other household and kitchen necessaries, and we paid out the next fall, but had to go in debt again. I have had a powerful hard struggle to barely keep something to eat and wear, and many times both myself and family have suffered for want of food and raiment, and are in need even now. I have tried to go and preach Jesus as often as I possibly could, and have always had to walk, for the Primitive Baptists are very

few in this country, and are very poor and widely scattered, therefore I never have had a helping hand from any mortal in this part. My family consists at present of my wife and three little children.

I was set apart and ordained to the gospel ministry by Elders Joshua Long and Wm. Hall on the 3rd Saturday in May 1882, and have been trying to fill that calling, ever since but have labored under so many disadvantages that it seems there was never given for me any ease or satisfaction in this world. Yes, it seems that I was born unto trouble tribulations and disappointments, for my days have been as prone to trouble as the sparks are to fly upwards. And there are but two things that make me want to stay here in Time's many distempers, and that is my poor little poverty-stricken family and the poor little saints who are scattered here in this mountain country. They are but few in number and poor in the world, and yet I am knit to them in love.

Brother Respass, I submit this to your kindness, hoping it may find grace in your sight. I am your poor little unworthy brother in hope of the resurrection of life eternal.

State Road, N. C.
William R. Welborn

P. S.—Dear Brother Respass :—
It is at the request of several of your readers that I have written this short sketch of my life and experience for

your precious paper, THE GOSPEL MESSENGER; please give it a corner in your precious paper.

The Gospel Messenger—May 1887

It is now the seventh day of December, 1906. Forty-two years ago a council met at my former home in Herrick, Bradford Co., Pa., in accordance with the request of the Middletown and Wallkill Church, in Orange Co., N.Y., to consider the question of ordaining me to the gospel ministry. On account of the inability of my father and mother to travel a distance, the meeting was appointed at our home, about two hundred miles from the church of which I was a member. Of the six ministers who constituted the presbytery only one is now living. Elder Gilbert Beebe was the moderator. The examination and a sermon occupied the first day. The ordination services were on the 8th. The weather was pleasant, and there was a very large congregation both days. What my feelings were at the time, a mingling of hopes, doubts, fears, zealous desires, I would like to tell, but cannot. As I look back how short the time seems, which would have appeared so long to look forward to at that time. How little I thought I should live forty-two years. Though the time seems so short to look back to, yet how few of those who were present then are living now; of those who were the council I do not remember of but two now

living. Of my father's family and the families of two brothers living near, there were eleven who were members of the church at Vaughan Hill in 1865; only two of these are still on earth: my sister Bessie and myself. What questionings were mine at the time as to whether the Lord had called me to preach, and what questionings many times since. I was Baptized on the second Sunday in June, 1864, by Elder Beebe, in Middletown, N.Y., and from that time I had but one subject to talk about, and that was salvation by grace. But it was near the last of August that I was told by the Spirit that I must preach. I had listened to a sermon in which there was no gospel, but error from beginning to end. My desire was to get up in that congregation and tell the people that this that they had heard was not the truth; that if they knew what the text meant it would comfort them. I had been a member there, and would have felt no hesitation in speaking, but the Spirit suffered me not; but in an instant it was made known to me that I must preach. My one desire was (and has been ever since) to go and tell to all the ends of the earth that salvation is of the Lord. I wrote Elder Beebe, and asked him what such feelings meant. He replied that the church had thought I had a call to preach, and was waiting till the Lord should let me know it. Well, sometimes I feel that my work has been of the poorest kind, not worthy to be called preaching, and

Sometimes it seems to me that it has been a glorious work, and that all the praise belongs to Jesus, the dear Savior, who has at times filled my heart with love to him, and has filled my soul with laughter and my tongue with singing. But O, the dark nights, the terrible afflictions, the awful desolations of soul that have been mine to experience; they cannot be told. During these years I have traveled much, and spoken often, and met many kinds of people, and experienced many wonderful things. There are many of these experiences and incidents that would be of interest, I know, to the brethren, and I have sometimes thought I would try to tell some of them, and recount some of the circumstances of my travels, and tell of the ministers I have intimately known. I know of only one now who has been ordained a longer time than I. How poor appears my work, and myself. Truly I can say I feel to be the least of all saints, if I am one. But how sweet is the fellowship of the saints to me. If I ever write of these things I hope it will surely be by the direction of the Lord, so that I may write nothing that will hurt the cause of truth or any of the Lord's people.

Silas H. Durand

MATTHEW 5:8.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

No subject of the Bible holds more interest than this. Perhaps, we do not understand much about it. I am sure that I do not, and I realize how presumptuous it is for me to think I could teach anyone how to pray. This world professes to teach that and some theologian has gone to the trouble to write a book called "God's Minute." In the book he has a short prayer for each day in the year. Not being able to give you that many in advance. While I do not know that I have ever prayed, and if I have that I will ever be blessed to do so again it does not mean that it is not gospel subject. If it is, it certainly is profitable, under spiritual guidance, for our discussion and examination.

By way of encouragement to the dear saints I want to say to you that none of our leaders have a monopoly on prayer. Although prayer is a gift it is not one we can use any time men call on us to pray. If I am mistaken about it do not follow me, but I believe that any minister feels a great hesitancy offering prayer at times.

Prayer is, after all, a close-up with God, a veritable talking face to face. When we are really and truly given to see our sins, it is enough to cause a trembling in body and spirit to ask God for anything, seeing that it is the prayer of a righteous man that avails anything. In this connection let me say that I have impressions to pray just like I trust I do to preach. At these times it is the sweetest yielding and compliance to his blessed command

as it is in standing in the pulpit and preaching the doctrine of grace. Trying to pray is like trying to preach-it is mighty hard work-in fact it cannot be done. While trying to pray, we invariably are in the flesh and our object is selfish, begging for the things that we want. But that is not all, trying to accomplish a thing not only shows a lack of how but of what and why. I believe we pray as we preach and live and die, depending on the eternal fixed purposes of God. It is in faith that we come to him at all. This faith, at all times, is the substance of the things hoped for. This has never been changed and, although it moved Abel, Daniel, Jacob, Paul and all those gone before and will move every communicant that is yet to come, it is as unchangeable as God. In every step of our obedience to his commandments, it is faith that goes before, revealing the eternal perfection and sovereign purpose of God in disposing of all created things. Faith does not go before, bringing to light the unfinished things of God, as though he was a little undecided as to his rule of conduct, but it is the substance of our hope.

Now come hither little child and let us look at our hope. We do not hope that we will exercise faith to the end, but we hope that God eternally arranged for our salvation in Jesus Christ. Our prayer is not an effort to change God, but it is because he is unchangeable. The world (that is, the ungodly world)

may swerve and tauntingly tell us that if they believed everything was fixed they would not pray, we know better things than that. We know our eternal destiny is fixed and that all our spiritual blessings are as settled and stable in the mind and purpose of God as is his choice. Furthermore, we are assured that he has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness. It is according to this knowledge that every prayer is uttered. If we must try to pray then we must guess as to what to pray for. Guessing, we are told is all right when it hits, but unless we ask according to his will, our will would, if permitted to pray, ask for things that would forever remove us and land us away from every providential and parental blessing. If we must try to pray (that is, if we must pray more often, or more fervently) then we must guess as to what to pray for and, on that conditional basis, we would have a right to ask why if it was not answered.

A prayer is not something excited in you by the wisdom of this world. Just think of the prayer (that is, words called prayers) addressed to God (as they suppose) for favor in converting the heathen. That is a conditional, selfish, carnal utterance. If it was asked according to the will of God he would certainly grant it, because God answers that kind. We sometimes are motivated in like manner in the dear old church. We get over zealous and ask God promiscuously to bring the regenerated

into the church. He does not answer this kind of prayer because it is not prayer.

This is a wonderful subject, it is a blessing from God. We cannot pray unless blessed in spirit, yet the apostles commanded us to pray. We are told that we ought to pray. Now we realize that it is a gift from God. Would God give us a gift to ask that any will be done except his own? Is not all prayer a complacent acknowledgement of his will being done in heaven and in earth? Having been taught his sovereignty, and being kept by his power do we not have a desire to see and feel the doing of that will?

Elder W. D. Griffin (Sept., 1947)

“Who loved me, and gave himself for me.” -- Galatians ii. 20.

Many of the saints of God may not be so highly favoured as to take into their lips Paul’s language of strong, personal assurance. They may hope, and at times may rise beyond a hope, into a sweet confidence, by the shining in of the Sun of righteousness, that the Son of God has loved them, and given himself for them. But the strength of Paul’s persuasion and the full expression of his confidence so far outstrip both their assurance and the language, that many real saints of god confess they come short both in heart and tongue. Yet their com-

ing short of this blessed certainty as an enjoyed reality in the heart, and as a declared confidence by the mouth - for conscience and tongue must move together where God works - does not affect the fact. Clouds and mists sometimes obscure the sun, but they do not blot him out of the sky. So the mists and fogs of unbelief may obscure the Sun of righteousness, yet they do not blot him out of the spiritual hemisphere. He still loved you and gave himself for you who believe in his name, though you may not be able to rise up to the faith of Paul, or speak with the same fulness of assurance. The bud has the same union with the vine as the branch, but not the same strength of union; the babe is as much a member of the family as the grown-up son, but has not the same knowledge of its relationship; the foot is as much a part of the body as the eye or the hand, though it has not the same nearness to the head, or the same honours and employments.

Elder J.C. Philpot

St. John 20:29.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

PSALM 119: 129--133.

Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.

The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.

Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.

Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR NOVEMBER 2005

Vivian Viverette - NC	5.00
Chlonetia Thompson - VA	3.00
Patsy Lankford - LA	25.00
Buford Thompson - VA	5.00
Angie Cox - NC	3.00
Freida Dennis - FL	5.00

OBITUARIES

SISTER GLADYS MCCOOL

It is with great sadness that I attempt to write the obituary of our Dear Sister Gladys McCool.

Sister Gladys died October 18,

2005 at the age of 90. She is survived by two daughters, Sister Lorene Young and Fannie (Phillip) Taylor and one son Harold (Diane) McCool, two brothers Lloyd (Virginia) Crowley and Robert (Bobbie) Crowley, eleven grandchildren, thirty-three great grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband Dewey McCool, one daughter Jannie Coleman, and brothers Jonas, Horace, and James Crowley.

Sister Gladys was a member of Zion Primitive Baptist Church. She believed in the True and Living Sovereign God who works all things after the pleasure of His own will and her Hope was Christ Jesus and His finished work. Although health problems kept her from church she was blessed by God to profess her Hope to the end.

Her funeral was conducted at Zion Church on October 21, 2005 by her pastor Elder James Pugh and her grandsons Elder Tim McCool and Chris McCool. Her earthly remains were laid to rest beside her late husband in the adjoining cemetery. In Hope of the Resurrection, may we be reconciled to the will of God.

Written by one who loved her and was always blessed to hear her speak of Hope.

Elder James Pugh

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

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SONG

Faith adds new charms to earthly bliss

And saves us from its snares:

*It yields support in all our toils,
And softens all our cares.*

The wounded conscience knows its power

The healing balm to give;

That balm the saddest heart can cheer,

And make the dying live.

Unveiling wide the heavenly world,

Where endless pleasures reign,

It bids us seek our portion there;

Nor bids us seek in vain.

Faith shows the promise fully sealed

With our Redeemer's blood;

It helps our feeble hope to rest

Upon a faithful God.

There still unshaken, would we rest

Till this frail body dies;

And then on faith's triumphant wing

To endless glory rise.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	26
Elder Richard H. Campbell	
CORRESPONDENCE	35
VOICES OF THE PAST	35
Elder E. J. Lambert - <i>By request from W. W. Hudson, Jr.</i>	
Elder W. D. Griffin	
MEETINGS	46
CONTRIBUTIONS	47
OBITUARIES	47
Sister Merkley Murphy Giles	
Sister Pauline G. Shelton	

 EDITORIAL



Elder R. H. Campbell

As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer

persecution for the cross of Christ.

For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they might glory in your flesh.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” (Gal 6:12-15)

The above scripture, in (vs 12) describes, very accurately, the modern day churches in the world today, as I understand them, although it was written almost two thousand years ago, in another era, another time when the church was young and many of the Christians were still living who were alive when Christ walked upon face of the earth. We normally tend to think of that age as being a very pristine time, when the doctrine and practices were pure and void of the errors that have crept into the church since then. This, sadly to say, is not true however, for Jesus himself, while still here among his disciples, and speaking unto the Jews who were the established religion of that day, charged them, (Matt. 23:15) *“Woe unto you. Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.”*

This is very much the same situation that we see in most of the churches around us today; as they raise their billions of dollars and encircle the earth to, as they say, carry the gospel to the heathen. In the first place, you cannot carry the gospel anywhere, it is not merchandise that can be packaged and dispensed at

will, it can only be revealed by the Holy Ghost, and he does not have to carry it anywhere, he is everywhere, and was there for a long time before the missionary ever got there. If God has children in those foreign places, he is the one who must reveal the truth to them, whether there is a church, missionary or anyone else there or not. The Lord stated, in the new covenant, (*Heb 8:11*) "***And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.***"

These scriptures are evidence that the man, in nature, is the same, in all ages of time, that he was when driven from the Garden of Eden in the beginning. He is still subject to the vanity which causes him to desire to walk his own way, build his own air castles, or empires, whether it is concerning the things of this world, or the things of a spiritual nature. This characteristic is what is being demonstrated in the verses above in Paul's day, and we see it evidenced today in many of the churches of the modern world. There is an old saying that, when you begin to vary from the truth: the farther you travel, the further you get from the truth, and the evidence today has proven that old adage to be true.

The natural man will sanction any doctrines, adopt any traditions or accept any practices that will add to their numbers, and therefore, build themselves up in the eyes of mankind. Their desire is to be leader

of a much larger organization, with all of its prestige and privileges, and receive glory from their fellowman. To my own personal understanding of the situation, these do not desire, nor do they claim to suffer the persecution of the cross, for it is an undesirable characteristic to them in this modern day and age. In this day everything must be pleasing to the natural mind of man, and it is to this end that they direct their efforts in time and money. They seek words that are to be pleasing to the ear, attractive to the ego of man, and they will avoid the harsh reality of the cross, and all of the afflictions that accompany it.

One will see, appreciate and glory in the cross of Christ, only when they are given to see and realize the beauty and power in it, knowing what was accomplished, and are made to see and to feel that it was in their behalf, that it was for the dead alien sinners, such as they see themselves to be. They must first be made to see what they were by nature, and understand that it took this sacrifice, the very Son of God, to redeem them from the just condemnation that they are under, as the son of Adam. They feel themselves to be, as Paul said that he felt to be, the chiefest of sinners, in their own eyes.

The scriptures say, (*II Cor 6:17*) "***Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto***

you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” and yet seemingly their desire and practices are to bring all of the ways of the world into the church, so that there is no suffering for the cross, nor any lack of the pleasures in those things which are so appealing to the flesh. They are not crucified unto the world, nor is the world crucified unto them: for their goal is to appeal directly to the inhabitants of the world, as the source of converts to be added to their fold, and then they will say, see how God is adding to his church daily, as the results of their efforts. This is not how God worked in the former days, and it is not how he adds to the church in this day and age. His method is by calling each one individually, without the assistance of any man or a committee composed of their peers. There is no evangelistic revival; to stir the emotions of the natural man, no great display of the things which appeal to the eyes and ears of the crowds and claiming that it is the Spirit of God at work in their midst. God’s work is in the heart of the creature, not an outward display designed to persuade man to join them by carnal reasoning. It is today, even as it was in Elijah’s day, God did not come in mighty display of his wrath, in the great strong wind, nor the earthquake or the fire, but, after the fire a still small voice, and Elijah responded to the still small voice. God’s coming unto his people is a

very solemn, sober, personal, and soul searching experience, and it is effective only to the one being so exercised.

This experience is unknown to the so called religious world in these days, because the modern world, with it’s complete lack of moral principles, the flood of obscene actions and practices which are so readily accepted by a proud and boasting “enlightened generation,” which is no longer bound by the traditions of their fathers. They cannot understand the truths as contained in the scriptures, because they are spiritually discerned and man it trying to interpret them with his natural reasoning, and this cannot be done. (*I Cor 1:18*) “*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*” The same information that is foolishness unto some, and salvation unto others, is because only the chosen vessels of mercy have been given the understanding by which the scriptures may be rightly interpreted. This same dilemma has been the downfall of man in the flesh, in all ages, and will continue to be among those who are not taught of God.

(*II Thess 2:12*) “*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*”, is witnessed

by the prophet Habakkuk in his day, referring to the evil practices of the natural man, (*Hab 1:14-17*) "*And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them? They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad. Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous. Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?*" Is not that the same vain underlying characteristic of man, being exhibited in the text above, that we witness in the world around us today? The ambitions and lust of the natural man are exerted toward the building of a memorial to God, one of their own design and fashion, but it is not according to the pattern that is laid down in the scriptures. They worship the work of their own hands, striving to add to their borders, in any manner that they can, and then glorying in the results, as though this manner of deception had the approval of God.

There is another manner of people, however, that can not and will not, accept these teachings and practices, because, they have been taught of God, of the vanity and foolishness of these schemes. I say schemes, and not doctrines: for they are but the devices of the natu-

ral man to deceive, and to ensnare the world with their social programs designed to appeal unto it's, imagined, self esteem. Those who will not follow their teachings, are referred to in the subject text as, "*a new creature*". These have been born of the Spirit of God, and have been given the desire and the ability to rightly discern the word of truth, sift the wheat from the tares, feast on the pure and unadulterated word of God, which is that pure language which God promised unto a poor and afflicted people. This is their delight, and they will follow it all the days of their life because God's calling is not on a trial and error basis, (*Rom 8:30*) "*Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*" (*Zeph. 3:9*) "*For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.*" They are all called with the same holy calling, and will come forth speaking this pure language as evidence of that fact; although they may not be the first to notice it, those who have been so blessed will recognize it immediately. These are the ones referred to, by Moses, in the song that God told him to teach to the people just prior to his death, (*Deut 32:8-9*) "*When the Most*

High divided unto the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob the lot of his inheritance."

This distinction was also made manifest by God's judgment of the Serpent, for his beguiling of Eve in the Garden of Eden, when He said, (Gen 3:15) *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel."* The seed of the woman are those who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. God placed enmity between, the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, and that enmity continues to exist, and will, as long as the world stands, and there can never be any bonds of love and fellowship between them.

The illustrations of this separation, by God, of his creation into two manner of people, are emphasized many times in the, normal course of the scriptures: the accounts of Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, the elect and the non elect, the carnal and the spiritual are but a few of them. The natural man is described, by Paul, in, (Eph 2:12) *"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of*

promise, having no hope and without God in the world:" and the spiritual man, the new creature, has been born of the Spirit of God, and worships him in Spirit and in truth; Jesus said, God is a Spirit and they that worship, must worship him in Spirit and in truth. The apostle Paul states this, in his epistle to the church at Ephesus, (Eph 1:4) *"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."*

Those that have been so chosen, are as the three Hebrew children, when they were commanded to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up and commanded that all men worship it. Their reply was, (Dan 3:17-18) *"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 has set up."* These, in this day, will not join in with the idol worshippers because, they cannot, they have been made to see and understand the truth, and therefore recognize the fallacy of the doctrines of the world which are repugnant to them. They all see and know that the gods of this world, exist only in the minds of man, and they will have no part of that, for (Psalm 115:4-8)

“Their idols are silver and gold, the work of man’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not, eyes have they, but they see not, ears but they hear not, noses have they but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not, feet have they but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.”

The apostles on the day of Pentecost were all of one accord, and in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost and they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Those who witnessed this occurrence on the day of Pentecost were amazed and said, how can this be? For, we each hear them in our own tongue, wherein we were born. This was the beginning of the true church, as we know it, and it has continued, unchanged, down to the present time, and will do so until the end of time, when an even more grand and glorious era will begin, for all of the saints of God.

The truth as preached on the day of Pentecost, after Christ’s resurrection, is foolishness to the natural man; even as it was to the strang-

ers on that occasion: they could not understand it because it is a foreign tongue to the unlearned, for it is in the pure language of the Spirit. It is contrary to anything that they have ever heard, or, have been taught by the world, and therefore they have no accurate basis of comparison that they can use in the interpretation of it. There were some who did hear, and understand, and the same is true today, for it takes the same degree of revelation by the Holy Ghost, for the speaker to declare the truth, that it does for the hearer to discern the truth of that which is being declared.

This is indeed a great comfort and consolation to the children of God when they have been given an ear to hear, the heart to understand and the mind to believe this preaching, for the first time, and this is the greatest evidence that they will ever have, that they are among the chosen few who have been given faith, by the grace of God, which will save them to the uttermost. They had heard the sound of the preaching before, but were not able to understand or get any comfort from it, and they realize that the change was not the results of anything that they have done, and they begin to understand that it is by faith, which is a gift from God, and that it has been given unto them.

The sovereign way and manner in which they have received it, causes them to believe this is in accordance with the revealed terms of

the new covenant which God made with his children as described in, *(Heb 8:10-11)* ***“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me from, the least to the greatest.”*** At this most wonderful time, in their experience, there is no other plausible explanation that they can give, for the mysterious way and manner that this change came over them. They were not seeking it, nor did they anticipate it. It just came upon them suddenly, and they began to speak and think, in that pure language that God promised to give unto them that love Him, and it is given so that they may all call upon him, and serve him with one consent.

This is the experience and the calling of all of those who are designated in the above text as, ***“a new creature”***, and elsewhere in the scriptures as, the elect, the saints of God, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a peculiar people, and it is always, that they may worship God in Spirit and in truth. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him indeed and in truth, and since man is not born a spiritual being, he must

be changed before he can worship God in the Spirit. Jesus first told Nicodemus that except a man be born again, he could not see the kingdom of heaven, and therefore, worship Him in the Spirit, so, this change that has come over the natural man is his new birth.

This happened to the apostles when the day of Pentecost was fully come, and to the apostle Paul, on the road to Damascus, and each time that it occurs in the life of an individual, their walk, talk and countenance undergoes a drastic change; they love things that they were unaware existed before, and they hate the things that they had once loved and delighted in. They are indeed, a new creature, and the apostle Paul describes their change, in this manner, *(II Cor 5:17-18)* ***“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”*** You see, their experience is much more than just, an acceptance of the fact that you believe that there is a God, or make a decision to follow him: they are made a new creature, and are made ambassadors for

Christ who are to come forth and witness unto all, whether they realize that they are doing it or not. Their walk, talk and very countenance will witness to the fact that they are a different person from what they had formerly been.

When ones reads these scriptures for the first time, after their experience, it causes him to weep for joy, sing praises unto his holy name, because right at that moment, they feel to know that they have indeed been born again. They may be made to question it from time to time, later on, but they are also made to believe as each new experience builds, line upon line, line upon line; precept upon precept, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little, that it will, according to the promises of God, result in a finished work that God is making in their life. *(Phil 1:6)* ***“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”*** They can hardly contain themselves for the sheer joy and praise that floods their heart and they feel that it will be permanent, but alas, will learn by bitter experience, that this will not be the case. They must be shown, time and time again, that they are not directing their own steps, but must ever depend on that same source for strength and courage to enable them to run, with patience, the race that has been set before them.

Jesus' words, *(John 16:32-33)*

“Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world,” These are some of the most comforting of the words to be found in the scriptures, because, they are referring to the Lord's people, the new creature, and all of the things that are done, for their sake. Jesus was left alone, of any human support, because man could not be of any help there. Man could only stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, and His children see it in this day, by the same faith He said that he spoke these things unto them that they might have peace, and this is when they are given the mind of the Spirit. *(John 14:26-29)* ***“But the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye love me, ye will rejoice, because I***

said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it come to pass, ye might believe." They will have tribulation as long as they dwell in these bodies of flesh, and to this they can all attest, but he said, be of good cheer I have overcome the world and he overcame it for them, the new creature, that is dwelling in this old man in this low ground of sin and sorrow.

If the above scriptures teach lessons that you have learned in your own personal experiences in this life, then you are one of those designated as a new creature in Christ, and one to whom all of the promises of God apply. You may seriously question this, at times, but the problem is that you cannot see the forest for the trees. You are so surrounded by the sins in your life, that you cannot see that these things too, are but a part of the all things that work together for good, to them who love the Lord. The trees are the thing nearest you, your sins, the daily afflictions which abide you, thorns in the flesh, if you will, while the forest is the whole picture which includes your being called, quickened, born again, the heartfelt love for God, the love and fellowship of the brethren which is the most precious possession to each one of the poor and afflicted saints: the trial of you faith that you face daily, as you travel the journey that has been laid out before you. When given to con-

sider all of these things which make up your life, your hope and faith, you are not nearly as doubtful as you felt to be, when you are in darkness for a season.

The beauty and glory, which you behold in the countenance of the brethren belies the sin and corruption that dwells within them. When Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." I believe, that he meant a light which shines unto all that are in the house, one which comes from within the heart of the individual, and surely it is the glory of the Spirit of God that dwells there. The individual is unaware that the light is shining unto his brethren, for he cannot see it. (II Cor 4:6) "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." There is an old adage which says, the beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and is seen because of the love that dwells there. This love first begins when they became new creatures in Christ, and is beheld only by others that have been like blessed. You will understand all of these things, only if you are one of those who have experienced this miracle of the grace of God in your life.

In bonds of love,
Richard H. Campbell

CORRESPONDENCE

12-7-05

Dear Elder Terry,

We look forward to reading the Signs. Many thanks to all who work so faithfully to publish it.

Enclosed is a check for two years renewal and a small gift to use as needed.

Love and sweet fellowship to the household of faith.

Garlon and Dora Vick

VOICES OF THE PAST

**SPIRITUAL SONGS ACCORD WITH
GOD'S STRINGED INSTRUMENTS
JANUARY, 1953**

MY LATE visit with the editors and many readers of the *Signs* in Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania and other places has stimulated me with a greater desire to write to the Household of Faith through this medium. The visit with the Welsh Tract, Hopewell, and other historical meeting places of God's children through the centuries past has peculiarly affected me. It is inspirational to learn that the same principles of Truth have been loved,

cherished and contended for by His people these hundreds of years in the same meeting place.

While attending Salisbury Association held at Delmar, Delaware, the text of this article began to arrest my attention. God willing, I shall use Isaiah 38:20, as basis for my remarks: *"The Lord was ready to save me; therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord."* We shall attempt to prove that the songs of God's people are their spiritual experiences and the stringed instruments are the harp of God, the hearts of His people, the Bible, etc. We want to show that a psalm or an hymn is not necessarily a spiritual song to one of God's people at all times. We expect to show that the stringed instruments under consideration are not pianos, organs, or any like instrument made and tuned by man-which will get out of tune-but, that which God has tuned, strung, and prepared, which never gets out of tune. Re-read the paragraph above and may it become fixed in your mind before we meditate further upon the text. Read Isaiah 38, and then prayerfully consider the following meditations.

The expression found in the 20th verse was made by Hezekiah, King of Judah, after undergoing critical experiences brought about by the Lord dealing with him. Even though he be king he was brought low by the Lord. He was sick until

death, and word came to him from the Lord. Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live, (Isa. 38:1) . We read a similar command in Amos 4:12 to Israel, " Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." I am persuaded a similar command comes to every spiritual Israelite in the beginning of an experience of grace. When we try to cope with the situation in trying to set our house in order in preparation to meet God, we find ourselves as miserable failures in the attempt. This forces us to pray to God for mercy. Surely Hezekiah's attempts were in vain to set his house in order and he was made to depend upon God for this. We would all sink into death were it not for what the Lord adds unto our life. Our life is sinful, He adds holiness; our life is unstable; He adds stability; our life is earthly, He adds heaven; our life is ungodly. He adds godliness. We come to the end of our path. He leads us into a new path. We die, He adds life. Dear trembling child, has the Lord added unto your life? Our life is unstrung and untuned. He tunes and strings our hearts to sing His praise! This must have been Hezekiah's experience as he said, "*The Lord was ready to save me.*"

We learn that we cannot save ourselves. It is not the question: am I ready for the Lord to save me? But, is the Lord ready to save? All things are so ordered and arranged, tuned and strung by the Lord that events so fall in perfect order and rhythm

that a fixed time, place, and circumstance comes for the Lord's salvation to be made manifest to each and every one of the trophies of His amazing grace.

Because the Lord was ready to save me- "*we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments.*" We read in Ephesians 5:19, of, "*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*" What were the songs Hezekiah had under consideration Psalms and hymns would include all compositions written with natural verse to be used in religious worship. When any hymn or psalm is in perfect harmony with our experience and feelings, it becomes our spiritual song. Paul says in 1st Cor. 14:15, "*I will sing with the understanding also.*" There is a natural song and there is a spiritual song. There are experiences that are natural and there are experiences that are spiritual. The song that is natural is the old song and the song that is spiritual is that the Lord adds by putting into your mouth the new song. We would like to contrast the old song and the new.

The old song is sung in the key of man-man being the central keynote. The new is sung in the key of Jesus Christ-He being the foundation key. If you want to hear a discord, try singing the old and the new together. They will not harmonize, for the old song praises man and the new song praises God. The old

sings of the ability of man and the new song proclaims man's inability. The old song utters salvation is hinged upon the volition and works of the creature, while the new bases the creature's salvation upon the volition and work of the three-one God. The new song being opposed to the old prevents the harmonization of the two.

You will note that Hezekiah says, my songs. This means his own personal spiritual experiences. Unless the Lord has added to your individual life you cannot sing these songs. There are more spiritual experiences than one. Sometimes you sing, "*All things work together for good.*" Sometimes you feel, "*All things are against me.*"

Sometimes you are asking, "*Is God gone forever!*" Sometimes you say, I know that my Redeemer liveth." Sometimes you sing, "*Jesus, Lover of my soul*"; and at other times, "I am a stranger here below." Sometimes you ask, "*My God, why hast thou forsaken me!*" Sometimes you sing, "*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*"

The stringed instruments these new songs perfectly accord with are the instruments God has prepared, strung, and tuned. The word 'instrument', is translated from a word meaning "prepared." Our songs are sung to that which God has prepared. We find recorded in Proverbs 16:1, "*The preparations of the heart in man and the answer of*

the tongue, is from the Lord." When the Lord strings and tunes the hearts of His people there is perfect harmony in their experiences. When your experience harmonizes with the experience of Hezekiah, Jacob, Paul, and others whose lives are recorded in the Bible, it is singing your songs to the stringed instruments. When your experience harmonizes with the fundamental principles expressed in the Scriptures, and held sacred by your brethren, it accords with the stringed instruments.

Pianos and organs are made, strung, and tuned by man. These may be damaged, get out of tune, and the strings broken. Natural musical instruments only give forth natural mechanical tones. The instruments under consideration give forth spiritual godly melody. The command to the Church is to, speak to yourselves, singing, not, to play a mechanical instrument. The question should be, "*Is our singing to accord with the mechanical instruments or spiritual instruments? Is our singing to be in accord with the piano, organ, or heart? I am persuaded the singing should be in harmony with our hearts that God has prepared, tuned and strung; thus, making melody in the heart.*" When brethren are blessed to come together and sing with the Spirit and understanding in sweet fellowship and harmony it is much greater and sweeter melody than the best of singing without the Spirit accompa-

nied by the best mechanical musical instruments. The accompaniment of mechanical musical instruments is pleasing to the natural ear. The accompaniment of the Spirit and understanding is pleasing to the spiritual ear.

We read in the Psalms of the harps of God, and also in Revelations. According to Josephus and what we can find in the Scriptures, these harps and ten strings. We can call you attention to Psalms 33:2,3, "Praise the Lord with harp; sing unto Him with psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto Him a new song. We want to quote the following stanzas from the hymn "There Is A Fountain":

*Lord, I believe thou hast prepared
(Unworthy though I be)
For me a blood-bought free reward-
A golden harp for me.*

*'Tis strung and tuned for endless years
And formed by power divine,
To sound in God the Father's ears
No other name but thine.*

Hezekiah stated in the same chapter from which the text of this article was taken, "He hath both spoken unto me and himself hath done it" (Isa. 38:15). Here is a double. He commanded "Set thine house in order," and He performed the command Himself by setting it in

order. He works both the will and the do. Children of God receive "*of the Lord's hand double*" (Isa. 40:2). Scores of doubles come to our mind that neither time nor space will permit us to mention. Suffice it to suggest that the harp of God consists of a number of double strings. If the harps used back at that time under the ceremonial worship had ten strings, the spiritual harp must have five doubles which results in ten. Let us turn to the 8th chapter of Romans to find these five principles of the doctrine briefly stated. As we read them let us keep in mind that He has both spoken and Himself hath done it. Now, "*For whom He did (1) foreknow, He also did (2) predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also (3) called and whom He called, them He also (4) justified: and whom He justified, them He also (5) glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*" (Rom. 8:29-31).

This foreknowledge is an intimate relationship with His people even before the manifestation of His decrees in time. He chose them in His Son. "*Thine eyes did see my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there were none of them.*" Psalms 139:16). He knew them in eternity; they shall know

Him in time. He predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son. He has ordered, arranged, and fixed all things to work together for the fulfillment of this grand purpose. See Romans 8:28. He calls and they shall answer. He performs the double as the word that goes forth out of His mouth returns not to Him void, but accomplishes that which He pleases and prospers in the thing whereunto He sends it. He decreed the justification of His people and He justifieth them by sending His Son into the world to pay the penalty for their sins, thus satisfying justice. The just bore the sins of the unjust that justice divine might be perfectly satisfied. He not only justified them but also glorified them through the divine righteousness of His own Son. *"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled (justified) to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled (justified) to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved (glorified) by His life" (Rom. 5:10).* We are glorified by the imputed righteousness of His Son. These five wonderful things are both spoken and performed by God the Father, Son, and Spirit. These ten strings ring clear the melodious son of praise to Him. This ten-stringed harp becomes ours when it pleases God to give it to us that we receive it with praise and thanksgiving. Then we are harpers harping with their harps. See Rev-

elation 14:2. We have the harps of God (Rev. 15:2). We sing to the accomplishment of these harps in the *"house of the Lord," Zion, the new Jerusalem, the Church, or with the children of God. We sing "all the days of our life."* Sometimes the day is gloomy because of the clouds of trouble and despondency which hides the view of the brightness of the Son of Glory. Sometimes the day is cold because of the felt sense of our unworthiness. We experience cloudy and bright days; but, they are all days because it takes the light to manifest the darkness that is in our heart and the coldness in our thoughts. Nevertheless the expression of days in the plural shows that there are night times in our experience.

We hang our harps upon the willows by the river, Babylon, during the nights of our experience (Psalms 137). We have no use or regard for the Lord, nor Zion nor His people during the night. We are then resting in our own carnality and we are at ease. We do not think upon Zion nor His people. We forget Zion as is intimated in the expression, *"We wept when we remembered Zion" (Ps. 137:1).* When the dwellers in Babylon require of us in mirth to sing one of the songs of Zion, we are made to realize we cannot sing the Lord's song in a strange land. We must be brought again out of Babylon into Zion before we have any more use for the harp. It is not in the night that we feel unworthy,

unfit, and so wretched but on dark and cloudy days. In the night we have no feeling, no sense of guilt, no deep concern over our spiritual welfare, neither any regard for His house. It is when we are awakened in the morning that we are made to weep because of our forgetfulness and unconsciousness of His providential care over us. It is when we are awakened by His Spirit before the rising of the Son of glory. Thanks be to God, when the Son rises and we see the brightness of His face whose rays warm and calm our troubled breasts, fear is driven from our souls and love springs forth. Songs of praise again are sung to His matchless and glorious name for His amazing grace toward us.

You notice that Hezekiah says "our life" in the text. It seems to the natural mind that he should have said, "my life" or "our lives" to have been consistent with the proper usage of language. Let us see. The Lord added unto his life. My life had its end as my life when the Lord added His life to my life. My natural life ended as only a natural life when the Lord added that which is spiritual to my life. The life of a child of God prior to regeneration (or the addition of the graces of His Holy Spirit) is only a lustful fleshly life. After God adds that which is spiritual it becomes our life. When the Lord adds His Spirit there is set up a dual character in one. This results in a warfare. The flesh so that you cannot do the things that you would,

these being contrary one to the other. See Gal. 5:17. What the Lord adds is contrary to that naturally possessed.

One more thought and I shall close. The last night will be when death shall come at the end of our sojourn here.

Then will be the dawning of the final day when we awaken in His likeness and shall be satisfied. There will be no night there but one eternal Day of perfect joy and peace. No cloudy and cold times to mar our peace. There will be no night nor river of Babylon. There will be no hanging of harps in the willows. We will all sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb harmoniously to the harps of God forever and forever.

Elder E.J. Lambert

Reprint from Elder E.J. Lambert's book "Tried In The Furnace" at the request of:

Elder W.W. Hudson, Jr.
208 Frederick St.
Bastrop, La 71220

ECCLESIASTES 8:6-7.

Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?

EPHESIANS 1:1, 13.

Having found in our last the family of God as they were chosen in Christ, we now come to the delightful theme of what they were chosen to. The contrast between what we were by nature and practice, to what we were chosen to, is so great our finite minds are carried away in wonder and holy ecstasy. All of the skill of linguists cannot describe the gloom and despair of a soul when sin is revealed in us. Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death, and there is a death at the manifest entrance of sin into our consciousness that cannot be described by tongue or pen. The effort to describe it to one to whom sin has not been revealed, is one of the most futile things among men. The love of God now takes on a meaning that we have never contemplated before. What we were chosen to, and the suffering of the precious Saviour to bring this delightful state about is more than a match for our dull comprehension.

Look upon the theme in our text. The height and length, the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ for His church passes all understanding. Well might the apostle say, *"O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out"*. (Romans 11:33). The love of God as manifested in the love of Christ for the

church, can never be described by mortal man -in fact, it is past finding out. The choosing of His people in Christ before the world began is full of nutrition for the hungry and thirsting children of the kingdom. No other name would do; no other personage could measure up to our sin. My soul is astounded as I stand before the bar of God's judgment. Out of Christ there is not any salvation. Only the righteous have an acceptable standing where sin has abounded. The costliness of our salvation is seen in the crucifixion of our Master. Pilate, in answer to the demands of the high priest for the crucifixion of the Saviour said, *"Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him"* (John 10:6). If there has ever been an execution like unto that, the pages of history are silent about it. That is understandable because He needed only once to die; the offering had to be a perfect one. We, like Barabbas, were guilty, and we the guilty went free, but although Christ had no fault, He was a fit offering for our sins. He did not have any sin, but we did, and He loved us and made our cause as His cause. May the Spirit of the Lord arise in our being, that we understand and be blessed to praise His high and lofty name for coming to earth in a body to suffer, to be mangled, spit upon. Being the son of Mary, who had fallen into sin, being under the rigid, death dealing law of God He came in a body to meet and endure the penalty for our sin,

and yet He was God the conqueror of all the enemies.

Let it be remembered that these things must needs be. The rites and ceremonies and ordinances had to be fulfilled. They could not be passed by. How weak and trifling is that doctrine that would leave one thing missing, one thing unfulfilled, one step, one journey missing from His travels here below. Could it be so, my soul knows, that there being no acceptable sacrifice for sin since He gave up the ghost and died, that the portion of His mission's work unfulfilled would still be charged to me. How beautiful, how gracious, how kind that if I am not deceived, He made my cause as His cause. He came to earth to solve a case that hopelessly involved the sinner, you and I, as each of us hopes, even a case that we never could have won and never could have extricated ourselves from out of it. What a beautiful doctrine. To this end was the covenant of redemption set up from all eternity. That covenant involved Him in coming and making the sinner's cause as His. Whatever our transgression brought upon us, He took that upon Himself; all privation, all sorrow, all His being cut off out of the land of the living. All His coming to the ignominious end that He did was for the purpose of giving poor covenant children a home beyond this vale of sorrow.

However, let me retrogress backwards. In the annals of eternity, His love was so great, so strong, so

lasting, that He was ever rejoicing among the inhabitants of the earth, ever delighting in this people, in this family that God chose in Him in eternity and that He was so in agreement and in unity with every single individual of that family, and in support of, and a part of every stipulation of that Covenant that He delighted always in the beneficiaries of that covenant. How my poor heart leaps for joy that such a Being is on the side of sinners (psa. 124); that this is not something that had its beginning among the sons of Adam, but that this is an old arrangement, as old a covenant, as ageless a purpose, as the eternal predestination of God to the end that His Son came down from heaven in behalf of His bride, his people, and that he came down from heaven as God's free gift to the children of men, and that He came to do what He did do, that His life from conception in Mary's womb was laid out, appointed for Him from the cradle to the grave.

My soul is astonished at such a display of sovereign mercy, and to see the eternal fixedness of God in us being chosen in Him, and as a result of that choice of the Father of us in Him, the arrangements of every step, every thought, every action, every bitter draught of vinegar, every taunting and sneering insinuation and reflection on Him and His mother, all, all was for the lifting of Him on high, and that it was for the bringing of poor sinners into such a manifest relationship that they be

brought before Him holy without blame in love.

“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will” O my dear children of God, there are not any dropped stitches or broken links in the salvation of God’s people. He made the world and the fullness of it. Now who will dispute that? It is still His world. That likewise is indisputable. He does His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. That is indisputable. He declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure (Isa. 46:10). This is Israel’s God and Saviour speaking. Let us keep the record straight; let us settle every doctrinal tenet of faith by His word, for it is forever settled in heaven (Psa. 119:9). When I survey the vast degree of difference between me and my God in the dispensation of His purposes, I am thrown upon His mercy time and time again. I need His counselling grace to teach me that as high as the heavens are above the earth, even so are His ways above my ways. There is a tendency in all of the roving around of my mind, to mark out a way and a channel in which my God can consistently work. If He does not stay in the channel that I have marked out for him, He immediately crosses me. His doctrine becomes heretical; His

ways become austere; His ways become partial and tyrannical. This is universal among the children of men, some even going so far, when they read of His ways in the Bible, or hear the rich gospel of grace preached by the hearing of the natural ear, that if He is that kind of God, that they do not want any part of Him. At this juncture of my investigation of God’s fulness, let me note this thought, to wit, It may be thought that only dyed-in-the-wool Arminians would say such hard things about God. How wrong we are. The hardest things said about God, about His doctrine, about His children that trust in the arm of Jehovah God, are said by those that come the nearest to saying that God is a Sovereign over all things, worlds, and times.

At every step of the way, in all kinds of situations, under all kinds of circumstances, I need the leadership, the guidance, the superintendence, the keeping power of God’s Holy Spirit to keep me meek, submissive, graciously reconciled to His way and His will. No mother’s knee is sufficient, no fatherly elder in the church can do it, but enabling us to say, *“Have thine own way Lord,”* is taught alone by the Spirit of God. It is the same fleshly lusting and workings of the nature of men that objects to God choosing one and leaving the other that is to say that He cannot raise up and bring together the mob that crucified our Saviour. The flesh has always objected to God’s way, whether it has

to do with some being elected to glory or to His having wicked men do His will. Both are objecting to His right to do what He wills with that which is His alone (Matt. 20:15). Since this question did not stop the carping objections of unbelievers, I am not expecting my expounding of these things to make objecters to the glorious doctrine of God's Sovereignty to suddenly turn and give credence to it. I do not expect it, nor am I out to overcome the objections of creatures that are at variance with God over His ways, but I do write, and I humbly trust that I speak the truth in Christ Jesus our Lord that they, one and all, even everyone that is called by His great name be reconciled to God.

Perhaps I will be criticized for using the word, but I do hope that I am not amendable to men for the words that I use. I use many words not in the King James version of the Bible. And those that object to me using the word theory are just as guilty of using other words not in the lids of the Bible. Thus, the doctrine of God's election is as much spoken against as is His unlimited doctrine of predestination. Anything said against God's predestination of anything is equally to be said against His election of some of Adam's race to eternal glory. Our text tells us so clearly that God had predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to good pleasure of his will.

Undoubtedly, and without reser-

vation, I declare unto you that God's determining act of predestination of some unto the adoption of children, and the leaving out of some who were not adopted, that if it is unfair to predestinate and determine to leave them out, and yet hold them accountable for being left out, that there is not any difference in doing that, and in predestinating the act of men in wickedness and charging their sin to them. I have read all of the sob sister stories that God did not predestinate the wicked going to hell. Whoever heard of God preparing an abode for a class of people and He did not know whether He would have anybody to send there or not? When God chose a certain number to be saved of Adam's race, the very fact that He did not choose them left them for the devil, in the relationship that each of them bore to their earthly father, they were all children of wrath, all exactly alike, the only difference in the two portions of the race of Adam was in the fact that one portion of that race had an everlasting place of rest prepared for them, and the other portion of that race of Adam had a place prepared in the abode of Satan and his angels.

It does not make any difference how much name calling is indulged in, it is still solidly established that there is a great gulf fixed between those for whom the adoption was not carried out for, and no man has ever crossed that gulf and got in among the redeemed of the Lord.

When some are predestinated to a certain end, that end is just as certain as a thing can be, if those that are left out of God's predestination to the adoption of children, or to a home in heaven. Nothing, not one thing at all, be that thing whatever you desire to call it, that can be sure of the outcome of His predestination concerning it, unless the whereabouts, the coming, the going, the movements in every way of the thing left out of the predestination is secured in some way. Yes, I realize what men say. They say, since God foreknows all things, He is able to avert disaster by outwitting the devil. But let us see. If God only foreknew what any given part of His creation knows, if only some things are predestinated, who is establishing the other things which, it is said, God foreknows alright, but that He did not declare, fix, ordain or predestinate. Have we got a third party that makes the things foreknown a certainty? Who is it that makes these things certain? They must be certain by someone because God does not foreknow anything except certainties.

Furthermore, if it was according to the good will of God to predestinate the chosen of God unto the adoption of sons, was it not equally according to the good pleasure of God to leave the others out. What kind of God have we before us? Is He so weak, or so unconcerned or so helpless that really and truly He had rather have predestinated all of

them unto the adoption of children, but that His hands were tied? Is that what you are preaching for gospel? Is that kind of spurious fulness to be preached to the Gentiles? The limiting of God as to what and when He does a thing, the sitting in judgment on what He is involved in, and how entangled and involved He becomes if He does things this way instead of that way, is not the fulness that satisfies a poor sinner.

What God does he does it freely. No creature can say unto Him, You doing this or that or the other is wrong. He is under no restraint, nor is He constrained by any of His creation from doing His will in heaven or in earth. He does as He pleases and He is pleased with what He does. I do not blush when I say it; I do not apologize to Him for preaching it, but, by the grace of God, as I humbly hope, I preach that the acts of Joseph's brethren, the acts of Potiphar's wife, and everything else connected with getting Joseph down to Egypt was from God—it all was the direct, the moving, the intentional work and purpose of God. It may be said that I am being childish—and I hope that is true, for the brethren of Joseph, the brethren of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ acknowledged the salvation that they were given came immediately from God meaning it, intending it, to be for their good. Every hungry destitute Israelite in that day, and every hungry and destitute Israelite today rises up and pays homage and

adoration to the God of Israel that according to the good pleasure of His will He sent Joseph a man of sorrow, a man who was hated and persecuted in his own household to save much people alive by the sacrifice of Himself to the evil caprices of them for whom He was laboring in for them to have bread, even the fullness of life forevermore.

May the Lord enable Israel to know that all of our blessings here, and the precious and waiting things ahead for them comes as the fulness of the gospel of the grace of God. God forbid that any one of the family of God ever again raise their voice or lift their pen to ascribe this fulness as coming from us that are filled from time to time on these things. The man of God was received without grumbling by the poor widow woman. They, (she and her son) with Elijah, ate what she had. He was willing to eat the last she had, and she was willing for him to eat the last she had. When he left a promise of fulness was left with her. The barrel of meal wasted not (was not consumed), and the cruise of oil continued. Elijah (God sent or God Himself) promised her that kind of sufficiency, that kind of fulness. I humbly trust that, by the grace of God, I have known that fulness, even that fulness which is in the Lord Jesus Christ among you for more than fifty years, and I hope that as long as I am on this time journey not to know anything more among you other than the fulness, other

than the salvation that is in Him, and that of Him and by Him each of us will be brought to His table and fed on it.

Elder W. D. Griffin

MEETINGS

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union will be held at the Greensboro Church on the fifth Sunday in January.

The Church is located on the corner of Tate and Carr streets in Greensboro.

We invite all lovers of the truth to meet with us. We especially invite all ministers of our faith and order.

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Mod.
Wayne Edwards, Clerk

REVELATION 7:15-17.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR NOVEMBER 2004

Mark Jordon, NC	1.00
Riley Justice, WVA	5.00
Hattie Spencer, VA	5.00
<i>Mildred Duke, SC In memory of</i>	
Robert N. Duke	100.00
Kenneth Thompson, VA	5.00
Guy Holley, VA	5.00
Norma Smith, VA	5.00
J.B. Mitchell, VA	5.00
Clinton Ferris, VA	5.00
Garlon Vick, NC	10.00
Willie Shelton, VA	5.00
Noel Lavinder, VA	5.00
Michael Williams, NC	5.00

OBITUARIES

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF SISTER
MERKLEY MURPHY GILES**

At the request of Union Primitive Baptist Church, I will endeavor to write the obituary of our beloved Sister Merkley Murphy Giles. Sister Giles was born August 4, 1923 and passed away August 2, 2005.

Sister Giles was the daughter of the late John William and Hattie Doss

Murphy. She married William Clyde Giles December 19, 1947 and to this union they were blessed with a son and a daughter. She was predeceased by two brothers, George Murphy and Percy Murphy, and two sisters, Connie M. Jefferson and Bertie Hill Craddock. She is survived by her son and daughter in law, Frederick James "Jim" and Laura Lee Giles of Buchanan, VA, her daughter, Jonnie G. McDowell of Chatham, VA, two sisters, Sister M. Thompson and Frances M. Giles, one brother, Brother Fred W. Murphy, four grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Sister Giles asked for a home with Chapel Primitive Baptist Church in October, 1977 and was baptized by her pastor, Elder O. K. Tench. She was granted a letter from Chapel Church March, 1993 and moved her membership to Union Primitive Baptist Church August, 1, 1993.

Sister Giles was a believer in salvation by grace and attended her meetings as long as her health permitted. She was always concerned that her Church was taken care of and gave freely of her handmade crafts.

Her graveside service was held August 4, 2005 at Hillcrest Burial Park, Chatham, VA by her pastor, Elder Raymond Goad, and Elder Marvin Brumfield. Her body was laid

to rest beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the glorious resurrection.

She will be greatly missed by her family, church and friends. May all that mourn her loss be reconciled to the will of our Heavenly Father who never makes a mistake.

Written by: Pam Betterton
Elder Raymond Goad - Moderator
Brother William Midkiff - Clerk

SISTER PAULINE G. SHELTON

With sorrow for our loss but joy for her great gain, we record the death on August 29, 2005 of our beloved sister, Mildred Pauline Gilley Shelton, at the age of 81. Born in Patrick County, Virginia on October 26, 1923, she was a daughter of the late James Harbour Gilley and Alice Spencer Gilley.

On March 27, 1948 she was united in marriage to Vernard Albert Shelton. who preceded her in death about six years ago. To their union were born two children: a daughter, Glenda. who is now Mrs J. Randolph Joyce of Martinsville; and a son, Albert Daryl Shelton, of the home.

Sister Shelton joined Liberty Church by experience in May, 1975 and was baptized the following 1st Sunday by the late Elder Bennie Clifton. For the remaining 30 years

of her life she was a loving and faithful member, seldom missing a meeting until she had to care for her husband in the last stages of his life. Her loss is keenly felt by all of us, though by her godly example, we feel that, being dead, she yet speaketh. Her funeral service was conducted at Moody Funeral Home Chapel in Stuart, Va. by her pastor, Elder John Wingfield; after which her mortal body was laid to rest in Liberty Cemetery, beside that of her late husband. We feel that she lived and died in the faith, and now awaits her resurrection in the likeness of her dear Savior and Redeemer.

In addition to her children. Sister Pauline was survived by her son-in-law, Randolph Joyce; one granddaughter, Brittany Joyce; one brother, John Albert Gilley of Bassett; three sisters, Mrs. Barney (Madeline) Adams and Mrs. Myrtle Wright of Patrick Springs and Mrs. Dolly McNabb of Atlanta, Ga.; and several nieces and nephews.

We agreed to prepare three copies of this memorial record: one to be included in our church minutes, one to be given to her family, and one to be submitted to the Signs of the Times for publication.

Done by order of Liberty Church in conference, the 3rd day of September 2005.

Elder John T. Wingfield. Mod.
Deacon Paul A. Puckett, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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SONG

*Behold the Shepherd's tender care
Towards the sheep that strays!
Throughout the desert waste and bare
He tracks its wandering ways.*

*So Jesus, while he sojourned here,
Amidst the waste of sin,
'Tis said he travelled far and near,
And sought his sheep therein.*

*To save from everlasting woe
An object of his care,
Behold him through Samaria go!
A sheep had wandered there.*

*Though she insults him to his face
It mattered not to him,
Her name was found among that race
That Jesus must redeem.*

*Amidst this flock, beloved of God,
Manasseh we behold,
And though his fleece was stained
with blood
He brought him to the fold.*

*Yea, from the dregs of sin and woe
Shall grace her trophies wave,
And each to glory safe shall go,
Whom God ordained to save.*

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	50
Elder Richard H. Campbell	
CORRESPONDENCE	57
VOICES OF THE PAST	58
Elder Silas H. Durand	
Elder T. M. Poulson	
H. J. Redd	
B. J. Coulter	
CONTRIBUTIONS	70
OBITUARIES	71
Charles Pierce Hayes	
Rlee Blankenship Houchins	

 EDITORIAL

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance: As ye know what manner of men we were among you, for your sake. (I Thes 1:5)



Elder R. H. Campbell

The apostle Paul, in this short verse of scripture, is describing his own experience of how he was brought to the knowledge of the truth, and declaring the way and manner that all of the saints of God

are brought into the fold. It is accomplished not just by the hearing of the word, because the word even though it is the truth, is foolishness to the natural man and until this same special miracle of grace is wrought in their heart they cannot believe it. This truth was demonstrated, most vividly, to the apostle in his experience on the road to Damascus, and to a certain degree, in the experience of all as they are brought from out of nature's darkness into the marvelous light and liberty of the gospel. Most all of the apostle Paul's writings are based upon his own experiences even as Jesus told him (*Acts 26:16*) "*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 these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee.*" This is the complete foundation upon which the whole gospel, which Paul preached was based, and is because as Jesus told him (*Acts 18:10*) "*For I am with thee,*" and therefore we know that what he preached was the truth.

Our gospel came unto you not in word only, but in power: You will remember, that he was struck down, blinded and heard a voice that came to him with such force and power, that this former blasphemer and persecutor of the way of truth, was astonished and made to tremble as he meekly asked, "*Lord what wilt*

thou have me to do?" He was no longer the proud boaster of his heritage as a Jew: he no longer boasted that he was of the stock of Abraham, an Hebrew of the Hebrews: as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless, because he was made to realize that these things had nothing to do with his change. On a later occasion he declared that he counted all of these things, which he had claimed as blessings in the Jewish religion, he counted but dung that he might know this one who was speaking to him, on this occasion. This is power that made him declare, in the above text, that it came to him, not in word only, but also in power, which power made him a different man, when he arrive in Damascus, from the one who left Jerusalem. He later referred to this in his writings as being, a new creature in Christ, whose old ways are passed away and behold all things have become new, the natural had given way to the spiritual. (1 John:4:4) *"Ye are of God little children, and have overcome them (the antichrist) because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."*

I have always felt that, in this experience, the same lesson was being taught as when Moses was told to take his shoes from off his feet, at the burning bush, because he was standing on holy ground. God appeared to Moses, and told him that

He was going to send him in ways that he had never traveled before, he was being called from being a shepherd, to contending with the Pharaoh over the captivity of the children of Israel, and who would eventually deliver the children of Israel out of the hand of the Pharaoh. He told Moses that he was going to lead the Lord's children out of their bondage in the land of Egypt. The apostle Paul was also being sent in a new direction, unto the Gentiles, to lead them in ways that they had not previously known, and teach them the things that Jesus had made known unto him.

A man's feet represent his walk, and Moses was being sent on a mission by God, to go and tell Pharaoh to let his people go, so that they might serve the Lord their God. Paul was to go unto the Gentiles; to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. This similarity is in the fact that Moses and Israel, and Paul and the Gentiles were made to experience a great change in their lives because of their calling of God. Moses' immediate response was that he could not do it because he was of a stammering tongue and could not speak to Pharaoh, he said, (Exo. 3:11) *"And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"* This has been the response of all when they are called upon to serve

the Lord in a work which is beyond their abilities in the flesh: they do not feel up to the task, and in and of themselves they are not, but Paul was made to say because of the power of the Holy Ghost, (*Phil 4:13*) *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* and he boldly proceeded to do as his heavenly Father told him to do, and this same power enables all of his children to perform deeds of greatness because of this same gift, the gift of faith."

I have always felt that Jesus' washing the feet of his disciples denoted a change in their walk, as he said on one occasion, because I go unto my Father, and their way was to be in ways that they had never known. I know that, Jesus' washing the disciples demonstrates humility, which is to be a basic characteristic of the saints of God, and that they are to serve their brethren, but I also believe that it goes further than that, in that he is cleansing their walk which is accomplished by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Just prior to his leaving them, here on the earth, he told them (*Matt. 28:19-20*), *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen"*. As we said

above, a man's feet represents his walk, and Jesus is preparing them to go forth, and perform those greater works that he referred to in (*John 14:12*). He was cleansing their walk as they were to go forth, in the Spirit, proclaiming the gospel to all who were given eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to understand. Their commission was not to go forth and make sheep, but rather, go forth feeding the sheep and the lambs, making manifest who are the sheep and who are the goats, and to comfort all that mourn because of their sins.

Our gospel came unto you by way of the Holy Ghost: (*John 14:26*) *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."* If you have any understanding of spiritual matters it is because that it was given of God, and was not as a result of your studying, meditating on the scriptures, or making a decision to accept the scriptures as the word of God. A man cannot make a decision to believe a thing; for you to believe it, there must be solid evidence, over which you have no control, and in spiritual matters, this evidence must be given of God, by revelation. This is the results of the operation of the Holy Ghost, as Christ told his apostles, (*John 16:15*) *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he*

will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

Jesus referred to this change as being born again into a new life, a spiritual life where there was no condemnation to them that are blessed therewith. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin and death, as Paul recorded in the eighth chapter of Romans. You will say immediately, well, I am afraid that this cannot be said of me, because I am still a sinner in this body of flesh. That is true, and you will still walk in sin, in the flesh, but you will not serve sin, because now your whole desire is to walk after the Spirit because that is the yearning of your whole heart and soul, and you mourn the weakness and inability of the flesh to accomplish this. You will never attain the state of perfection in this life that you desire, but you will always be seeking to follow along in the footsteps of the flock, showing forth your calling, and to be found rejoicing in the love and fellowship of those who are partakers of this same heavenly calling, walking after the Spirit.

Have no fear, or distress, over the fact that you do not attain your goal, in this life, because this is true of all. The apostle Paul, who was

blessed above most men, in his experiencing and understanding the truth, left on record his own testimony lamenting this same fact in the seventh chapter of the book of Romans. He said that he was not able to walk as he desired, he said, (*Rom. 7:22-23*) "*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 of sin which is in my members.*" So you see, you are in good company, bemoaning the sin that is in your members, and this testimony was recorded, by the apostle Paul, after he had been made a preacher of the gospel of God. Now this should bring things down to the level on which you can relate, and he is the same one who later declared that he felt to be the chiefest of sinners, (sound familiar) but, then said that he was a pattern to them that should thereafter believe in God to life everlasting, so should we expect anything else. This enables you to rejoice and praise God, for what you believe has been done for you, in bringing you unto the knowledge of this blessed truth, and delivering you from the lost and undone condition, that you were made to realize that you had been in previously. And in much assurance: (*Heb. 12:1-2*) "*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily be-*

set us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.” We tend to see so much sin in our way that we cannot feel the assurance that we have, actually, in our hope of salvation.

The dark threads are as needful, in the weavers skillful hands.

As the threads of gold and silver,

In the pattern he has planned.

It is the complexity of the colors, shades and shadows, which make the weaving beautiful; and this is where you live for if it was all one color, or hue, there would not be the beauty that the whole weaving portrays: and so it is in the experience of the saints, the evidence is there, but you have to step back, with the leading of the Holy Ghost, and see how it all fits together. It is then that you can say, with the apostle Paul *“All things work together for good for them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”*. The great cloud of witnesses, is the evidence that you have been given, first by your own calling and experience, and then by the empathy for those who have been so exercised in spiri-

tual matters. You have a love and fellowship for them that you did not have before your calling, and yet, you may have known many of them in the flesh, for many years, but there was not the love and fellowship that you now feel. You did not create this love; it came with the calling out of nature’s darkness into the light and liberty of the gospel. I believe that this is the one that God created in the beginning, separating the light from the darkness that had prevailed previously, before the light of the sun and the moon: it is the light that shined around the apostle Paul, on the road to Damascus; the light which Jesus told his disciples to let their light so shine that it gives light to all that are in the house, the household of faith that is. It is not seen by the world, because only those who have been given to experience the mystery, beauty and power of that light can understand why this doctrine is so sweet and precious to the saints.

You may spend much time in the darkness, and wonder if you have ever seen the light, but you still keep following along with the flock, because that’s where your heart, and your treasure is. The darkness of nature is as perfect and complete, as the light of the liberty of life because they are both the work of God, and he is as perfect in all of his ways. This is true in the experience of those who have been traveling this path for many years, they are just as helpless in the matter as the novice,

man does not exercise the gift; the gift exercises the man. You will try, but, you will find that your best efforts avail you nothing, and then suddenly you are being exercised, and are amazed that you could not before, when you desired it so much. This is why the apostle Paul said in the above verse of scripture, *“run with patience the race that is set before you”*, it is even as the children of Israel, at the Red Sea; they were in extreme trauma, at the time, and wanted help, right now, but they were told to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. At his own time, deliverance will come, (*Eccl. 3:1*) *“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven”*, you cannot hurry it up, nor can you slow it down: so, even as they were told to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, so must you. This race must be run, with much patience, and endurance, but also, with the assurance that your calling is indeed of God, and that he that hath begun a good work in your life will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. (*Psa 27:14*) *“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.”*

I knew a sister who followed in this path for sixty years, who had said originally, that if she remained firm in her faith, that she would know that it was of God, because, she was not able to keep herself, even in the things of nature, much less in spiri-

tual matters. She walked by faith all of those sixty years, and was still fearful that she had run in vain, at the age of ninety. Walking by faith is not seeing your way clearly, for, that would be walking by sight; so, your continuing to walk by faith, exhibits the assurance that you, really have deep down in your heart and soul, that you are in the way.

Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* And (*Isa 35: 8-10*) said, *“and an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be The way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there: but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”* The blessings of the redeemed, as describe by Isaiah, are contained in this scripture and were fulfilled in Christ and when he said, *“I am the way,”* Christ said, “I am the way” not a way, as being one of many, but the way, the only way, and that highway of which Isaiah was speaking, when he said, it shall be called the way of holiness, and nothing except the redeemed shall walk

there in THE WAY. There is nothing unclean, no lion nor ravenous beast shall walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; there shall be nothing that offends, nothing of this world except the redeemed of the Lord, none of the sorrows, sighing and mourning endured because of sin, but rather joy and gladness of heart.

John describes this scene, as follows, (*Rev 14: 1-3*) "*And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*" The only ones who can sing the song of deliverance are those who have been delivered, even as the children of Israel, who sang the song of deliverance when they saw Pharaoh and his army destroyed by the waters of the Red Sea. They were the sole beneficiaries of the deliverance, and therefore are the only ones who are entitled to sing the song.

This is the eternal hope of those to whom this gospel comes, and it certainly is not, just in word only, it is in power, because it will not let them go, and it is their assurance as Paul said, (*Phil 1:6*) "*Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*" I like to think of, (*Heb 11:1*) as saying, "*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for*", and I do not think that it does any violence to the scriptures to say it this way. Faith which is given of God, is, the blessed assurance that these things are true, and that they do apply to those whom it is given.

May god, through the comfort of his word, and by his mighty power, bless us to live out our lives, and die with the blessed assurance that we will be numbered among that one hundred forty and four thousand, who only, can sing the song of deliverance.

In bonds of love;
Richard H. Campbell

PSALM 22: 1-3.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

CORRESPONDENCE

Jan. 9, 2006

Dear Elder Terry,

The Signs of the Times has been a blessing to my wife and I. We have enjoyed the writings so very much.

I trust the good Lord will continue to bless you with the good paper.

Love in Christ,
Eld. James Moody

33 Hilcrest Ave, N.E.
Roanoke, VA 24012
Jan. 31, 2006.

Dear Elder and Sister Key,

We hope you are both well. We are so glad our Lord has graciously blessed the publication of the Signs, though it has been here so many years. It is still a labor, but being a labor of love makes it lighter, which reminds us of the scripture of the easy yokes. The words of our Saviour to his servants. We have heard it quoted down through the ages. The best I can remember it is: come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and take

my yoke upon you and I will give you rest.

You may have heard Sister Rlee Houchins entered into rest a few months back. Enclosed is her obituary by Sister Mary Poff. We were so grateful for her labor of love and could not see how it could have been better. Thanks be unto God!

May God continue to bless us and be our all.

Sister Mamie Rose Ferguson

PSALM 23.
A Psalm of David.

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.

VOICES OF THE PAST

HOW THEY GROW

“CONSIDER the lilies of the field, how they grow.”

To his disciples the dear Savior thus taught precious truths concerning his people, how they are manifested, how they are provided for, how they are clothed in beauty and purity by no power of their own, and how their confidence and trust must be alone in the Lord.

The church is called a lily by her heavenly Husband, and is distinguished from all other religious organizations *“as the lily among thorns.”*

The Lord says of Israel that he shall grow as the lily. (Hosea xiv. 5.) Therefore we are sure that when we consider how the lilies of the field grow we shall be considering in this beautiful and striking figure that peculiar experience and doctrine of the Lord’s people, which distinguish them as *“a peculiar people.”* Growth in vegetable or animal is a great mystery. We cannot fully understand *why* things grow, for it is a part of the unsearchable mystery of life; but we can consider and in some measure understand, *how* they grow. Growth cannot be regarded as an act, for that would imply that it depended upon an exercise of will. It is not an act of the thing growing; but it is a movement which is a necessary conse-

quence of life. The will of the person or thing growing has nothing to do with the growth. It is an experience. The plant grows because of the life that is in it, not because it wills to grow. If that growth is to be increased it might be by the work of the one attending it in enriching and stirring the soil and giving it, water and light and warmth. A man may affect his own natural growth, under certain circumstances, by attention to food and drink, while the principle of life that causes growth remains beyond the possible power of his will or his understanding.

In the figure of the lily in the text, and in similar figures throughout the Scriptures, the subject of God’s spiritual work is regarded as a plant or tree, more controlled and exercised by the power of the life within, but not exercising in the least degree any power over that life.

When a poor sinner, *“who knows the plague of his own heart,”* considers the lilies of the field, so white, so pure, so beautiful, and then looks into his own heart, so sinful, so full of evil, how can he think of himself as one of those who the dear Savior would represent by the lily? With what grief and consternation he sees the absolute contrast between the lily and its unspeakable loveliness and himself. Where can he see in himself any principle or feature which can answer to the purity of the lily? *“In every respect they seem to him to be contrary the one to the other.”* The poor

soul cannot realize at such a time that only by the power of the Spirit can he see and feel the evil of the flesh. The natural one does not receive the truth that he is sinful and depraved; that is one of those things which can only be known by the revelation of the Spirit of God. That sad knowledge is an evidence of life, but the Spirit alone can make the poor soul see that evidence. "In him is life; and the life is the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. *John i. 4, 5. "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light."* *Eph. v. 1:3.*

But let us consider how the lilies grow. The first work in order to the growth of a plant is the preparation of the soil. This is the work of the gardener. The first movement made by the seed after it has been put into the soil prepared for it is to send roots downward. The roots will be working and extending into the ground for several days before the plant appears. This order in the work of growing, both in natural plants and in the Lord's plants which grow in the garden of grace, is recognized in the words of the Lord by Isaiah: "*And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.*"

The soil for plants generally must be broken up and rendered soft and fine, so that the roots can

easily work into it. The soil for lilies of some kinds needs much softening by water, and in some kinds to be covered by it. There are in great many things of most obnoxious kind that need to be gotten together to make a good rich soil for the lily. We speak of the soil as "good," "rich," but put some of it out of place, on the face or on a white garment, and we pronounce it vile and loathsome.

What a sad, dark, fearful time that is for the poor soul when his thoughts are engaged day and night in searching his own vile heart and finding nothing but evil there. He cannot tell how he first came to see himself so sinful, cannot tell how his thoughts first began to be engaged in such a doleful search, in which he finds no good, but deeper and darker depths of evil.

This broken heart; this depraved and sinful nature, this mass of corruption felt in the soil, is the soil which the Lord has prepared. It is he, the heavenly Husbandman, who has broken up the heart, who has made its corruption appear to our startled view, who has made us sick of sin, and sick of self because of sin.

Into this vile soil our thoughts are working downward like roots from a good seed which the Lord has planted. This vile nature, this corrupt heart, is the "good ground" into which the good seed has fallen. It is "good ground" because it is well broken up and pulverized and made soft and tender. It is not the corruption, the sinfulness, which makes it

good ground, but the knowledge of that corruption and sin, and the hatred of it. All men are corrupt and sinful, but until the Law of God enters into the heart no one can know and feel it. And until that knowledge of one's just condemnation comes to him by the quickening power of God his heart is hard like the rock, the wayside or the thorny ground.

When the thoughts are working down in the darkness of our heart, and observing the sinfulness of all our life, trying if they can find some good thing there, what terrible anxiety and distress we feel. We cannot give up the search for something to give us hope, some way of escape from the sin and evil that everywhere so afflict us. But we can find no relief, no way of escape from evil, for we seem to be all evil. Think of the roots that are working downward and abroad in the depths of the earth; what hopelessness we may imagine is theirs as they work in the darkness, the mass of fine, minute rootlets struggling, pushing themselves down into the soil, which grows more and more mellow, creeping and forcing themselves outward, to find they know not what. But they are doing the work appointed for them, and it is through the work done by them that the tender blade finally appears in sight.

It is through the work done by the thoughts down in the broken soil of the heart that finally the tender hope appears. The thoughts have been working downward, but the

hope is reaching upward. The search must be exhaustive and in vain. Again and again we must learn the sad truth: no light, no hope, no good thing down there in the earth; in the flesh no good thing. That must be learned deeply again and again.

But the tender roots with their mysterious, delicate life-power are taking up something from that dark, obnoxious soil which will be conveyed by the miraculous processes of nature upward and cause the appearance of the blade, the flower and the fruit. So the thoughts have gathered the sad assurance that there is nothing but evil in us, and because there is left no question of that truth, and because we are cut off from all hope in ourselves, we are prepared to wonder and adore when a blessed hope is given unto us reaching upward instead of downward. What a glorious surprise when the hope in Jesus appears to us! What thanksgiving and praise fill our poor hearts!

So the lilies grow, and the corn and the vine. *"They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine."* *"I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."* — *Hosea xiv. 5, 7.*

When at any time the roots cease to be sent forth downward and outward in the soil, then the plant or the tree will cease to grow. When the thoughts cease to work in the soil of a sinful, broken heart,

then the growth in grace ceases. When we lose sight of our sinfulness in any degree, and begin to feel some contentment and satisfaction with our own condition, then we may think that we have attained to some excellent growth, but we have truly not grown at all in a spiritual sense, but have really diminished. *“Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.”*

So from time to time the Lord sends a winter time upon us, when we can only send roots downward; when we can only think of our vileness; when our life looks to us utterly unworthy; when we can hardly see anything in our heart and life to take any comfort in. The things that we have been enabled to do in obedience to the Lord we are thankful to him for, but we have still to think of our own unprofitableness as servants. All that was of ourselves in every work seems to display our own weakness and sinfulness. We feel a tender thankfulness to the Lord for his goodness in leading us in the paths of righteousness, but we feel also that *“the sins of one most righteous day might sink us in despair.”*

How many a time I have seemed to be at the point of giving up, assured that my hope was not good, because for days I could seem to think of nothing but my own sinfulness and depravity. It was not long ago that while in this dark state of mind, my thoughts active, but active in a downward direction, when all at

once I saw them as the roots of a plant working downward that the plant might grow upward. What a sweet comfort that was.

Think of the pure, white flower of the lily looking downward at the black mud out of which it has grown! Think of the Spirit contrasted with the flesh. In the same person the flesh is felt lusting *“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.”* No wonder that the Lord’s people feel conflicts within themselves. There must be a warfare where there are two contrary principles. None but quickened souls can feel that warfare.

The lilies, how wonderfully beautiful they are. Do they know of their beauty? Do they not feel ashamed as they look down at that black, uncomely soil where they live? Could they grow otherwise or elsewhere than they do? Could they transfer themselves to some whiter, cleaner ground? Can they by exerting some power of their own grow more rapidly, or by neglect can they cease to grow? Can they cause themselves to be more or less pure and fair and lovely? Consider them, how they grow, and then you will see how the Lord’s children grow in grace.

It is by no effort or power of their own, and yet they are constantly, when exercised by the Spirit, anxious to grow, and feeling that some-

thing depends upon them, and are hiding and condemning themselves for their lack of growth. But all their efforts are vain, and they only show them how helpless they are, how unable to make themselves any more worthy in the sight of God. Then they come again to the knowledge that all their goodness and power are in Jesus; that He is their righteousness. When they truly grow, not in themselves, but in Jesus. Then they grow, not in their own works, but in grace. Then it can be said of them:

*Blessed are you when you
strive in vain,*

*And all your works no com-
fort yield;*

*For when you cease to toil
and spin,*

*You are as lilies of the field,
And he who richly clothes
the flower,*

*Which passes almost as a
breath,*

*Will show his riches grace
and power*

In you, O ye of little faith.

The plants in nature grow in the night. I have measured the growth of corn. Once from six at night to six in the morning it grew thirteen inches, and only an inch during the following day. It is authoritatively said that corn will sometimes, under most favorable circumstances, grow sixteen inches in one night. It is in the night time of sorrow and affliction

that the Lord's plants grow in the knowledge and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is while under a distressing sense of their own weakness that they grow in the knowledge of Jesus as their Strength. It is through an especially dark and oppressive experience of their own sinfulness and depravity that they grow in the knowledge of Jesus as their Righteousness. When their thoughts have long been working and groping, like the roots of plants, in the dark depths of their earthly nature, and have found no good thing dwelling there, but only evil, then with what glad surprise they see the same thoughts reaching upward and coming beautifully into flower, and rejoicing in the pure light of the Sun of Righteousness. Then they learn that all their sad and weary night work has not been in vain. Those creeping, searching roots, those struggling, groping thoughts, have brought up into the soul something that was necessary to the real growth of the true plant of grace. Their work down there in the darkness has caused the growth to be away from the earth, away from self-confidence, and have caused the blade to reach upward, and the flower to bloom in the sunlit atmosphere of grace. The poor soul can now see that by the faith and hope and love that are now blooming in their hearts, and filling them with the beauty and perfume of Jesus' blessed name, they are even more gloriously clothed than are the lilies

of the field.

SILAS H. DURAND.
HAMPTON, PA - Dec. 10, 1904.

ELDER T.M. POULSON
Massey, Va., 1902

Dear brethren Editors;—
Something has seemed to prompt me to pen a few things incidental to my life in a general way, and forward them to you for your disposal, whether to give them a place in our family paper, The Signs of the Times, or not.

I was born in the year 1831, in the same county (Accomac, Va.,) where I have resided ever since. I experienced a hope in God through his abounding grace in August 1851; was united in marriage with my present companion January 1852; was received, and baptized by Elder Thomas Waters, in the fellowship of the Old Baptist Church at Messongo, Accomac Co., Va., March, 1852. So you see that I have very few more mileposts to pass to my journey's end, as I have passed the 71st year of my natural life, and the fiftieth of my spiritual life, and also the fiftieth year of my married life.

In the year 1865 I became very much impressed in mind in regard to the things of the kingdom of God, and what constituted that kingdom.

The more I thought about it the more beautiful the subject became, and the stronger my interest grew, In my deep meditations I would find myself talking all alone, not supposing that was preaching, my ignorance would forbid it, but these things still grew more and more oppressive until it brought me into a state of questioning myself, what this all meant? And soon brought me before others also, who would inquire with reference to my exercise of mind. Thus I was led along until I was prevailed upon to talk a little in the meetings, and I think sometime in the year 1866, I was given a license to speak as I felt led, and in the year 1869 or 70 I was set apart to the full work of the gospel ministry, and immediately afterwards I accepted the care of four of the churches of the Salisbury Association, viz; Messongo, Accomac Co., Va., Indiantown, Wicomico Co., Md., Nassaongo, Wicomico Co., Md., Pitt's Creek, Worcester Co., Md., and a few years later the church was organized in Snow Hill, Worcester Co., Md., and they called me to the care of that also, and I have been paying my best attention to those churches ever since, traveling from twenty-two to twenty-three hundred miles each year to fill my appointments, and nearly all by private conveyance. But if you will notice the above dates you will see that my labor is nearly over. I have experienced varied seasons in the churches during this period of thirty-five years. Nearly all have passed away that composed

the whole five churches when I first commenced my feeble labors among them. I have witnessed the coming in of all the five churches at present but eighteen persons. During the thirty-five years there has not been an "ism" nor "schism" nor any new thing to interrupt the fellowship of those churches. There have been times when the churches were full of life and zeal, and of frequent additions, and also times of drought and coldness. Sometimes when I am looking for some evidence of my hope and call to the work of the ministry, the only evidence that I can rest upon is in the remembrance of what the apostle Paul said referring to believers; "Ye are our epistles, written in our hearts, known and read by all men." Then my mind surveys the faithful brethren and sisters, and it brings comfort with it. But O, how wretched and miserable I do feel at times, for as much as I have witnessed and experienced during the fifty years passed, I have fallen so far short of living up to the scribe that I pictured in my mind years ago. I have been tempted to mark upon the walls where I can have it to look at, Watch your words and your thoughts, and also every evil lust, but I have failed. Finally a longing desire has been following me that I wanted to be an angel just for the time being, so I could not be contaminated with sin in any way, but I wanted to die a sinner saved by grace, for I know that will be the theme of the heavenly host, and then I think that an angel cannot

magnify the grace of God, and then I am brought to a standstill, and can only say, keep me O lord, and I shall be kept; draw me and I shall run after thee. I feel and know that this tabernacle in which I now groan must soon be taken down, and one of the strongest evidences that I have to rest upon is what Paul said; "For I know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternally in the heavens.

For in this we groan "being burdened." This is a strong evidence to me, for I know this is so. How the thought gladdens our hearts that in that building of God there will be no burdens, there will be no groaning there, and all tears will be wiped from weeping faces. I am trying to be as contented as I can, and live as much for others as I can. I sometimes get to think that my usefulness is nearly over, and then I have an unrest. I sometimes hear the brethren talk over their spiritual comforts, then I think my life and labor among them is of some profit, and then I am contented to live on, and fill up the measure of my days. How it is that my poor labors and mingling among the Lord's people has been acceptable, I have never been able to tell, only to hope that the things to which I bear testimony, finds a witness in the hearts and lives of others. I hope that this is so.

It is more than likely this is the last time that I shall trouble you with my scribble. I thought that I wanted

the brethren all to know some of my feelings and experiences before I passed away.

This from a poor old sinner whose only hope of salvation is through the blood and righteousness of a crucified and risen Savior.

Farewell.
T. M. Poulson

RIVERVIEW, ALA.

DEAR READERS OF THE SIGNS :- Last week I was Jacob's companion, and derived much comfort from his conversation and surroundings, but I soon almost lost sight of Jacob. The only thing I could hear of him was, "*It is even the time of Jacob's trouble.*" - Jer. xxx. 7. This followed me all the past week, till this morning I fell in company with Samson; not Samson as he slew the lion, nor as he slew the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, but Samson shorn of his strength, and eyes plucked out. In this respect I feel to be a veritable Samson. My experience has been indeed to me a mystery. I am a profound mystery to myself.

Whether I am a child of God, and a called minister of the gospel, I know not, but I do know that in my experience I have been a companion of almost every prominent character mentioned in the Scriptures, and at the time when I was with them I felt that it was I, as well as they. I fellowshipped them, and was one

with them in all their varied experiences, and in my experience I have been with the wicked as well as the righteous, and yet when with the wicked I could have no fellowship for them. I have been with David in his varied experience. I have thought I felt what he did when he wept over Abraham and said, "Would God I had died for thee, O Abraham my son, my son!" I have been with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in all their trials and afflictions. I have read the book of Job, and felt that he was my brother, and that his experience was me, and as I read I wept. I have been with Daniel in Babylon; the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace; Daniel in the lion's den; Jeremiah in the dungeon; Mordecai before the king's gate, clothed in sackcloth; Christ in his temptations in the wilderness; John the Baptist in prison; Peter denying the Savior all preaching among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;" Stephen being stoned; with Paul in his sufferings, hunger, nakedness, peril and sword; in perils on land, on sea, among false brethren, among his own countrymen; privations, sorrows, prayers and tears, night and day. The same accusations that were hurled against Paul; have been hurled against me. I have been with John on the isle of Patmos, find with all the ancient saints in their pilgrimage. I have also felt to be like Esau, "who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright;" I have also felt to be a wandering star, a raging wave of the sea, foam-

ing out my own shame, and to whom the mist of darkness was reserved forever; a tree whose fruit was withered, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; the accuser of the brethren; the unfaithful, unprofitable servant, and instead of giving them their meat in due season, smiting the men servants and the maidens; eating and drinking with the drunken, for which cause I am cast out into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth; having my portion with the hypocrites. Sometimes I am a murmurer and a complainer, walking after my own lusts: of man of corrupt mind, destitute of the truth, supporting that gain in godliness, and as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do I also resist the truth. I eat with the wicked, and drink with the drunken. I feel that I am an impostor, hypocrites, pencil in the nostrils of the Lord's people, and unfit instead of the Lord preserving me unto His heavenly kingdom, he is only reserving me unto the day of judgment to be punished. Then again I am like an owl of the desert, a pelican of the wilderness, or sparrow upon the housetop. I come to an experience that I hesitate to mention, but it is my experience, and if deceived in this I am deceived in all. I have been brought into such close fellowship with the sufferings of Christ that I have felt that in a measure I have suffered for the sins of his people. I would not be misunderstood here; Jesus is the only Savior, he bare the

sins of his people in his own body on the tree, but what does Paul mean when he says, "*Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is in him of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church?*" Again, "*I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*" Other Scriptures might be cited, but is it not true that the people of God still sin, collectively is well is individually? Moses, Samson, David and all the prophets suffered for the people of God, and often on account of their sins; the Apostles likewise suffered for the errors of the people, and is it not true that all the ministers today have to suffer for the errors and sins of the Lord's people? Is it not true that a gospel minister has an experience that no other man under the sun has, or can have? I believe that all the prominent characters are set forth in the Scriptures as a type of the true gospel minister, and their trials and experiences are recorded for the comfort and encouragement of such. Samson was a chosen servant of God to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines; his strength was in his long hair; the Spirit of the Lord moved him; he slew many of the Philistines; his marriage to the Philistine woman was of the Lord. But when his hair was shorn he lost his strength, then the Philistines bound him and put out his eyes and cast

him into prison. But it seems that his hair grew out again, and it is said of him that the *“dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.”* Is it not true that a gospel minister may be “shorn of his strength,” and his eyes put out. Are not the Philistines a type of the sins of the flesh, or the works of the flesh in the Lord’s people? For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.” Do not the Philistines now sometimes have dominion over Israel?

When I take a retrospective view of my past life and the changing vicissitudes through which I have been called to pass, I am utterly astonished, and can but feel that the Lord has graciously and mercifully preserved me all the days of my life. I was born and brought up in rags and poverty, and have lived (as the saying goes) from “hand to mouth” all my life, and labored at almost all kinds of drudgery until this day, and aside from spiritual trials and temptations and afflictions, I have been a constant sufferer from nervous dyspepsia, heart trouble and other ailments for a number of years, often feeling that death was at hand, even at the door. I have buried eight children, one of them a grown daughter killed in Opelika, Ala., by a car; I have once been shot at by an incendiary, because he thought I was watching

him set fire to a bank; I have had a long knife drawn on me by a convict; I have had a man abuse me and threaten me with death because he

said I owed him ninety cents; I have fallen from treetops and housetops, and I cannot recount all the dangers through which I have passed, and still I am here. I have preached in private houses, in hovels and huts, schoolhouses, under trees and bush arbors, in my own house, standing, sitting and lying down. I have preached in fine structures in many places, and surely the Lord has been with me and preserved me for some wise and glorious purpose. *“It is even the time of Jacob’s throne; but he shall be saved out of it.”*

I can but wonder if this sketch of my life and experience be published, will it be of any comfort to any one I have told the truth.

In tribulation, yours,
H. J. REDD

Roman 1: 6-9.

Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.

JESUS AS A SHEPHERD.

AMONG the many names by which Jesus is recognized by his people, in his multiplied relationship to them, is that of "Shepherd," and in that relationship they are likened unto sheep. In the tenth chapter of John, the Savior himself points out with peculiar clearness the difference between the Shepherd whose own the sheep are, and the one who tendeth the sheep as a hireling, at the same time presenting himself as the true Shepherd. The sheep follow the Shepherd because they know his voice. A very clear evidence that one is a follower of Jesus, is that he knows his voice. The Apostle John, in the Spirit on the Lord's day, saw Jesus and heard his voice and described it as "The voice of many waters." Elijah, at the mouth of the cave, hears the same voice, and he describes it as a "*still small voice.*" The Israelites heard it in the wilderness at Mount Sinai, and to their ears it was a voice of thunder, yet they all knew it and recognized its import also. Observe how the sheep follows its natural owner, willingly, gladly, without doubt or question, or a moment's hesitancy, aught but obedience is not thought of because love is the incentive, and obedience the result. Hark, saith the bride in the song, "*The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.*"

It is the time of love, and now we hear the divine Shepherd calling to his sheep, it is not a command, there is no need of that; it is love calling to love, "*deep calleth into deep,*" the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. You hear the voice in your heart saying: "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*" And immediately we become his true and faithful followers. Some one will ask, How do I know when Jesus speaks to me. What are the signs of his beloved presence. Satan is so cunning that I am often deceived. Well, in the first place, the apostle tells you what to do, he says: "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.*" Then he gives you the evidence that will convince you of the truth, he says: "*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.*" On the other hand, all those spirits that confess not that Jesus is come in the flesh, are antichrist and false prophets. Again, you are not ignorant of your own condition, you know that if you are alive to righteousness, you are dead to sin. The voice of the messenger from God that speaks to you, brings with it life, and peace, and quietness, and joy in the Holy Ghost; while the messenger from Satan brings confusion, and evil thought, and a discontented mind. When you can say out of a full heart, "*The Lord*

is my Shepherd, I shall not want,” then you may know that the Spirit of the Lord dwelleth in you. This Spirit within you is of faith, and enables you to say: This is the voice of my beloved. Added to the loving voice of the Shepherd is the tender care which he devotes to the sheep; of him the prophet says: “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.” In every vicissitude of our life the pitying eye of our tender Shepherd looks upon us. He does not look down upon us and our afflictions are his afflictions, we are weak but he is strong, but he becometh weak that we may be made strong. In our fleshly lusts and worldly ambitions, our backslidings and uncomeliness, we are made to realize his long and tender forbearance toward us. We also observe that this watchcare is so persistent that he never leaves nor forsakes us. When Israel traveled in the wilderness the Lord was with them, and as a shepherd leadeth his sheep and careth for them, so the Shepherd of Israel led His sheep about in the wilderness and instructed them in all the way he would have them go. He was unto them a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night; his vigilant eye was always upon them. The helplessness of sheep to care for themselves is well known; when separated from the shepherd they are utterly incapable of protecting

themselves from the enemy, or of taking care for themselves in any way. The shepherd being fully aware of this fact, constantly watches over them, he knoweth all their weakness and frailties, and so nourisheth and cherisheth them as a father careth for his children. As sheep of the fold of the flock of God, we are under complete control of our precious Shepherd, of ourselves we can do nothing, left alone for a little time we become scattered from our fellows, and soon fall into the hand of the enemy, and are lost. But the watchful Shepherd leaveth the ninety and nine that are safe in the fold, and goeth out into the darkness to seek the lost one, and he seeketh until he findeth and restoreth the precious one to the fold. Thus do we die daily, and thus are daily delivered. As the natural sheep are found in flocks, so also the Lord setteth the solitary in families, whence they organize themselves into bodies that they may worship the Lord, and maintain the order of God’s house. Ever since the visible church has been set up this has been the case, but in order to maintain this, they have had to suffer many trials and undergo much persecution. These little groups, or families, called churches, have, when available, an under-shepherd who ministereth to them in word and deed, but the spirit of the Shepherd is with them, according as he (Jesus) has promised, that where two or more are gathered together in his name, he is in their

midst.

They are to be distinguished from the religionists of the world, in that they continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship; they manifest the faith of God's elect, they use not humility as a cloak, but with fear and trembling they worship God in spirit and in truth; they preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. The way and the works of man all lead unto death, but the way of God is unto life eternal. Like sheep their trust is in their master who leadeth them and careth for them. Of Joseph it is declared: "*Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall: * * * from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.*" Of David he saith: "*And will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, he shall be their shepherd.*" Joseph and David both being lively types of our Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel assurance also comes to us with much sweetness: "*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." Again: *For ye were as sheep going astray but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*" And also both assurance and promise: "*And when the chief Shepherd shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*" Wondrous Shepherd blessed sheep, how strong is our hope, and how secure our inheritance, and how faithful the promise.

B. J. COULTER.
Philadelphia, Pa.,
Nov. 25, 1904.

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FOR JANUARY 2006

T. R. Pullig -TX.....	5.00
Majorie Cook -TN	10.00
Sarah Barker -VA	5.00
Reed Harper- TX	5.00
George Hyslip -TN	10.00
Tommy Clayton -NC	2.00
Benny Abernathy -NC	10.00
Jessie & Elaine Jones -TN	5.00
Elder W. T. Conner-VA	5.00
Billie Dunn Speir-LA	15.00
James Lambert -GA	5.00
Lloyd Spikes -OR.....	10.00
Elder W. L. Gardner-GA	25.00
Carla Horton -VA.....	5.00

MEETINGS



**ELDER J.B. FARMER
COMING TO BIG MEADOWS**

Elder J.B. Farmer of Grayson, Ky., the Lord willing, will be with us on the second Sunday in April.

Elder Farmer is also an associate editor of the Signs of the Times.

Big Meadows is located about 20 miles below Graham, N.C. Those traveling I-85 take the Pittsboro/Gra-

ham exit and go 17 miles toward Pittsboro. After crossing the Cane Creek Bridge take first road to right at top of hill – go 4 miles to a cross-road and turn left – go 1 mile then to church.

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

Elder Kenneth R. Key
Sister JoAnn Self, Clerk

OBITUARIES

CHARLES PIERCE HAYES

Born Sept. 7, 1914, died Dec. 26, 2005 of a massive stroke in Birmingham, Al. Before having to move to Birmingham he served as

Moderator of the Buttahatchie and the Buttahatchie-Hopewell Association.

After moving to Kirkwood By The River in Birmingham he was

unable to attend church. He was a true believer in Christ and his finished work.

He was a faithful member and deacon of Poplar Springs Church for 58 years. He was laid to rest in Vernon City Cemetery, Vernon, Ala.

Survivors include his wife Arva Rae Hayes, a daughter Beth Hayes Nigri and son-in-law Victor Nigri.

Looking forward to the resurrection. May we be reconciled to the will of God.

Beth Hayes Nigri

3605 Ratliff Rd.

Birmingham, Ala. 35210

RLEE BLANKENSHIP HOUCHINS

At the request of Sister Rlee's church I will make the attempt to write an obituary for her. May God's grace bless this pen to write in her honor. We had been friends since our teenage years so this is hard for me.

Sister Rlee was called from our midst on May 11, 2005. God only knows how this lovely Sister is missed, but we feel that our loss is her eternal gain. She was so good in telling the many wonderful expe-

riences that the Lord had blessed her. When she finished telling one of them you would know that God still performs miracles.

As she laid in the hospital she could see God's beautiful mountains out her window and she told me that she would soon be to the top of that mountain and her journey would soon be over.

Sister Rlee had been a member of the church fifty-six years. Her first home was at Head of the River, then moving her membership to Roanoke in later years. She was baptized on her 20th birthday and was a true soldier of the cross all those years.

Sister Rlee was preceded in death by her loving husband of 48 years, Harding Houchins who passed away June 22, 1998. Surviving are two sons and daughters-in-law, and Jo Ann Houchins and Philip and Robin Houchins, five grandchildren, two great-grandsons and one brother and sister-in-law, Garlin and Claudine Blankenship.

Funeral services were held at Oakey's South Chapel May 13, 2005. She was laid to rest beside her dear husband in the Blue Ridge Memorial Gardens. Humbly submitted to the Roanoke Church in Christian love.

Sister Mary Poff

Signs of the Times

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SONG

*How sweet how heavenly is the sight,
When those who love the Lord
In one another's peace delight,
And thus fulfil his word:*

*When each can feel his brother's sigh,
And with him bear a part;
When sorrow flows from eye to eye,
And joy from heart to heart:*

*When free from envy, scorn and pride,
Our wishes all above,
Each can his brother's failings hide,
And show a brother's love.*

*When love in one delightful stream
Through every bosom flows,
And union sweet, and dear esteem,
In every action glows!*

*Love is the golden chain that binds
The happy souls above;
And he's an heir of heaven that finds
His bosom glow with love.*

C.M.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	74
Elder Cleo D. Robertson	
CORRESPONDENCE	78
VOICES OF THE PAST	79
Elder Peter Corn	
J. D. Wood	
Elder H. H. Lefferts	
Elder J. C. Philpot	
MEETINGS	94
CONTRIBUTIONS	95
OBITUARIES	96
Lloyd Cummins Spikes	

 EDITORIAL

ARK OF THE COVENANT



Elder Cleo D. Robertson

God called Moses up into Mount Sinai and he was there forty days and forty nights. During this time, God gave Moses tables of stone upon which God had written ten commandments and also gave him instructions for making an ark, a tabernacle, and items that were to be in the tabernacle. These were types and shadows of heavenly things and were made according to the pattern God showed Moses in the mount.

If the Lord would bless me, I would like to touch upon the ark, called the Ark of the Covenant. It was called the Ark of the Covenant because the tables of stone upon which were written the Ten Commandments were placed inside the ark. This was the law covenant as stated in Exodus 34:28. The ark was a type of Christ and the tables of the law being inside the ark set forth Christ fulfilling the law to a jot and a tittle. He did not destroy the law, but He fulfilled it as He was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

The ark was made of shittim wood which was a very hard wood with a very close grain. The density of the wood did not allow anything to enter that would cause decay. Insects were repelled by the very taste of it. Therefore, the type of wood sets forth the incorruptible body of Christ. He was without sin. Righteous and holy was He. As the Apostle Peter said, *“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.”* Psalm 16:10, *“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither will thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”* And Acts 13:37, *“But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.”* After John baptized Him, Christ was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Though he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet he was without sin.

The ark was overlaid within and without with pure gold. Pure gold

sets forth the purity, righteousness, and holiness of Christ within His body of flesh as He was indeed the Son of God. The fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily and He was the express image of God and the brightness of His glory. All the attributes of God were in Him bodily as He was God in a body of flesh. He had all power as He walked upon the earth. He had the power to lay down His life and the power to take it up again. No man takes it from Him. Then, when His hour had come, no man nor army could keep Him from that appointed time to suffer and die. Pure gold without also sets forth the purity, righteousness, and holiness of His body as it had no sin in it. He was born of a virgin overshadowed by the power of God. He was a man who could experience everything that you and I experience except sin. He wept. He endured mockings, pain, and even the dread of death. His father sent an angel to strengthen Him. He learned obedience by the things He suffered. His body was a veil that no man could see beyond. He appeared as any other man. There was no beauty that anyone should desire Him or follow Him. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, despised, and was not esteemed. Yet, in that body prepared for Him, He bore our sins, our griefs, and our sorrows. In that body, He suffered so greatly—the just for the unjust.

A crown of gold was around the top of the ark. This sets forth the kingship of Christ. He is the King of

kings, and Lord of lords. As king, He has absolute power and authority and is under no law nor bound by any limits. He speaks and it's done. He commands and it stands fast. As King Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed after he had been thoroughly taught of the Lord, *"And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?"* A king must have a kingdom. Christ said his kingdom was not of this world and that it cometh not with observation. He said, *"Behold the kingdom of God is within you."* There is no end to His kingdom for it is an everlasting kingdom. The Apostle Paul preached that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. The inhabitants of this kingdom are those whom He chose before the foundation of the world and whose sins He bore in His body on the cross. They are those that Peter said, *"were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."*

The ark had four rings of gold in the four corners of it. To me this

sets forth the gospel of Jesus Christ. Gold points to the purity of the gospel: its richness in the righteousness and holiness of Christ and its preciousness far beyond the material wealth of the world. The gold rings on the four corners of the ark speak of the gospel being preached to God's people wherever they are in the world. Christ commanded His Apostles after His resurrection to *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."* This command was fulfilled as Mark 16:20 says, *"And they went forth, and preached every where."* The two staves were of shittim wood overlaid with gold and were in the gold rings and by these was the ark borne. The staves were not to be taken from the rings of gold. The staves were typical of grace and truth for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Without grace and truth, there is no gospel. The staves being of shittim wood overlaid with gold presents a picture of Christ as the Son of man and as the son of God. We are to preach that He came in the flesh without sin, born of a virgin, suffered, died and rose again and is seated at the right hand of the Father making intercession for His people. He bare the sins of His little ones in His own body redeeming them from under the curse of the law, being made a curse for them. The Apostle Paul wrote that He had not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

There was a mercy seat of pure

gold above upon the ark with two cherubims of beaten gold in the two ends of the mercy seat. God told Moses that He would meet with him and commune with him from above the mercy seat between the cherubims. The mercy seat is a type of Christ as He is our mercy seat. He is rich in mercy. His mercy endureth forever. God said to Moses, *"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."* So the Apostle Paul writes, *"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."* The Apostle adds, *"Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy; and whom He will he hardeneth."* The man dwelling among the tombs in the mountains crying and cutting himself with stones was experiencing the condemnation of the law. He had no rest day nor night. Men had tried to bind him with chains of conditional salvation but he could not find any peace or comfort in these efforts of the flesh. He was dwelling among the dead. There was no life there. The more he tried, the more he was cut by the stones or application of the law. No man could tame him. Tame is to make submissive or bring into subjection. Men had tried to make him submissive to a religion of self-works, but they could not. Dear people, haven't you been there? Can't you witness with him? He was oppressed, alone, and no one could

reach his case or even understand what he was going through. But, Oh dear one, there was One who knew exactly where he was and in what condition he was in. Christ came to where he was and when the man saw Him, he ran and worshipped Him. He didn't need any man to introduce him to Christ. *"My sheep know my voice."* He was at the mercy seat, clothed and in his right mind. Clothed with the righteousness of Christ and possessing a spiritual mind, he was resting in the peace and comfort of His Lord.

The cherubims were in each end of the mercy seat facing each other toward the mercy seat and were of beaten gold. I believe they were both looking at one place on the mercy seat—the cross. One cherub set forth the prophets and prophecies of Christ from the beginning of time looking toward the cross. The beaten gold signifies suffering and trials and death that not only the prophets endured but that which they prophesied concerning Christ. The other cherub set forth the gospel ministers who look back to the cross. These not only endured sufferings, trials, and death but they preached the sufferings and death of Christ on the cross.

Inside the ark were the tables of the covenant which I have already mentioned as well as the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded. The golden pot of manna is a type of the spiritual food that Christ feeds His people—that heavenly

manna that comes from above. Christ said He was the bread of life. As with the Israelites in the wilderness, this heavenly food never gives out. It is always enough, but never too much. You can not store it up, but it is always provided when you need it. It is strengthening and comforting. Aaron's rod that budded signifies Christ as high priest. When Korah and others rebelled against Moses and Aaron and accused them of lifting themselves above everyone else and that everyone in the congregation of Israel was just as qualified to lead and serve as high priest as Moses and Aaron were, God opened the earth and swallowed some of them and brought fire down and consumed others. God, then, told Moses to have each tribe take a rod with the name of the head of the tribes and lay them in the tabernacle before the ark. Aaron's name was on the rod for the tribe of Levi. The twelve rods were left there overnight and the following day Moses saw that Aaron's rod had budded, bloomed blossoms and yielded almonds. The Lord said unto Aaron, *"Thou and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood."* Aaron's rod that budded being in the ark sets forth the priesthood of Christ and that He must bear the iniquity of His people. Isaiah 53:11, *"He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied:*

by His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities."

The ark always went before the children of Israel. Numbers 10:33 reads: *"And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them."* Christ is the resting place of His little ones. As one of the hymn writers wrote, *"Father, we'll rest in thee."* When the children of Israel came to Jordan, they lodged there three days. After three days, the people were commanded that when you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, you are to remove from your place, and go after it. So with every little child of God, when Christ is manifested to them, they have a desire, a love, to follow Him. When the priests bearing the ark came to the brink of the water of Jordan, they stood still in the river and the waters rolled back. So the people passed over on dry ground into the promised land.

I realize that I have but skimmed the surface of this beautiful and precious subject, but my hope is that your pure minds have been stirred with thoughts far beyond mine.

Yours in hope,
Cleo Robertson

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Elder Terry,

Please find enclosed a check for the renewal of "Signs of the Times" for two years. The rest of the money to be used as you need. May God continue to give His ministers His sovereign grace to feed his flock through the "Signs of the Times."

In Christian Love,
Anne Pearson

2-3-06

Greetings,

I see my subscription is expiring with this month's issue. Attached is a check for \$30.00 for two years renewal and the balance to use as you see fit.

Thank you for your labor in getting the Signs out every month. I look forward to it and enjoy it each month. I keep them and re-read them at various times.

May God continue His blessings on each of you at the Signs!

Thank you,
In hope,
M. L. Richardson

Feb. 18, 2006

Dear Elder Terry,

Enclosed is a check for \$25.00 to renew my subscription to the "Signs of the Times" for another two years.

I really look forward to each issue, and enjoy the writings/remarks very much.

Hope you are doing well and look forwards to seeing you soon.

Love and Fellowship,
Brother John Collie

VOICES OF THE PAST

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND PICTURE
OF ELDER PETER CORN, MODERATOR
OF THE PIG RIVER P. B. ASSOCIATION.



Elder Peter Corn

Having a desire to leave something for future generations to look upon when I am gone, I will give a sketch of my life both natural and spiritual, as I hope.

According to the record in my father's Bible, I was born into this visible kingdom Feb. 26, 1834, in Patrick Co., Va. I was the youngest of thirteen children, nine girls and four boys, one of which died in infancy. My oldest brother was twenty years, four months and seventeen days older than myself, My other

brother, who grew to manhood, was about fourteen years and six months older than myself.

My parents were Jesse and Elizabeth Corn. My father, being crippled by rheumatism in his feet from childhood, never could walk without a cane and consequently, could not labor as most men. He was a Justice for fifty-four years; and held some public office nearly all his life. He was a member of the Primitive Baptist Church before I was born. My mother was a professor, strong in the same faith, but never joined the church. They were strict disciplinarians in their family, impressing upon the children the great necessity of truth, honesty and virtue. My father being in moderate circumstances, his children consequently had to labor hard, which deprived them of the opportunity of going to school much; and there were then no public schools. So my education was quite limited. I learned to read and to write very imperfectly, and went as far as "Rule of Three" in Pike's old arithmetic. I served my father till I was twenty-one years of age, and then set out trying to make a living in this world. I hired to my father for a two-year-old colt and a few barrels of corn. I feel to say, the Lord has blessed my efforts to live an honest and upright life. But I have been in great straits and did not see how I was to get out, but the Lord always opened up a way; and I to day, though not rich, have a sufficiency of this world's goods to keep me comfortable; and, if I ever

wronged any man out of a cent or failed to pay every cent owed to any man, and he will make me sensible of the fact, I will pay him four-fold. I have tried to live a moral and sober life. I have used some spirits during my life, but have never been intoxicated, nor have I ever gone to a bar room and bought a drink of intoxicating spirits and have never been warranted or sued on any of my contracts with my fellow man. I will now give some of the reasons of a hope beyond death. When quite a child, I had very serious thoughts on death and eternity, and frequently had dreams regarding the same; and, like all children, would tell them to mother. who would say, to me, "*These are loud calls to you.*" But I hardly knew the meaning of what she said, These thoughts followed me to manhood, when I became fond of young and gay company, especially the society of decent young ladies; desiring to have my pleasure with them. Often I asked the Lord to remove the impressions of death and eternity from me, promising that, if he would till I should get married, I would turn and be good, believing, as most of Adam's children do, that I could bring the Lord under obligations to save me. For a time, as it seemed, the Lord gave me over to my desires: I became fond of dancing, so much that I could not control myself, when the music started. Notwithstanding this, I would become greatly distressed on account of it. So that, in the year

1858, I solemnly promised the Lord, if he would forgive me, I would not dance again. But the Christmas following, myself and another young man came to Franklin County, near where I now live, to spend the Christmas. We met with two young ladies (who had attracted us here) on Sunday, at Union church, and spent that night at the home of one of those young ladies. The next day the lady whom I was with invited me out to the home of the other young lady. As we went our crowd increased. It was a house into which they admitted dancing, and they had a dance there that night, and the young lady whom I was with invited me out to dance with her; and, thinking it ungentlemanly to refuse, I went. I think we were the last couple that went out. I remained out on the floor only a short time, and do not think that any criminal on the gallows ever felt more condemned than I. I felt like sinking to the floor; and, remembered my vow, I was sensible that I had lied to God. I feigned an excuse that I was sick, laid down on the bed and did not mix any more with the company that night. The next morning I proposed to the young man that we would go back to Patrick. But he said, "*No; we came to see our fun, and let's have it out.*" I told him that he could do as he pleased, but I was going to Patrick. Breakfast being over, I, according to my resolve, saddled my horse and went, feeling, as I suppose, like a bird just liberated from a cage.

My troubles, more or less severe, continued from then on.

In 1859, I became engaged to my wife, Nancy C. Turner, with the understanding that we were to marry the next fall or winter. My troubles continued to grow on me all the while. In that year, June, 1859, there was an association at Jack's Creek, Patrick Co., Va. I, together with other young company, stopped at my wife's father's till bed time, and, as young people will, spent the time talking and laughing. Having to return home to accompany my sisters to the association I, at bed time, left for home, meditating on how I had spent the day and night, and became awfully distressed. While riding along crying and trying to pray, it seemed to me that I had committed an unpardonable sin, and that there was no hope for me. But there seemed to be a voice speaking in me, saying, "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Not being familiar with the scriptures; I did know that it was scriptural language. It created within me a little hope for mercy in the future. But I went on in great distress through the summer and fall, remembering I had promised the Lord, if he would spare me till married, I would then try to serve him. But the very thought of marrying became a terror to me: for, not wanting anyone to know the condition I was in, I did not see how I could possibly keep it hid from a wife. I had no personal objections to

her, but continued in that condition till fall. The time we had agreed to marry was approaching. But it did not seem possible for me to enter into the married state, if I should live to the time, which I did not think I could do. I went on in this condition till October 24, 1859, when I gave up all hope. Before lying down that night, I went out to pray, not thinking that I would live to see another day. Fearing the family might mistrust something, I returned to the house and went upstairs to bed. While lying there on my back, nearly in the position of one in death, meditating and trying to pray for mercy, verily believing that I had a breast disease which would soon end my days; and how long I had been in bed I do not know, but I know that I had not slept any, when, all of a sudden, a light appeared to shine all around me, and into my inmost soul. The burden of my heart passed away. I clapped my hands upon my breast, believing that I was changed soul and body. A verse from two poets ran through my mind. The first was :

*"I love my blessed Savior,
And I am his forever."*

Second was :

*"O may I worthy prove to see
The saints in full prosperity;
The bride, the glittering
bride,*

*Close seated by the Savior's
side."*

The family had not all gone to bed yet; and I thought I would have

to go down and tell them what I hoped the Lord had done for me. But the thought, "*I had better keep it to myself,*" occurred to my mind, as I might be deceived. I laid there in a state of peace and composure, feeling that I loved the Lord and all created things. I could not then remember but one human being who had aught against me. A short time before this an old lady had given me a terrible tongue-lashing about my father's hogs getting into her corn. She was the first person I thought of, and felt that, if she had been present, I could have taken her into my arms. The next was my promised wife, and every obstacle seemed to be removed that should hinder us from being joined in marriage.

I had seen the plan of salvation so plainly that I thought I could, if she had been present, have shown it to her. Two days after this occurrence, old Brother Joshua Adams had an appointment at a graveyard in the woods. He came by my father's on his way. My sister, who was a member of the church, and myself went with him to the meeting. They rode along together, talking on the subject of godliness and experimental religion. I ride along behind them listening and, frequently, shedding tears; but cautiously concealed my tears from them. Arriving at the place appointed, I took a seat by a gum tree in front of the stand. I had been accustomed to hearing him all of my life, but on this occasion, as I thought, he preached altogether dif-

ferent to me. I enjoyed the meeting and returned home in a state of enjoyment. But between that time and the going down of the sun, I was thrown into "*Doubting Castle;*" my joy was gone; my burden, also, was gone; and I thought I was deceived in the whole matter. I prayed to the Lord, if deceived, to undeceive me. I laid down in that condition, in great distress of mind, and praying to the Lord to make it manifest to me whether I was deceived or not. Whilst lying on the bed, the plan of salvation was opened so plainly that I saw clearly how sinners were justified through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. At this time my soul was so filled with love that I arose from my bed and went down stairs. The family had not yet retired. I told them of some of the wonderful things which I hoped I had experienced, affecting the family very much; and I myself was shedding tears of joy. On the Sunday following this event, I attended a funeral service at a neighbor's house, conducted by Elders Cassell and Lackey. I thought they preached wonderfully and had a good meeting. The most of my young comrades were present and became very much carried away in feelings; and feeling so much over-joyed, and viewing so much beauty, I thought I could show it to them, and undertook to do so, by talking to them. But it was like casting straws before the wind, and I saw that it took a higher power than man to open the eyes of the blind.

I now pass on to the 15th day of Dec. 1859, at which time my wife and myself were joined together in marriage. I can truthfully say, with the wise man, Solomon *"A good woman is a gift from the Lord." We have been living together about 48 years. Other men may have as good a woman for a wife, but none have a better one. She has been blessed with a good constitution and good health, only having to call a doctor on but one occasion."*

By this union nine children were born, five daughters and four sons; but five, three sons and two daughters, are now dead. The three sons and one daughter died in infancy, and the other daughter died, leaving four children. I entertain the hope that she is at rest, and entertain no fears regarding the state of the four that died in infancy : for Jesus said, *"Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."* Three daughters and one son are still living. Two of the daughters are members of the Primitive Baptist church; but the other daughter and son have made no open confession.

I was received into the Primitive Baptist church at Union, the fourth Saturday in March, 1860; and was baptized the third Sunday in April, 1860, by Elder Joshua Adams.

Sent in by Brother Keith Hiatt.

Williamston, N.C.,
July 9, 1864

Dear Brother Temple;

I have thought that an account of the Christian experience and ministry of old brother James Hinton, an aged colored preacher of our faith and order yet living in this neighborhood, would not be uninteresting nor unprofitable to the readers of the Primitive Baptist. His truthfulness and sincerity are attested by the uprightness of his character, and by the excellence of his teachings. *"By their fruits ye shall know them."* (Matt. 7:20). With his thoughts, his conversation is continually directed towards heaven, where all his treasures lie.

Brother James does not know a "letter in the book"; he has evidently derived his information from a divine source. I give it in very nearly his own simple and expressive language ; I am 83 years old. I was born and raised in Bertie County, N.C.

My first master was old man Billie Hinton. I have had five or six owners during my life. They have been kind to me. I have been married twice, having twelve children by my first wife, two by my last and present wife. Most of them died in infancy. My son, Bosen, became a Baptist and a preacher, though unlearned, like myself. But with his master and others of my children, he moved many years ago to Mississippi. I do not know the number of my grandchild-

dren nor great grandchildren.

I was twelve years old when first struck under conviction; up to that time I had been required to do scarcely any work my old master wanted me to grow and get strong, and be of some account.

One day I challenged several of my playmates to box with me, declaring I could out fist them all put together. We had been thus roughly engaged for some moments, when I heard a voice, loud enough I thought to be heard four miles, calling out most distinctly, "James". I looked all around and up, but saw nobody. My arms and wrists at once grew weak; and at a second similar call, powerless; so I backed away in silence, and sat upon the ground. I wondered that the boys didn't hear the call, but they did not for they kept thumping me for some time, crying out that they had whipped me; but I did not care for it. After they had left me, something seemed to fall from the heavens and drop into my bosom. Ere long it spoke and said, "*Christ is the way for saving sinners.*" I trembled like a leaf and wept like a child. From that day forward it kept talking to me gospel, scripture, justice and righteousness, continually pointing out the way for me to go. I never was more puzzled, and could form no idea what it was.

I tried my best to run away from it by moving from place to place, but all in vain the talking went everywhere I did. It kept up with and annoyed me so that I thought it must

be my tongue somehow was speaking; so I pulled it out and tried to hold it and stop it, but quickly it darted back, and the talking went on worse than ever. Well, I thought, what is it? What can it be? I was fond of frolics; the voice told me to stop going. I resolved not to obey it, and continued to go, but at last I was so much troubled that I promised that I would not dance, but would sit civil, and not be chargeable. I did it; but while walking along one day the voice reminded me of my promise, and said, "*James, I say unto you, if you will go into such places when not compelled, I threaten you with dreadful wrath!*"

I shook with terror I wept as though my heart would break. I never went to any more frolics after that. I kept wondering what could be the matter with me. One time it spoke to me and said "*Come out from among them; be ye unspotted from the world, and I will receive you, sayeth the Lord.*" Then I knew, and not till then, that it was the Lord who had been dealing with me.

"*Come you, by prayer, to me,*" he said. I told him I did not know how to pray. "Cry out to me," he replied, "*through faith for God to have mercy on you a poor sinner, and I will have mercy.*"

I tried to pray this prayer a long time, and thought I had been heard by the great Master; but one night I went off to pray in great distress. My

tears struck the ground before my knees did. I prayed with a new and true fervency of the Spirit; and the Lord said to me, "*James, this is the first prayer of yours I have heard.*" My deliverance occurred in May, about corn weeding time. I had been abroad over the swamp, and came home at early sunset. I went to bed and slept until two or three hours of day, then woke up and found myself straight and flat on my back as though I was dead and laid out—a position I never lay in to my knowledge. I was as wide awake as I am now. I felt a weight press down on the middle of my breast; and I could not imagine what it was. I looked and saw, hanging from three cords, a great body of darkness about two and a half feet from my breast. I could not tell what it was. A strange thing in my bosom then moved, and spoke, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" I knew what was the matter then. This cry was repeated. I thought I would get up and move away from the terrible object, but found myself unable to stir; and looking up, saw myself right on the middle of the jaws of hell. Oh what a great ocean!

I gave up utterly, and confessed; "*Lord, this is my sins; would you be merciful, would you be so good, would you be so kind as to pardon and forgive me? O Lord I am not able to stand them, they are greater than I can bear.*" At once a straight line of light came as swiftly as a shot and cut

down the great body of darkness, and slipped it by me. Then there broke a light in and about me, as old Brother Paul says, above the brightness of the sun. If brought into this world, it would make noonday look like darkness. I thought it was day, but found it was not. I felt as light as any down in your "head-pillar".

My old master was a mild, free and open-hearted man. He had hundreds of servants, whom he clothed and fed well. He used to sell a thousand barrels of corn a year, and send off hundreds of fattening hogs to Richmond, Petersburg, Suffolk, Smithfield, and Edenton.

He would put them under my charge and allow me to bring home the bags of money received in payment. One Spring when I was hauling rails, he thought I was staying too long in the woods, so he took to watching me. He did not tell me of it though until I asked for an order to relate to the church what I had faith to believe the Lord had done for my soul. "*Jim,*" he said, "*do you believe He has done anything for your soul?*" "*Yes sir,*" I said. "*And I believe it too,*" he answered, "*for I have been watching you for years, and often see you in the woods, after you had loaded your car, kneel down and pray for yourself and for me; but I would not interrupt you.*"

He told me to take the rest of the day to talk with him, and that I might go to meeting whenever I pleased, for the time was not his but mine;

but I only stayed awhile with him, and then slipped off to my work it was such a good day for work.

The Lord promised me that when I went to give an account of my exercises to the church, He would be with me and bless the day. It, indeed, proved to be a lovely day, and the Lord seemed to manifest His special presence. As I was telling of His dealings with my poor soul, I could see the gentlemen and ladies trembling and wiping their eyes. The old Elder declared it was useless to examine the candidate any further; For said he, "*we cannot go anywhere he cannot go with us.*" Many said they had not seen such a candidate in thirty years; and after I was through talking, they told me to talk on, for it was greater than the preaching they had heard. One great gentleman was struck then and there under conviction. At the beginning of the service he sat away up high in one corner of the meeting-house, but before I finished speaking, he was standing by my side, half bent and trembling. He did not rest until he experienced conversion, and was baptized a year later.

He used to hail me and talk with me every time we met; and we loved each other.

On the day of my baptism, before I reached the water, the devil tried to persuade me that if I were baptized, I would be drowned; but I did not believe him. And, as always, he turned out to be a liar. Six years after I joined the church the Lord told

me he was going to make me a minister of His gospel; and that, too, before the year was out, no matter how much I might run and hide from it. But I thought surely not yet; and went one Sunday to Billy Thompson's quarter where two colored brethren were expected to preach that day. When I arrived they urged me to go forward and speak to the people, saying that I was better taught of the Spirit than they. I wanted to run away, but saw no chance. I felt I had nothing to say, and trembled like a leaf; but when I arose this hymn came to me at once, and I gave it out; "*That awful day will surely come; The appointed hour makes haste When I must stand before the Judge And pass the solemn test.*" etc.

I tried to pray; and when I had finished that duty, I was as much at a loss what to say as ever. But this text was given me, as well as every word I spoke from it; "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and sup with him and he with me.*" (Rev. 3:20)

The strength and warmth of feelings came over me, and I could not help from weeping while I spoke the Saviour's sweet kind call and welcome to the poor, lost sinners unto him. The people said that they had never heard better preaching than on that day. They called me "preacher" after that. Another text given me once was, "*The eyes of the Lord*

are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry." (Psalms 34;15). Another was *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it bring forth more fruit."* (John 15;1,2)

By invitation, I would often preach, especially on funeral occasions, in porches of gentlemen's houses, to congregations two or three hundred persons. After service the gentlemen crowd around me, and push a book before my face, and see if I could not read. I assured them that I did not know a letter; could not tell one if they were going to hang me unless I did. *"How can you preach, then? We would rather hear you preach than anyone else."* I told them the Lord was my teacher. Other books can be burned up, but mine is fixed with the seven seals of the Lord. Oh, if any person wants high learning, let him get the grammer of Christ!

I must not forget to tell you that He once said to me, "Always be dutiful to your earthly master, and tell him the truth, and you can ever meet him gladly. And so, by always living in prayer and faith to me, you will at last invite, instead of dreading, death; and face it boldly." This command was put over me, and I thought that I could not do enough for him after that.

In the Lord's direction to me in

pursuing his ministry, He has said, *"James, you know my terrors, and shall persuade men to strive for beauty that will never die, for crowns of righteousness that shall never perish. You shall warn sinners to repent; you shall preach my gospel by the tree of life."* I once prayed to the Lord to take away this talking and deal with me as other of his people; and for awhile He left me in silence, and did not visit me at all. But, as I was going across an old field one day, I heard a singing low down at a distance, which gradually ascended the heavens, and followed and overtook me, and struck down on my face. "Ah, James," said my inward mentor, *"You disbelieved in the way in which I was bringing you, but I shall not deal with you otherwise. Talk with your brethren, and you will find that they and you witness the same truths; have all drunk of the same spring, and have been born of the same God. I shall talk with you thus, as man to man; you shall feel, hear, and see with your inward ears and eyes, and you shall believe. These are the great witnesses that shall stand death and face judgement."* You shall pray and thank me every Christmas day and New Years day that your life has been preserved. You shall glorify me. I will be with you and support and supply you with gospel and scriptures. You shall drink of me and never run dry. I will

keep you here a long time, working for me. You need not think that pain or chill will carry you off. You shall know when I call you. I will send six angels when you expire, who shall convey you home to heaven, and then one of your attendant spirits shall exclaim 'Fly wide open, ye pearly gates of the New Jerusalem, and let the righteous nation in,' *"A crown of glory shall be put on your head, and you shall take your seat at my right hand, and your end shall be peace."*

One day, while I was in the field, it seemed that He slipped around in front of me, and treated me with a drink far sweeter than all the sugar and coffee in the world; that, if the taste had remained, I should have never wanted water.

During the night of the shelling (6th of July, 1863), I sat in my door facing the river, assured by the Lord that I should not be harmed; and I was not, though I could see the shells bursting through my walling, and firing a neighbor's dwelling house. The Yankees asked me if I did not want to go with them and have my freedom. I told them I did not want to go from my old home, where I knew my people, off with them where I knew nobody; and, besides, that I was already free- that I had a freedom that no man could take from me, even the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. They said they wished they had that freedom, (I thought to myself, you won't get it by throwing bomb-shells), and they

left me alone.

Oh, this something within me often sings its own praise, prays its own prayers, and preaches its own sermons. As I am working with my hoe in my little field, it often holds a meeting like an association! And as it talks to me of the greatness and goodness of God, I have to stop working and sit down; and my eyes become leaky as a spring, and my tears drop like the rain. I never stop thinking of Him; I can never thank him enough for his blessings. I have tried hard many a year to get a better love for Him, but I find I can only feel the same old love still. Sometimes I rise and sit up in my bed at night, rapturously listening to the marvelous glorious language of my God. Oh, the teachings of this heavenly voice will never leave me! No thunder or bombshell can drown it. The world and the devil cannot stop it. Old Jim is going to die there! For almost 50 years he has been a mouth for God, laboring for Him, and laying off his parables. Poor old fellow, he is "most gone," but not afraid to die; for his life is hid with Christ in God, safe from all harm. (Col.3;3). There's my dependence. I'm not living here for a peck of meal or pound of meat, that I may have something to eat hereafter, that I may not perish there. I long to die the death of the righteous, and have my last end like His. (Num.23; 10). The Lord sustains me with his comforting word, *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Yea, sayeth the*

Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

Our last work is not done after God speaks peace to our souls.

It is rather begun than ended. We must follow all the directions of the Spirit, try to serve the true and living God aright, to get all our help from Him, for without Him we can do nothing, endeavor to die in the triumphs of faith. Ours is a whispering God. He speaks so softly that even if another head be touching yours, it cannot hear Him. While He is speaking the tears run down your cheeks.

The Spirit is made overseer of the body, to mortify its lusts. We shall carry the warfare with us until death. When we offend, the good Lord whips us well from it, but will never take his loving kindness from us. (Psalms 89;30-34) We are careful to avoid that place in the future.

"When grace is given to the soul", He said to me, "it keeps pushing away sin, and distilling in the soul until it drives out every unclean thing, and in death washes it as pure as gold, and fit for the kingdom of heaven."

I could not tell the end of his instruction in a thousand years. We shall all meet at the great Day. All the judges in the world shall be there, and be silent and tremble, while the great judge only will speak. There will be no rocks or mountains to hide the wicked from his vengeance. They will all be turned into Hell; while the righteous shall be welcomed to life

eternal.

Sometimes I doubt, but deliverance comes and stamps the foundation sure. I feel that I know that God who thunders when he pleases, and calms the rolling seas; who directs the whirlwind and rides upon the storm. I have thought I loved my wife and children better than anything else in the world, but now I know that, *"I love my God, his ways, and his people better than these; and best of all."*

Thus, dear Brother Temple, I have given you an account of some of the exercises of this truly wonderful man of God. His brethren know that his is the *"path of the just, which is a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."*

REMARKS:

I was baptized by my father at Williamston, N.C, in Roanoke River, January 11, 1864, and in the same year wrote the above narrative. The testimony of the old brother was a blessing to me then, and is a blessing to me now. I cannot read it without tears. May the Lord bless it to thousands of the present readers.

The shelling of Williamston by the Federal gunboats on the river July 6, 1863, was an account of a few Confederate soldiers passing through, who, however, did not shoot at the Federals. The bombardment continued part of the afternoon and all night. Nearly every resident, except a few Old Baptists, left

the town. Two houses were burned by the shells, but no person hurt. When the Marines marched up main street next morning they saw my father sitting on his front porch, and asked him what he had been doing all night. He replied, "*I have been praying for you.*"

If all men had this spirit, there would be no more wars.

Silvester Hassell

(The above was re-published in the Gospel Messenger of August, 1917, and is re-published in the Signs by request We found it very interesting, and feel that our readers will also. - J. D. Wood)

A MYSTERY

There was a mystery which was kept secret from the foundation of the world, "hid in God," a mystery which was revealed to none of the sons of God before the gospel age, a mystery of which Paul alone of all the apostles was made a minister. This dispensation of the gospel was committed unto him, that whether he preached willingly or by constraint, still it had to be preached. Necessity was laid upon him, and there was a woe unto him if he preached it not. The whole work of salvation is a mystery, and no part of it can be understood with the natural mind. But there was a special feature of this great work of salvation which had been hidden

until the gospel age, and this special feature of the work of grace was given to Paul to preach unto the Gentiles. It was for the Gentiles' sake that Paul was a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and while there were twelve apostles unto the Jews, we, the Gentiles, have Paul, who is the thirteenth apostle.

This mystery of which Paul was made a minister he tells us about in his letter to the church at Ephesus. Now, the church at Ephesus was a Gentile church and Paul was a Jew. The same truth which was revealed in Paul was also revealed in these Gentile brethren. These Gentiles knew nothing about Judaism, and were strangers to that covenant which God gave Israel by the hand of Moses. This Mosaic covenant forbade the Jews to deal with the Gentiles. According to that covenant no Gentiles had any right to the feasts or the solemn assemblies of the Jews; they could not partake in the temple service, nor in any of the sacrifices or holy things. From all these the Gentiles were shut out. He did not have the oracles of God, he did not have the prophets, none of the types or shadows, was indeed barred from all the blessings and privileges of the Israelites. Consequently the Mosaic law constituted a barrier between Jew and Gentile, it was a "middle wall of partition" forbidding intercourse and fellowship between them. It was a handwriting of legal ordinances enjoined upon Israel for their obedience, car-

rying with it blessings for the observance and punishments for the breach. But none of these blessings or punishments could ever be the lot of the Gentiles, for the Gentiles were never under the Mosaic law. If Jesus, therefore, were made under the Mosaic law he would be the Savior of none but Jews, no Gentile could ever benefit by the shedding of Jesus' blood.

When the Scripture says that Jesus was made of a woman, made under the law, it is not the Mosaic law which is meant, but the law under which Adam fell in condemnation, which fall embraced all the elect of God in Adam. This fall embraced both Jew and Gentile, for there was yet no difference between Jew and Gentile when Adam transgressed. The obedience of Jesus was not confined to the law of Moses, but his obedience was unto the law of God, of which law of God the law of Moses was but a faint shadow, portraying in the temporal blessings which fell to the lot of Israel the spiritual blessings which under the new covenant fall to the lot of spiritual Israel.

Indeed, literally, Jesus did not keep the Mosaic law at all. That law forbade any work whatsoever on the sabbath day, and Jesus did pluck ears of corn on that day. That law said, Honor thy father and mother, and Jesus never did honor Mary as his mother nor Joseph as his father. That law said that any man calling himself equal with God was a blasphemer and was to be put to death,

and Jesus did say, I and my Father are one. All these, and other acts which Jesus did, were looked upon as literal breaches of the law. But in the spirit Jesus did keep the law, and fulfilled to every jot and tittle its spiritual import; but he did far more, he obeyed the law and the will of God, so that his salvation is not confined to Jews, which it would have been had he obeyed merely the law of Moses, but reaches out and takes in both Jew and Gentile: all his people from the four winds of heaven and from the four corners of the earth, in every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue.

Thus we see that the Mosaic law comprised a "handwriting of ordinances" which was against the Gentiles, being contrary to them, because they were barred from the observance of it and from the blessings or privileges or punishments of it.

This Mosaic covenant made an enmity between Jew and Gentile. So when Jesus died it ended the old covenant. He took away the handwriting of ordinances, nailing them to his cross, thus abolishing the enmity. This expression, "*Having abolished in his flesh the enmity,*" and that other expression, "*Having slain the enmity*" by the cross, both found in the second chapter of Ephesians, do not refer at all to the enmity of the carnal mind and the mind of Christ, nor to the enmity between the flesh and the Spirit, but to the enmity between Jew

and Gentile, which enmity arose from the makeup of the Mosaic covenant which excluded Gentiles from participating in it. This enmity, this old covenant, had to be abolished before Gentiles could come into the kingdom of God. This abolition Jesus performed by the death of the cross.

Resulting from this death of Jesus comes the revelation of the mystery kept hid from the foundation of the world, and it is thus: the church, or body of Christ, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, are one in the kingdom of God. Having broken down the middle wall of partition Christ made of the twain one new man. The "twain" means two, and the two are Jew and the Gentile. Of these two he makes one new man, or one new body, the body of Christ. All are members of his flesh and of his bones, all fitly joined together, growing unto a holy temple in the Lord, builded through the Spirit for the habitation of his honor and glory. The children of God are not destined to become perfect men and perfect women. No, never. The gospel holds forth no such promise, but we all shall, that is, all his people from among both Jews and Gentiles, shall ultimately come unto the one perfect man, and that one perfect man is the measure of stature of the fullness of Christ. We shall all become as we already are, molded into one body, the body of our Lord.

Paul says somewhere in writing to the church at Corinth, Ye are all

one bread. No loaf of bread can by any possibility be resolved back into its original grains of wheat. Each grain and all the grains lose their separateness when in the loaf of bread. Just so, only infinitely more so, the body of Christ while composed of redeemed sinners of Adam's fallen race can never be resolved back again into the individual men and women whence it came. Now this is the mystery which Paul particularly refers to in his letter to the church at Ephesus: "*That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body (with the Jews), and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.*" This doctrine of the new man; that is, of the body of Christ, made of Jew and Gentile, a wholly new thing until the resurrection of Christ, that is the special dispensation which was committed unto Paul to preach. It was not in other ages made known unto the sons of men, but it is now in the gospel age revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

In some of the prophecies of the Old Testament, to be sure, there is abundant evidence of the bringing of the Gentiles to the light of the truth. Especially is this true of the prophecies of Isaiah. But that One body, or one new man, was to be formed of the hosts of the redeemed from among both Jews and Gentiles that both were to be quickened together with Christ and to be raised up together with Christ, and both to

be made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ; we say all this had been kept hid throughout all the ages heretofore to be revealed and made known in these last times, and was first made known in the ministry of Paul, the Gentiles' apostle, and was the special dispensation of the gospel committed unto him. This, the unity of the whole church of God in the one body of the new man, Christ Jesus, is the "unsearchable riches of Christ" which Paul says he was especially called to preach among the Gentiles. This oneness of Christ and his people, whosoever they may be in the flesh, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free, Greek or barbarian, is the gist and kernel of the whole gospel matter. It is the fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined, on which God feasts his children in his holy mount.

Elder H. H. Lefferts
Nov. 1, 1920

(We question if Paul
was the 13th Apostle. Ed.)

ECCLESIASTES 8:6-7.

*Because to every purpose
there is time and judgment,
therefore the misery of man is
great upon him.*

*For he knoweth not that
which shall be: for who can
tell him when it shall be?*

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." - Hebrews iv.15,16.

What heart can conceive or tongue recount the daily, hourly triumphs of the Lord Jesus Christ's all conquering grace? We see scarcely a millionth part of what he, as a King on his throne, is daily doing; and yet we see enough to know that he ever lives at God's right hand, and lives to save and bless .

What a crowd of needy petitioners every moment surrounds his throne! What urgent wants and woes to redress; what cutting griefs and sorrows to assuage; what broken hearts to bind up; what wounded consciences to heal; what countless prayers to hear; what earnest petitions to grant; what stubborn foes to subdue; what guilty fears to quell ! What clemency, what kindness , what long suffering what compassion, what mercy, what love, and yet what power and authority does this Almighty Sovereign display! No circumstance is too trifling; no petitioner too insignificant; no case too hard; no difficulty too great; no suer too importunate; no beggar

too ragged; no bankrupt too penniless ; no debtor too insolvent, for him not to notice and not to relieve. Sitting on his throne of grace, his allseeing eye views all, his almighty hand grasps all, and his loving heart embraces all whom the Father gave him by covenant, whom he himself redeemed by his blood, and whom the blessed Spirit has quickened into life by his invincible power. The hopeless, the helpless; the outcasts whom no man careth for; the tossed with tempest and not comforted ; the ready to perish; the mourners in Zion; the bereaved widow; the wailing orphan; the sick in body, the still more sick in heart ; the racked with hourly pain; the fevered consumptive; the wrestler with death's last struggle O what crowds of pitiable objects surround his throne; and all needing a look from his eye, a word from his lips, a smile from his face, a touch from his hand! O could we but see what his grace is, what his grace has, what his grace does; and could we but feel more what it is doing in and for ourselves, we should have more exalted views of the reign of grace now exercised on high by Zion's enthroned King!

Elder J. C. Philpot

ST. JOHN 15:5

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Job 37: 23-24.

Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.

Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.

MEETINGS

**LOWER MAYO
FIFTH SUNDAY MEETING**

The Lower Mayo Association fifth Sunday meeting is to be held, the Lord willing, on Sunday only, April 30th, 2006. We hope to start singing at 10:30 A.M. and preaching at 11:00. Spoon Creek Church will host the meeting and it will be held in Russell Creek Meeting House.

Directions for those who do not know the location; the meeting house is located approximately 9 miles south of Stuart, Virginia near the Virginia, North Carolina Border. Those coming north or south on Route #8, turn east on Ayers Orchard Road #653 for about 1 mile. Turn right on Moorefield Store Road #631. Go 1/4 mile to Church location on right. Those coming east or west on Route #58, turn south on Southfork Loop #827, turn on Ayers

Orchard Road #653. Go 3 miles to Moorefield Store Road #631. Turn left, go 1/4 mile to Church location on right.

We invite the ministers, brothers, sisters and all believers in Salvation by Grace to come and be with us during this meeting.

In bonds of Love,
Lowell Hopkins, Clerk

**ELDER J.B. FARMER
COMING TO BIG MEADOWS**

Elder J.B. Farmer of Grayson, Ky., the Lord willing, will be with us on the second Sunday in April.

Elder Farmer is also an associate editor of the Signs of the Times.

Big Meadows is located about 20 miles below Graham, N.C. Those traveling I-85 take the Pittsboro/Graham exit and go 17 miles toward Pittsboro. After crossing the Cane Creek Bridge take first road to right at top of hill – go 4 miles to a cross-road and turn left – go 1 mile then to church.

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

Elder Kenneth R. Key
Sister JoAnn Self, Clerk

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union will convene, the Lord willing, with Moons Creek Church the 5th Sunday in April 2006. The church is located about 1/2 mile east of Highway #86 between Danville and Yanceyville.

Traveling from Danville toward Yanceyville on Highway 86, turn left onto Parks Springs Road.

Kenneth R. Key, Moderator
Sister Sue Blalock, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR FEBRUARY 2006

Sheryl Jackson -TX	25.00
M. L. Richardson -FL	5.00
Ruby Dyer -VA.....	5.00
Lowell Hopkins -VA	5.00
Herbert Dodson -VA	5.00
Nellie Dalton -VA	5.00
Clemmie Tucker -LA	5.00
Anne Pearson -MI	15.00
Connie Franco -TX	2.00
Livie Thompson -VA	3.00
Ralph Dale -NC	5.00
Alvis Beacham -NC	5.00

OBITUARIES

LLOYD CUMMINS SPIKES

Brother Lloyd Spikes was the last remaining member of Big Springs Primitive Baptist Church in Elgin, Oregon. He had been a member for over 50 years. He died on February 14, 2006, at the age of 90 years. Brother Spikes was born May 1, 1915, to Lloyd F. and Elva Cummings Spikes in Elgin and was the oldest of seven children.

Brother Lloyd grew up living and working on farms in the area and did occasional carpentering jobs. During World War II, he served in the Navy in the Pacific. Following the war, he was a partner in a small saw-mill operation and then started his own construction business which he operated for over 24 years. He also served as Mayor of Elgin for three terms after serving on the City Council for several years.

He married Florence E. Walter in 1936 and to this union were born three children. They are: daughter Carrol and husband Chuck Turk of Portland; daughter Connie and husband Tom Flaskerud of Las Vegas, NV; and son Mike and wife Kristy Spikes of Corvallis, OR. He is also survived by two sisters, Helen Maxwell of Walla Walla, WA, and Mary Ann Hazelwood of Ellensburg, WA and his aunt Katherine Strauss of Coos Bay, OR. He leaves behind five

grandchildren, four great grandchildren and numerous younger relatives. He was predeceased by siblings Dorothy Faught, Tom Spikes, Jean Weaver and Dale Spikes.

His first wife, Sister Florence, was a member of Big Springs Primitive Baptist Church and also predeceased him December 1996. It was a privilege and blessing for my wife and I to visit in their home and to hold a service in their home. Brother Lloyd was blessed with much spiritual understanding and loved to discuss the scriptures. We continued to do so by correspondence and telephone until shortly before he had a heart attack. In 1998, he married Beth Miller who passed away in 2004.

There were no ministers of like-precious faith in his area so he requested that there be no funeral or graveside service. He was blessed to live his faith and to die in it.

Submitted in love,
Cleo D. Robertson

ROMANS 5:1-2.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

By whom also we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

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202 Carousel Lane, Meadows of Dan, Va. 24120-4403

SONG

*My God, my life, my love,
To thee, to thee I call;
I cannot live if thou remove,
For thou art all in all.*

*The smilings of thy face,
How amiable they are!
'Tis heaven to rest in thine embrace
And nowhere else but there.*

*Not all the harps above
Can make a heavenly place
If God his residence remove,
Or but conceal his face.*

*Nor earth, nor all the sky
Can one delight afford;
No, not a drop of real joy
Without thy presence, Lord.*

*Thou art the sea of love,
Where all my pleasures roll;
The circle where my passions move,
And centre of my soul.*

*To thee my spirits fly,
With infinite desire;
And yet how far from thee I lie!
Dear Jesus, raise me higher.*

C.M.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 98
 Elder J. B. Farmer

CORRESPONDENCE 104

ARTICLES 108
 Riley Justice

VOICES OF THE PAST 111
 J. A. Ashburn
 Mrs. Pearley E. Smith
 Elder J.C. Philpot

CONTRIBUTIONS 119

OBITUARIES 120

EDITORIAL

“For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.” 2 Corinthians 1:12



Elder J.B. Farmer

In agreement with the conversation or way of life of God’s children, the gospel containing the true doctrine is so simple that it confounds the minds of all men who are wise

in their own conceits. It is so mysteriously simple that the little babes in

Christ who still have need of milk, and also those who are brought to maturity and have need of meat, are all glad to receive it. And they all are miraculously fed and edified by it. This gospel does not stand in the wisdom of the fleshly man but rather stands in the unfathomable wisdom of God in a mystery. In the beginning of the revelation of the gospel of truth we are taught that the eternal God, by His unimaginable wisdom and power, made the world and all things in it. He perfectly made all these things, both seen and unseen, for His good pleasure. Although many, by natural means, have tried to find out how things came to be as they are, they have all been confounded and made to stumble as blind men in the dark. By God’s great hidden wisdom He orders and sustains all things that He made. His little ones all rejoice and marvel at the great and mysterious creation by the almighty God of the world and all that is in it, and the sun, the moon and the whole universe of stars. His little ones hold the mystery of creation in simple faith and are taught to simply, *“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”*

Men in their carnal minds and ungodly insincerity try to confuse things. They say that there was no creation - that all things just happened without any guiding wisdom or power. They say that life sponta-

neously began and that it gradually became more complex over time. And they say that life, all by itself, developed into the intricate world that we know today. Since the world is so plainly full of the majesty and mystery of the Creator's work, how foolish is the carnal mind, and what blindness is manifest by those who deny Him? In the world there is no Godly sincerity or simple faith that acknowledges God as God in all His marvelous works and ways. *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."*

Here is the simple truth that I am made to believe according to the scriptures concerning God's people. Before God made the world, He foreknew His own people, who are His generation. He foreknew them in that He created them in Christ Jesus and set His everlasting love upon them. Before we had a being in this world God knew us and knew all about us. He knew the instant of our natural and spiritual births. He knew the day of our death. He knew where and how we would live. He knew what we would look like and what our name would be. He knew all our troubles and our joys. He knew every step we would take and even every word that would come from our mouths, yea even our thoughts before we had them. He loves His own much better than a good natural father loves his children, and He seeks their benefit always. There is nothing that is able to separate the Children of God from that everlast-

ing love of God. Here is how far God went to secure the happiness of His little ones that He foreknew. He loved them to the extent that He gave His only begotten Son to live and die for them in order that they should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The simplicity of the gospel of salvation by grace is that God predestinated all those whom He loved and gave to Christ, to be conformed to His image. He fixed it so that none would be lost, but all should be raised up in the image and glory of Christ at His coming. Nothing can withstand the word of God. God promised that He would bring His people to glory and He cannot lie, neither can He fail in a promise. Otherwise He would not be God. But our Lord certainly is the God of all creation, even of heaven and earth and none can stay His hand or even ask, "Why doest Thou." God has promised to save His people and to raise them up in His likeness and He shall do it. *"He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."*

Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, but natural men only see natural things. They use their imaginings to build up a kind of complicated religion that satisfies the natural reasoning. Many even take the scriptures and twist them around and try to make them fit their fleshly ideas. The carnal mind would like to think that all men have a chance at salvation. They do not see that

God made the choice of His elect long before man was ever placed here on earth. They falsely think rather that through a man's proper choices he may secure his place in heaven. But even his heaven is little better than this earth. It has all the elements of this earth. To his understanding, families will be reunited there, and they will follow out their favorite old pursuits after some fashion. He even imagines that men will have larger and smaller rewards and positions in his supposed heaven. But according to the scriptures, I am made to believe that there shall be neither male nor female there, and we shall be as the angels. And those that labored in the vineyard were all given the same reward whether they worked one hour or many hours through the heat of the day. The reasoning of the carnal mind is always false. *"That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."*

The practice of the true church is the very model of simplicity. It is all of grace. The people He has called with a holy and effectual calling must hear His voice and live. God before determined that all of His chosen people must be brought out of the darkness of this world and into the glorious light of the gospel. Jesus built His church and set in it all the things necessary to glorify the Father. His people are made to love the Light rather than the darkness. They are made to love Him with all

their heart, mind, soul and strength; and they are made to love His people as their own selves. His people are given a mind to please Him that made all things. They are given a good understanding concerning the practice of true religion. All things must be done in love and therefore in decency and in order. There shall be no respecting of persons. All true believers are made to count their brethren better than themselves, and must not lord over one another. Even the meetings themselves are utter simplicity. There we find His people singing from the heart, praying prayers indited of God, preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit, and fellowshiping in love. *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."*

There are many organizations that have taken His name, but actually despise Him and depart from His commandments and His ways. They always confuse and complicate things. Instead of singing from the heart, they must have musical instruments and fleshly emotion to lead them. Instead of prayer being sent down from above, there are

men's ideas coming from the earth and going no higher than the earth. In place of the wisdom of God being preached in a mystery, enticing words of men's wisdom abound. Rather than having humble loving fellowship, there is a respecting of persons and the pride of life and the lust of the flesh. They introduce Sunday schools, missions, women's and men's organizations, tithing, programs of all kinds, unsound literature, and all sorts of other fleshly practices. God, knowing their ways has perfectly described them in His word. *"In that day seven women shall take hold of one man saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach."*

This one great salvation by grace alone is so simple that it cannot be understood by the wise of this world. This salvation was complete before the world was made. It extends from God in the beginning and returns to Him in the end. He has wrought all of it from the creation of His people in Christ; to the foreknowledge and predestination of them; to the formation of them on the earth; to the sending of His only begotten Son to save them from their sins; to the giving of faith to them in the Spirit; to the calling of His people out of darkness; to the establishment of their hearts in the doctrine of grace; to their walk in the obedience of faith; to their being kept and being made to be faithful

to death; to their resurrection and change, and to their eternal abode with Him. God is our all and all and our great salvation. *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption."*

By their carnal reasoning, men seek to confuse the simple truth of salvation by grace. They falsely say that God wants all men to be saved; and that salvation is secured in time by a man's so called "free will" choice; and that God writes one's name in the Lamb's book of life when he decides to believe; and that one obliges God to save him by deciding to believe; and that obedience depends upon the creature; and many even falsely say that one of God's children may fall away from grace and perish. But salvation for time and eternity is of the Lord. And Jesus said, *"And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."*

The true doctrine of the Lord concerning the resurrection of the dead is so simple that the least of God's little children in knowledge, and the greatest of them, believe it and embrace it and long for it. They are made to see themselves as vile worms of the dust, that cannot do anything good of themselves. They cry out with the apostle, *"O wretched man that I am! Who*

shall deliver me from the body of this death?" They are made to know that this world is not their home and that they are strangers and pilgrims here. They are taught that the whole world lies in wickedness. They, as did righteous Lot, vex their righteous souls from day to day with their unlawful deeds. They are the creation of God that groans and travails until this very hour, earnestly waiting for and expecting the adoption, which is the redemption of our body. They desire to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. It is their hope and expectation that when the Lord shall appear, they shall see Him as He is and shall be made like Him in a glorified body like His.

Men in a carnal mind, be they ever so knowledgeable, always end up corrupting the simplicity of the gospel. And many use the scriptures to try to prove their positions. But we have been forewarned of them. We are told that some will come saying there is no resurrection of the body. Some will teach that the resurrection is accomplished when one dies and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Others will say the resurrection is already past. Some will say that the resurrection could come at any moment. Some will say there are two resurrections of God's people. Some will say that Jesus, after the resurrection, will set up a thousand year reign upon the earth. All those teachings, to my understanding, are very misleading and false.

We must not be deceived by any of these things. When anyone uses a line of teaching that is complicated and hard to follow, he has departed from the simplicity of the gospel. When one makes many assumptions about the meaning of scriptures, especially if he says he has reasoned these things out using the scriptures, in my judgment, his word is to be closely tried by the simplicity of the gospel. One does not have to be a linguist or a bible scholar to understand the truth. If one comes in meanness of spirit, and condemns others that disagree with him, we are taught to beware. If one's teachings agree with the things being taught in the worldly religions, we must take heed. We are taught to try the spirits whether they are of God. We are taught to examine ourselves whether we are in the faith. We are cautioned that we are not to be blown about by every wind of doctrine. The gospel is simple. The true gospel preachers are humbled down by God Himself to have a Godly sincerity. They come not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. They come speaking the simple truth in love. The apostle Paul, by the Spirit of God, desired that the saints not "*be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*"

According to the scriptures, at the end of time, only after the falling away and only after the man of sin is revealed, Christ shall come once, not upon the earth, but in the air. At His coming, all shall be raised from

the dead – some to life eternal and some to everlasting destruction. The dead in Christ shall be raised first, then those which are alive and remain at His coming shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. All those that have died in Christ, whose spirits had before returned to God, shall be brought with Christ at His coming to be united with their bodies which shall have been made spiritual, and each one shall be perfected, along with all other children of God, into one spiritual body. All of God's children shall see Him as He is and shall be made like Him and shall be with Him forever. The wicked shall be destroyed by the brightness of His coming with an everlasting destruction. The earth shall melt with a fervent heat and the elements shall clean dissolve away at His presence. That will be the end of the world as we know it. David was blessed to say, *“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.”* This is the simple testimony of the inspired writers, as I understand it.

I am sure that some will say this is much too simplistic. They will say that the truth about salvation, church practice, obedience and the resurrection is way more complex than what has been briefly stated here. Of course the truth can never be fully expounded, but the truth is always profoundly simple. You must be the judge of these things. These are the things I believe that God has shown

to me, and not to me alone, but unto many that I count to be faithful, loving and sound brethren. If I am in the dark, I must remain so until the God of heaven and earth is pleased to raise the veil for me, if indeed He ever does. However, if these things are true, which I am made to wholeheartedly believe that they are; by grace let us hold them fast until the Lord of glory shall appear; let us, with all saints, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; let us rejoice in the truth, and have our conversation in Godly sincerity and in simplicity toward one another; let us glory in the power and wisdom of God and not in the weakness and foolishness of fleshly, worldly wisdom; let our hearts be established in the grace of God to the end, and let all greatness be ascribed to our God.

Written in love and in hope of eternal life.

Elder J.B. Farmer

JOHN 1:1-3.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

CORRESPONDENCE

February 23, 2006

Dear Brother and Sister Terry,

This afternoon I realized in my weak way that my subscription for "The Signs of the Times" was way past due. I thought of you and how that you had continued to send "The Signs" even when it was past due. I very much appreciate the fact that you desired that I continue to receive it. I enjoy the paper very much each month. I have enclosed a check to pay for the months I am past due as well as for two more years. In it's editorials and experiences it speaks of things that God has accomplished for his people and blessed me to believe and experience.

I have been blessed to meet all present writers and editors and some of the voices of the past writers. I hope that I am thankful to God for editors that He blesses with His grace, and gives them the desire to write and put the paper together.

"The Signs" causes me at times to look back to the book of remembrance - how that God blessed me to meet and visit with such loving and humble brothers and sisters in Christ in past years during my visits to the Stauton River and Smith River Associations. Also, this book of remembrance causes me to think of changes God has blessed my life

with. The Apostle Paul said *"We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."* That us we believe is the ones Christ went to the cross for, the ones that have that love. I have people to tell me that I don't have much if Hope is all I have, but that Hope that God's children have is not to be ashamed of, for it is the love of God in our hearts. Brother Terry, this is sweet to me because this love has changed the way I walked. I believe it quickened us who were dead in trespasses and sins. Paul wrote to the Corinthians *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."*

Elder Terry, a few weeks back in my discourse, prayers and gracing the table, I would beg God to give me wisdom and understanding. Something (I believe it was God) caused me to study the book of Job. I found in the 28th chapter that Job was asking *"where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?"* God showed him that it couldn't be found in the land of the living or bought with jewels of silver and fine gold. Then he asked, *"and whence then cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding?"* God showed

him that it is hid from all living.

To make this short - for what I was shown that God told Job. "And unto man he said, *"behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom and to depart from evil is understanding."* This to me is when man begins to see what he is by nature and to realize who this Sovereign God is - the one that holds the keys to all things. You are made to know you need his Grace and Mercy. This causes his children to turn from evil - this is the beginning of understanding. This wisdom and understanding is a gift from God.

We have been blessed to believe in a Savior who loved his children with an everlasting love. We have been made to believe as the Apostle Paul when he asked, *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"* He went on to answer his question. *"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* The Apostle Paul covered it all. To me this is the sweetest doctrine there could be, knowing that nothing will be able to separate God's people from this love of God has been merciful to Sylvia and I. He blesses me and Sylvia (when health permits her) to go each month to our home church Bordeaux. I still try to serve

some of the churches down in the Buttahatchie-Hopewell Association each month. As we get older and closer to the end of this life's journey this doctrine of predestination, election and grace is sweet.

Hope you and Sister Terry are doing well. We love you two and all brothers and sisters up East that we have met. Our desire is to have any of you to visit in our churches or home anytime, with the help of God we will try to make you feel welcome.

I didn't intend on writing such a long note, as you can tell I am not a very good writer. I would like to leave you with this last thought though. I hope we are blessed to leave this world looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

In Bonds of Love,
James T. Howard

February 20, 2006

Dear Elder Terry,

May this find the elect in peace, resting in the finished work of Christ.

By grace may the Editors of the Signs continue to serve the believers.

Enclosed is a check for two more years of the Signs of the Times.

Unworthy brother,
Earl W. Hall
8307 Appaloosa
Austin, Tx 78737-4004

March 7, 2006

Dear Elder Terry,

I received my issue of the Signs yesterday, and I noticed the subscription is due for renewal this month. Therefore, please find enclosed with this short letter a check in the amount of \$15.00 to renew my subscription to this periodical for another year.

The article beginning on page 65 by H. J. Redd is the only one that I have read, so far. It is a good story written by Mr. Redd who apparently was from Riverview, Alabama. However one cannot *tell* at what date it was written, only that it is listed in front as "VOICES OF THE PAST."

Those church fires down in Bibb County Alabama were really a terrible thing to happen last January. This was the county where my late Grandfather, William Ashley Barrett was born and raised. My wife and I were at the Rehobeth Baptist Church (one that was burnt clear to the ground) to attend a Family Reunion back in 1995. We did not go inside this old church which was founded in 1819, but were there to hear an historian tell about the history of this old church and of some of our ancestors buried in the church cemetery nearby. I do not believe this was a Primitive Baptist Church, however, the name of Barrett appears on some of the old records there. Grandpa Barrett later lived in Louisiana, Texas, and California. He was a deacon back in the

1940's of the old Seclusia Church of Southern California. He died at the age of 86 in 1953 and is buried in the Exeter Cemetery.

We hope this finds you doing well, Elder Terry. We are doing fairly well at this time. May the Lord continue to bless you and your household. Please pray for us when at the Throne of Grace.

Sincerely,
Bill

Oct. 14, 2006

Elder Wm. Hale Terry,

Dear Terry,

I trust this finds you well. I still enjoy reading the writing of different ones who are so able to write of the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

I can only read a short time - my eyes are failing also. I have hearing problems at 97 years but I thank the Lord I am as able as I am. I thank the Lord for his goodness and mercy to me.

My plans are to live with my twin sister Jane S. Carroll until I get an apartment or move in with someone else.

One in Hope of
eternal life in
Christ Jesus our Lord
Ellen Sellars

3-18-06

3-1-06

Elder Hale Terry:

Dear Brother Hale,

Enclosed is money to renew my subscription to the Signs for another year. Use what is left over as needed.

I enjoy reading the Signs, and would not like to be without it. I am now reading some old Signs from the 1950's to 1970's and really do enjoy the good experiences and letters as well as the articles on doctrine and order.

I wish more people would write for publication, and would love to see someone write on Genesis, 49th Chapter, 10th verse, where Jacob was blessing his sons before his death, especially Judah's blessing which reads: The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law given from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Would you please write on it? I hope someone will.

Just an old sinner and a weary stranger.

Aunt Edrie Clifton

THESSALONIANS 5:21.

Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.

Elder Wm. Hale Terry,

The Signs of the Times is such a blessing.

Enclosed is our subscription for 2 more years. Ours doesn't expire until May 2006 but I wish to renew now and give a gift subscription at the same time. I have enclosed a one year subscription for the following.

Please send their subscription to Mr. Jimmy & Darlene Wilson
125 County Road 4116
Quitman, TX 75783-4957

Thank you for so much and God Bless Our Country, its Leader, the men and women fighting to keep this country free.

Amazing Grace
John & Faith Ballard

Enclosed check for \$40.00

John 3:1-2.

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

 ARTICLES

God's mysteries are both great and small. I would like to write these thoughts on some of these mysteries of this sovereign God, who rules and controls, after the counsel of his will.

Some of the mysteries, occurring along life's journey, are beyond the comprehension of these fleshly minds. The beautiful words of the number one song in Goble's hymnal saying, "*God moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform, He plants his footsteps on the sea, and rides upon the storm,*" besides being my mother's favorite song, seems especially important to these thoughts.

All of these things both great and small that we read and hear of, unfold through the channels of God's grace, are timed to perfection and unfold at God's appointed time. God's mysterious ways are so much broader and deeper than even the events we encounter along life's journey, and have been considered through all of time. Mankind has always wondered his role in the tides of God's splendor, and given symbols and meanings to the questions in our minds.

One of our first hints of God's mysteries is the greatest of all: Love. Even the worst critics of the Old Baptist beliefs cannot fathom our complete and utter dependence on Isaiah's "still small voice," so beauti-

fully expressed in Paul's powerful words in Corinthians: "*if I have not love.*" This beginning idea has confounded the greatest of religious scholars both in the spans of time since the time when Christ walked on earth, through the wrangling away of the pearl before the swine well over a thousand years later.

Through all known history humans have considered their role in life's journey. Often led to mountain of jubilation through God's mysterious ways, even non-Christians expressed God's greatness: "*my feet no longer touched the earth.*" And when our hearts being fully fed at God's beckon, it is predictable that people would wish to control and relive those moments of spiritual clarity.

When we say we are helpless creatures here on earth asking that His will be done, it is in respect of both Isaiah's "still small voice," as well as the central idea that makes old Baptist belief distinctive.

This distinctiveness is especially important in light of the Arminian belief that one can accept or reject God's salvation through the flesh.

Now, if it is pleasing to this sovereign God to lead and guide one through the channels of His precious grace, which is defined as "an unmerited favor," to ask for a home in this great church of God, we come beggars, through God's mercy to do so. The old Baptist hear that "still

small voice" both on the mountain as well as in the valleys of our lives.

This difference in beliefs between the old Baptist and more Arminian beliefs is important. Our recognition that we are helpless to be partakers of God's holy events in any way is not an expression so much of our weakness, but of God's great sovereignty and complete grace. While it may be understandable that the Arminian would wish to stay upon the mountain, we find that this simply is not God's way.

God in heaven rules and controls everything, after the counsel of his will. Everything is everything, including this great salvation which is the deliverance of God's goodness in the hearts of His believing family—at God's discretion, through the channels of His precious grace, from the courts of glory, according to His precious will. God's work is a finished work, a work created as God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus from all eternity.

The bible says that He works and none can hinder, and hinders and none can work. When the old Baptist relinquishes the fleshly mind to these greater truths, it is in respect of our sovereign God. It is the ultimate act of faith, that we see a truly sovereign God as the ruler who controls not some, but all spiritual things pertaining to this great salvation.

All Christians marvel when God confounds our fleshly minds. But it is the old Baptists who truly live the

meanings found in these important examples. I heard the following story some years ago, so I can only hope to relate it to the best of my ability.

A distinguished lady in the south, who was well fixed materially, decided she would host preaching at her place. She had heard about a preacher Leland, who had the reputation of being a very able preacher. She contacted him with an appointment which he accepted. She had never met Elder Leland, but he was to arrive on a Saturday evening before preaching and spend the night. Arriving later than expected after a long dusty journey, he was greeted by this lady. His modest appearance assured her that this wasn't her expected visitor, so he was directed to the slave quarters to sleep.

The slaves knew she was expecting him, because they had been helping with preparations. Welcoming Leland in his modest quarters, the guest of honor would thus pass the night. The lady of the house, had made extensive arrangements and invited people from all over the country side.

When night came, the slave asked Leland if he would like to petition the God of heaven in a word of prayer. When Leland was led to pray, the words sounded so highly that the rafters were said to ring with joy. It became immediately obvious to the slave who his guest was. The next morning when the slave went to the lady's house, he found her very disappointed because her

guest had not arrived.

Recounting last night's prayer to the lady, the slave told her how the rafters rung with joy, from this beautiful sound of God's prayer. It then donned upon the lady that she had made a terrible mistake, as she remembered the scripture about turning an angel away unaware. She begged Leland's forgiveness and asked him to complete his appointment.

God's mysteries belong to both the great and small. The moral of the story is when God sends one of his servants to feed this little flock, they will be enabled through the channels of His grace to do so, his will being often if not predictably beyond the reaches of our understanding. The old Baptist have championed God's sovereignty in these matters as no other people.

Along the same lines, my father heard an elder preach several years ago who was sentenced to die in the electric chair in pennsylvania. The elder had come upon a wounded man who someone had left to die. Seeing the man suffering he offered his assistance, though later he did die. The elder could not get authorities to believe his story, and he was subsequently sentenced to die in the electric chair.

The night of the execution brought the sentenced elder to the electric chair. The elder was strapped in the electric chair, and current was applied. The electricity had no effect. The executioners tried

yet again, with the same effect. Seeing the seriousness of the situation, the executioners called the governor. They were told by the governor, "*Let that man loose, he is innocent.*"

We see example after example of God's authority throughout the bible. God's intercession on behalf of the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, where not even their garments were scorched is a phenomenal example of God's power and sovereignty. God's protection of Daniel in the lion's den is another powerfully beautiful example of not our will, but God's will, God's plan is complete. He rules and controls everything after the counsel of his precious will.

God leads his little ones through the fiery trials of afflictions, and through the darkness in nature, bringing them forth victorious over many trials and tribulations they encounter. God's sovereignty is given as the first cause of the universe, not man's. Though we often confuse our dominion of the earth with God's grace, we are continuously reminded that God is a loving, ruling, sovereign, controlling God who works everything after the counsel of his precious will, needing no help from puny man.

God's grace works through most of our lives in subtle and meaningful ways. The old Baptist are recorded as often living close to the land, often in rural settings throughout wherever they may be

found. At crossroads in the paths of life, Gods mysteries are especially meaningful to our journeys. He speaks in seasons and hope, in comfort and sorrow, in both substance and idea, in the morning and in the evening, behind the plow and on the mountain, in fellowship, in solitude, and in love.

God hides his mysteries in our daily lives in beautiful ways that make the words to a beautiful song worth repeating: *"God moves in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform, He plants his footsteps on the sea, and rides upon the storm"* bonds of his precious love,

Riley Justice
POB 272
War, WV 24892
304-875-2960

CHAPTER 11:2-5.

Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

VOICES OF THE PAST

MANNA

What is it? It is an edible gum, a miraculous gift of God from heaven, in the form of food, for the sustenance of life.

When the children of Israel had been brought out of Egypt by the Lord (Moses leading them), and came to the wilderness of sin, they began murmuring against Moses and Aaron, and wishing they had died by the flesh pots of Egypt. Moses informed them that their murmurings were not against him (Moses), but against the Lord: and that the Lord would send them flesh at evening and bread in the morning. So at evening there came quails, and in the morning something like unto round frost on the ground. As none could account for the appearance of this wonderful diet, or food, they called "manna." They gathered up, some more, and some less; and they that gathered much had nothing over, and they that gathered little had no lack. What a wonderful figure!

When Jesus was here in the flesh, his followers desired of him a sign saying, *"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat."* Jesus answered them saying, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the*

true bread from heaven.” He also said, *“I am the bread of life;”* and *“If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.”* And to the angel of the church at Pergamos, he commanded John to write, saying, *“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.”*

In the figure, we see a people chosen of God, called out of bondage, led by the Lord; and although they are rebellious and murmur, yet see them fed with “manna” from “heaven.” We worship a God who changes not. And now, in this gospel day, the Lord has a people chosen of God, elect and precious. “A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” This is a fact that none will dare to deny. Who is this people? Let us search for them. In the figure we saw a people in bondage in servitude, serving task masters. Have you ever felt the bondage of sin? Have you felt that you could not keep God’s holy law? that you could not pray to God so as to be heard? that you could not praise his holy name? that you were not free to join the church of God, to be baptized, to commune with God’s people, and to glorify God in your body and in your spirit? If so we have found you in bondage, and we follow you through a sea of tribulation to the wilderness where you hear the messenger of God crying, *“Prepare ye the way of the Lord.”* We see you hungering and murmuring, and saying, Why can’t I enjoy myself pride humbled, the world overcome, and

as I once did (by the flesh pots of Egypt)? God sends you a little morsel now and then. But you wonder and ask the question, in your mind, What is it? You may call it “manna.” You are a stranger in a strange land, and there you begin a battle with unbelief. Satan tells you that you are not a child of God. Yet you look to God for all your help, as a child looks to its father; and, as such, you look to God and, as you are aware, your very breathing is prayer to God.

Can I ever overcome? Yes, by faith in God. *“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”* *“Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”* you now believe this, and you believe also that Jesus died to save sinners. So we find you freed from the bondage of sin, eating manna in the wilderness, and asking, What is it? and, by faith in God, overcoming unbelief. But now comes your pride, which also must be overcome; You want to know that you are a Christian; that you are good enough to join the church; that you are as good as any, and even better than some. But you must deny self if you would follow Christ. You should be willing to saying with Paul, I am less than the least; with Job, *“Behold, I am vile;”* with David, *“Have mercy on me, O God: according to thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions! I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.”* In these we find you are found eating

that "*hidden manna*," going into baptism, communing with the saints, and finding freedom in the praise of the Lord.

J. A. Ashburn

AARON'S ROD

Among the mysteries contained in the Scriptures none is greater, perhaps, than Aaron's Rod. A question was raised by some of the children of Israel against Korah and company and they murmured against Moses and Aaron, claiming that they had killed the people of the Lord, so Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. The Lord commands Moses to get up from among the congregation, that he might consume them as in a moment. But Moses commands Aaron to make an atonement for them. The plague is stayed, as Aaron "*stood between the dead and the living.*"

God then gave command to Moses that a rod be prepared for each of the tribes of Israel, twelve rods, and that the name of every man be written, upon his rod. "*And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers.*"

The "rod," according to the best available authority, is of a twofold nature, serving both as an instrument for the infliction of punishment

and also as a staff to lean upon while walking. It also originally carried the idea of a branch or scion, and also the idea of dominion, as a scepter. While some have given these latter ideas, our conception of the word is simply a staff for walking, a rod for correction, or a scepter of dominion. Still we will not say much about the latter.

Now let us consider its material. We can see nothing but a mere stick cut off from the roots at the ground, the branches cut from the top, a mere stick. Should you wish to propagate a tree, you could never look for life or growth from such a branch, let the environments be what they may. Twelve of these are laid up in the tabernacle of the congregation. We see neither sunlight nor moisture on the rods.

We see neither life nor growth in the eleven. But we see signs of life in the rod on which the name of Aaron appears.

It has budded. The cause is invisible. Where is the root? Where is the branch? Where is the culture? All are invisible. The original bark bursts, as the life appears, and all eyes are fixed upon it. Mere signs of life is not all; it puts on beauty, for we see blossoms. Nor does it cease with beauty: for, it bears fruit, and we see the almonds, the strengthening, rich, luscious, soul-cheering fruit upon it. Wonderful mystery! What can compare with it? No hand has planted it, and none has activated it; but God causes it to manifest life, to put on beauty and to bear

fruit.

We now have a wonderful figure of the Gospel Ministry and *also* of the church. Now *let us* behold a poor sinner as he, for the first time, sees himself lost, and tries over and over to find joy and life in the things of earth, but cannot: for he is cut off and cannot find pleasure in the things of earth. He attempts to communicate with God in prayer, is cut off both root and branch. He is all alone; he feels, he sees no life, no beauty, no fruit: night comes, and he has no light; But "*night unto night showeth knowledge.*" The morrow comes and we see signs of life. The buds appear, as the heaving heart gives away in anguish, and we see the bloom of beauty (humility) depicted on a calm and serene face. It is the image of Jesus. Then we see the fruits, when we see the humble child of God obeying the heavenly Father in baptism, in the communion, in washing the saint's feet, and in bringing the members of the body into subjection.

Now let us look for a little while, at the Gospel Ministry. The man of God must be called as was Aaron: for no man taketh this honor unless he is thus called-has hope on which he leans as a staff. He is so lame that he cannot walk without it, and often so weak that he cannot stand without it. Often we see him cast it down and it becomes a serpent before him as he trembles before earthly rulers, but it *is* his whether serpent or rod. He must take it at God's command,

but, fearfully, he takes *it* by the tail. Where he sees danger he finds strength, for the serpent becomes a rod *in* his, hand. But what of it? It is only a rod. He examines it carefully. He sees no life in it and lays it away under the order of Moses. Yet it is his, whether day or night, serpent or rod, living or dead. It *is* his. He cannot get along without it, and often stumbles with it, and is afraid of it; but, still it is his. He has laid it aside during the night time, but the morning star arises; and, while many, very many rods were thus laid aside, we see buds on his, and oh, how the heart swells with emotion as the signs of life are manifested. Yet he feels so unworthy, so little-has some of the meekness that was manifested in Moses. He feels as Paul said: "*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given.*" As this meek humble feeling steals over him we see the beauty, or the rod blooming. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings." This gives him standing. Next we see him feeding the flock of God, for the almonds have appeared with their luscious strengthening. He has the honor thrust upon him, and the greater the honor the more humble he feels, and the more humble he feels the more he praises the Lord. Aaron's rod praised God, hence it was kept in the ark of the covenant with the tables of the law and the golden pot that held the manna. So this manifestation of life from the

dead is stored in the heart in which is written the law of God and is sustained by the invisible manna from heaven.

J.A. Ashburn

Ephesians 2:8.

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

Dear Brother Branscome,-I have felt a desire to write a few lines for your perusal; but fear to make the attempt, because my thoughts are of such a rambling nature that I may fail to interest you. And, again, when I review my vile and corrupt nature, I feel so sensibly my unworthiness to be taken into notice by any of the ransomed throng; of the true Israel of God. Yet my heart goes out to them in love, as I see them wearing the breast plate of faith and love, and the greatest desire of my heart is to be like them: for I believe them truly to be the servants of the living and true God, whether I am a child of God or not. It has been my desire to know this, but I have not been brought into this knowledge yet. I only live by hope; and when I joined the church, I went there willing for them to be the judge. And more than that: I believe that I was in the most bitter torment till I did go. But, as I said, I am tangle-minded. I most go back and give you some evidence to believe this.

A few years ago I wrote you two letters, never thinking that you would publish them; but you did and I was made to mourn over writing them. O, how I did wish that I had waited awhile: for what if I should be deceived? and then I would have so many deceived. But now I am a member of the Primitive Baptist church; and as sinful and as Unworthy as I am, I have found a home which the world could never have given. Though I do feel to be the least among them, if I could have stayed away, I would have done so, for I was determined not to go. I tried with all my strength to get released from that burden. But nothing I could do would suffice. I went under this oppression for several long years; but the longer I went the heavier grew my burden. I became so I could hardly stand on my feet at the close of religious services. And still, I would say, I will not go; I will die first. Because, I am not worthy, and can't tell them of anything good that I have ever done. I had once thought that I was about as good as anybody, but now everybody was better than myself. At last a great affliction was laid upon me, and I tried three different physicians; but they could do it no good, and it seemed that it was far from disobedience. I was made on one night to arise from my bed and to kneel down beside my little children's bed, I prayed to the Lord to take care of them so long as they should live in this unfriendly world. I

felt that I must die and it seemed that I was in the worst condition that any poor mortal ever could be in. My life was no enjoyment to me home was no pleasure my husband and children could not comfort me, and, truly, I felt to be a great burden to them, And I prayed to the Lord that, if all this was for my disobedience, to manifest it to me whether it was my duty to go and tell to the church what little I had to tell or not, When I closed my eyes-I can't say whether I was asleep or awake-I viewed the Old Baptists, the true servants of God, standing beside a pool with their shoes off ; they were bidding me to come and be baptized and I thought I said, "*Lord, why is it that I can't go, if it is my duty to go?*" when I heard a voice saying, "*The church has bid you come, and the Spirit bids you go, and you just will not.*" Then I begged the Lord to release me from my sufferings and I would go the next opportunity, And added, "*If I perish, I will perish.*" Three or four days before the meeting, it began to rain, and I never saw such wet weather in my life, Oh! now, I thought, there is no purpose in my going: for if so it would not have rained, On Friday night, I prayed (seeking a sign) that, if the Lord had a purpose in my going to the church the next day, to manifest it by causing the weather to be clear the next morning. But, behold, when I arose the next morning, I found it still raining. I took this as an evidence that I was mistaken:

and, to myself I said, "*Now, I will never go.*" About eight o'clock, amid one of the hardest rains I ever saw, I saw a gentleman ride up into our yard; and, behold, Who should it be but Elder Jesse A. Ashburn? He alighted and came into the house. I felt like I wanted to fall at his feet and tell him that I was deceived and that the Lord had no purpose in my going to the church. My heart ached, my limbs trembled, and I felt that I was choking to death. I sat there till about ten o'clock. Elder Ashburn went to the door, clapped his hands together, and said, "*It will be as clear as a whip in a few minutes.*" When a voice in this poor heart of mine, said, "Be still and know that I am God." O, how it did cheer me! I got up and told my husband that I was going to preaching. But he said, "*I won't go with you on such a day as today.*" As he has always been good to go with me to preaching, I don't know why it was so he refused to go this time. But I answered him, saying, "*I am going and I don't want you to think that I am doing this for contrariness, for I can't live here.*" He made me no answer, and went out as though he meant not to go. But when he came back to the house, I was almost ready to go and he said, "*Well, if you will go, I will go with you,*" My prayers all the while, had been to God to direct him aright and as soon as he spoke this same voice replied, "Be still, and know that I am God." So we went on to the

church, but owing to the wind and rain, there were but few out. Perhaps a dozen members and fifteen or twenty others were there. The thought struck me, If you join today people will say, we have expected you a long time, and you just picked this time because there were not many out. I knew the world would talk this for on other occasions I had heard of it. So I thought I would wait a little longer. But when Brother Ashburn got up to preach, it seemed that he knew my condition just as well as I knew it. And he tore up every place where I could have sought shelter, except the church. And Oh! I was there without a home and without friends, and I had to go begging the church for a home with them. I could not leave without telling them what the Lord had done for my poor soul. I was received without one question being asked. Oh, how light I did feel. I felt like a new being, and was baptized the next meeting on Saturday, after the other services. A large congregation and a number of preachers were present. Brother Ashburn led me down into the water, and, as I left the bank, I felt like I was going in duty, and had exchanged hell for heaven. And, O what a peaceful and clear conscience I received as I arose from the water. I felt that my troubles were all alone and that I should live happily the remainder of my days. But I have, not so found it I have seen much enjoyment, but cannot live one day as I would wish to live. The warfare that is going on within bends me

low; Satan and the vain and perishing things of this vain and perishing world besets me so that I know the mercy and free grace of God is still my whole dependence for instruction. If God is not my worthiness, then I am unworthy. And I wish to say to all the trembling saints, who have a hope and have not gone in the way of duty, to go home to their friends and tell them the dealings of the Lord with them. You will never regret it. I know that I was born in sin, both dead and blind; and the more I advanced in years the more debased and fitted for woe I found myself to be. I grew in this till God, at last, threatened me with his dreadful wrath. Before this I had taken no thought of the welfare of my poor soul. But Jesus had dearly bought it; and it pleased him to visit me and teach me that I *"must be born again;"* or else I could never meet him in peace.

So I went to work to keep the law. It appeared just and true, and I failed. I could do nothing good. But, in silent places, where I secreted myself to hide from my people, on bended knees, I poured out my grief. I prayed to God for mercy and not for justice at all. But Satan would say, *"Don't be so dull; go on and be cheerful, and wait till you are older. You are too young, and there is yet plenty of time."* But Oh, when the threatening law of God came I felt that it was already too late, and that I had sinned away the day of grace; and it was suggested, *"Now it is too late, so be con-*

tented.” But I was resolved to seek the Lord. And O, how I was made to mourn my vileness and my wretchedness: for I knew without free grace my soul must be forever lost. When I tried my strength to satisfy the law’s just demands I failed and gave up all for lost, and lay helpless, expecting to be banished to torment in a few minutes. But that kind and merciful God spoke peace to my poor soul and bid me rejoice in him. Immediately my soul did rise and was, for a time, borne away beyond sorrow and trouble. I counted all things here but dross, and could glory in the cross.

I now know that none, but God himself, is able to save a soul from death. And now, I can say, Come, one and all let us sing his praise. And now, if I am not deceived, you, who have passed through such fiery trials, can do no better than to go home to your friends and tell them what he has done for you. And if you love him as I hope I did, you are not afraid to risk their judgment. I believe they will act justly with you. And O, what a consolation it would be: for, “Tis a heaven below the Redeemer to know well, I have written much more than I expected, and am taking too much of your time. I have written my thoughts, just as they were presented to my mind; and now, I feel that I have written all on my mind; and, with love to one and all, and special love to those who have

met Christ in a pardon of their sins, I bid you adieu. I remain

Your unworthy sister in hope;

Mrs. Pearley E. Smith.

R. 1, Danbury, N. C.

August 14.

“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,” - ROMANS viii, 17.

O the blessedness of being a child of God! Can heart conceive or tongue express the heights and depths of grace and glory, the safety, the happiness, the honour, the bliss, the delight of being an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ? We soon shall have to put off our mortal bodies-soon have to lie down with the worms of the grave and the clods of the valley-soon have to enter into the invisible world. Well may we then ask ourselves what are our prospects of eternity? Where then will be our inheritance? Will it be one of eternal misery and woe, of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, or of the pleasures which are at God’s right hand for evermore? Have we any evidence or testimony that we are the children of God? Has the Spirit ever borne any direct or indirect witness to our adoption into his family-to our sonship and to our

heirship? When we review our past experience, can we find any marks that we can look upon with a good measure of faith and hope as sound, scriptural evidences that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ? Can you look back upon that memorable season when the Lord was first pleased to work upon your conscience and convince you of your sins? - to that time of love when Christ was first revealed to your heart? - to that day of affliction and trouble when a sweet promise of interest in his love and blood was sealed with divine power upon your soul? Can you find any solid, substantial marks or tokens that you are a partaker of saving and sanctifying grace, born of God, separated from the world as a pilgrim and a stranger, and pressing onward through a thousand foes and fears to a heavenly country? It is of no use leaning upon the testimony of man, or upon any vain hopes or presumptuous confidence that may spring up in a self-righteous, deceitful heart. It is the witness of the Spirit with our spirit, more or less clear - the shining in of the light of the Lord's countenance - the manifestations of his presence and love, which alone can really satisfy a child of God of his being a partaker of grace and of the glory that is to be revealed at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Elder J.C. Philpot

ACTS. CH. 2:1-4

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

CONTRIBUTIONS

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Banks Conner -VA	10.00
Bruce Smith -VA	25.00
Eld. Mark Terry -VA	5.00
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Edrie Clifton -VA	5.00
Betty Lovltte -NC	5.00
J. D. Inman -TX	5.00
FrancineFortner -TX	5.00
Mary Phillips - AL	5.00
Naomi Rouser -VA	5.00

OBITUARIES

BROTHER COLEN WADE

At the request of Old Union Church, I will attempt to write the obituary for our beloved Brother, Colen Culbert Wade. Brother Colen was born December 6, 1914 and passed from this life February 14, 2006, making his stay on this earth 91 years. He resided at the Heritage Hall Nursing Home in Blacksburg, Virginia, until his death.

In the last few months of his life he could not speak clearly because he had suffered a stroke.

But, we could always tell when we came to visit him that he wanted us to sing him some songs from our little Goble Hymn Books and to have a word of prayer before we left. He never complained about his afflictions that was laid upon him, a true Soldier of the Cross.

Brother Colen asked for a home with Old Union Church on October 21, 2000 but was not able to be Baptized until July 22, 2001 due to poor health. He was Baptized by his pastor, Elder Hale Terry and Elder Larry Hollandsworth. Brother Colen attended his meetings at Old Union Church faithfully, even when he could barely walk, he still had that great desire to meet with the Saints of God, and to hear the preaching of

the Word. One of his most favorite songs was the Hymn Amazing Grace. Brother Colen was a quiet and gentle man, and had such a humbleness about him, he manifested the love of God in his heart for all to see.

Brother Colen's funeral was conducted at the Mayberry Funeral Home in Floyd, Virginia. He is survived by, three Son's and Daughter's-in-law, Clinton C. and Brenda Wade, Earnest and Pam Wade, Jimmie and Ellen Wade. One Brother, Esker Wade and Sister-in-law Reva Wade. One sister, Lola Roy. Four Grandchildren and Two Great-Grandchildren, and a host of Brothers and Sisters in the Lord. He was laid to rest in the Big Sand Cemetery in Floyd County, Virginia under a beautiful mound of flowers, to await the Second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord make us all submissive to his Will and purpose, for it is written: All things work together for good to them who are called according to His purpose. May God's name be praised above all other names. Done by order of the Church in conference, Sunday February 26, 2006, one copy to be sent to the family, one to the Signs of the Times for publication, and one for our Church records.

Elder Hale Terry, Moderator
Sandra Hollandsworth, Clerk

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

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SONG

*RESOLVING thus, I entered in,
Though trembling and depressed,
I bowed before the gracious King,
And all my sins confessed.*

*Sweet majesty and awful grace
Sat smiling on his brow;
He turned to me his glorious face,
And made my eyes o'er flow.*

*He held the sceptre out to me,
And bade me touch and live;
I touched, and O what mercy free.
He did my sins forgive.*

*I touched, and lived and learned to
love,
And triumphed in my God;
I set my heart on things above,
And sang redeeming blood.*

*Come, sinners, grieved with sins, dis-
tressed,
And ready to despair,
Take courage, though with guilt op-
pressed
Jesus still answers prayer.*

*Come, enter in with cheerful haste;
You may his glories see;
You may his richest mercy taste -
He has forgiven me.*

C. M.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	122
Elder Richard H. Campbell	
CORRESPONDENCE	127
VOICES OF THE PAST	128
Elder Howard Wallace May	
Elder Jesse A. Ashburn	
Elder W. D. Griffin	
Elder J. C. Philpot	
MEETINGS	142
CONTRIBUTIONS	142
OBITUARIES	142
Sister Gertrude Lois Cox	
Sis. Elizabeth Mayhew Jones	
Clarabel Jones Massey	

EDITORIAL

I AM THAT I AM

(Exo 3:13-14) And Moses said unto God, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, what is his name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."



Elder R. H. Campbell

God's name is I AM, which is ever in the present tense with no passage of time, or change of mind or purpose, he is the eternal I AM. All things are ever present before him, for he dwells in one eternal now, with no past, or future in that realm in which no man dwells. Because he is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and changes not, he will save to the uttermost all of those that call upon him in Spirit and in truth, and will fulfill that which he has promised, from the beginning.

This fact is confirmed many times in the scriptures, as he comforts his children, in each generation, assuring them that he is the same, yesterday, today and forever, because there is time, as far as his children are concerned, and therefore the scripture uses time references. The promises that he made to Abraham in, (Gen 17:7) "*And I will establish my covenant with thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*" is just as inclusive to Isaac, Jacob and all of the chosen generation today, as it was in the day in which it was first spoken to our father Abraham. This is confirmed by Malachi, (3:6) "*For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*"

The apostle Paul related to this covenant in, (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 Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”* These are solemn and positive statements that as he has declared it, so it shall be.

Jesus said unto the Jews, (John 8:56-58) *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad.”* Then said the Jews unto him, *“Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?”* Jesus’ response unto them was, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.”* Since there is no time with God, all of those things that exist, or will exist are included in God’s ways and thoughts, which are as much higher than man’s ways and thoughts as the heavens are above the earth, it defies the natural reasoning power of man. The late Elder Biggs used to say, the doctrine of God, is not reasonable to the natural mind. Man can believe it, by the grace of God, but he can’t begin to try to explain it to anyone to whom it has not been revealed by the Holy Ghost. When God said, *“My glory I will not give to another, I believe that this is what he meant: he would never give the powers by which he accomplishes all of the works that*

he has promised unto any other, for this glory is reserved unto the God of the heavens and earth.

It is even as the apostle Paul said, regarding speaking in tongues, (1 Cor 14:23) *“If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad.”* Even so, when the church gathers together to worship God, in Spirit and in truth, they speak in that pure language spoke of by Zephaniah, which is an unknown tongue to the world. All men are born in the same state of ignorance and unbelief that the apostle Paul said that he was, before he took the trip down to Damascus and met Jesus. They cannot comprehend the mystery of godliness until they are blessed with the Holy Spirit, and the things of God are revealed unto them, and this occurs when they are born again, for Jesus said, only then, can they see the kingdom of God.

The God, of the bible is positive in all of its references to Jehovah, there is no ambiguity in the scriptures which refer to God, who is the author and finisher of the faith of his children, as is recorded in (Isa 46:9-11) *“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else: I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things*

that are not yet done, saying my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." These are the words of God who created the heavens and the earth in the beginning, is sustaining it, and controlling all things according to his own will and purpose at the present time; and all according to the terms of the covenant that he made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is subject to no power or authority above himself, and will certainly accomplish his own will, in disposing of all things in the heavens and on the earth.

The gods of this world are silver and gold, the works of man's hands, and in the ramblings of his natural mind. They have mouths, but they speak not, eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not, feet have they, but they walk not: neither do they speak through their throat. They bear them upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea one shall cry unto him, yet he cannot answer, nor save him out of his trouble. According to nature, it really is a mystery why they feel a need for their god, since he seems to be subject only to their

whims, and desires: having no will and purpose of his own. He cannot speak to them, hear them, or help them in any way or provide any of those things that are necessary to accomplish any purpose in their existence, or give them any reason for their being here on earth, or a plan for their future. What, in their minds, can cause them to worship idols which they have made, from stone, ashes or in the likenesses of man and four footed beasts, then set them up as a god.

This applies, not only to those who have physically made and set up their idols, but also unto those who, in the imagination of their mind, have created an idol, of their own design, which is subject to them, rather than their being subject unto it. They determine the limits of its wisdom and power, and these limits are all but figments of the imagination of the human mind, and are subject to change by their own vanity and desires. It has no power or wisdom, of its own, whereby it can deliver them from their troubles. You can see why they boast long and loud of their working for their god, because he is incapable of doing anything in and of himself.

Does this not describe the god that the natural men in the world worship today? They will tell you that he cannot save them against their will, he is trying to save everyone, but, some just will not accept him, or let him have his way in their life. One even went so far as to say

that, "God was just as surprised and hurt by the New Orleans storm as they were," so, evidently he has no advantage over them, in that he is just an observer of events, even as they are. This is no semblance of the God of the bible, who speaks and it is done, commands and it stands fast, and which even goes so far as to say, "*even as I have thought so shall it come to pass.*"

Is there any wonder at the enmity that exists between these two manner of people, those that worship the God who created the heavens and the earth and all of the host of heaven, and those who liken their gods unto the natural man, or stone images of animals, or whatever. Both peoples are firm in their convictions and there can be no reconciliation between them, because they are diametrically opposed in every respect, and to worship one, you must deny the existence of the other. This enmity was placed there in the Garden of Eden, and will exist throughout time, and surely this is the work of the beast, striving against God, but the earth opens up and swallows this doctrine which was designed to destroy the Lord's people, and they are delivered (Rev. 12:16).

Jesus himself said, speaking of the world's rejection of him, when he was here on earth, if they have done this unto a green tree what shall they do unto a dry tree. The apostle Paul said, the time shall come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap unto

themselves teachers having itching ears; and shall be turned unto fables. We are surely witnessing that day now, because the doctrine preached in the pulpits of the religions of the world, in this day, is but an amalgamation of half truths, sheer fantasies, words spoken to please the natural man, and are intended to glorify man as the principal instigator of his faith, because he can either accept or refuse it. Where is the comfort to be derived from that kind of faith, or belief? There is no assurance, or promises of what to expect in the future, because it all revolves around the will of the creature, as he is in nature, with no spiritual connotation, and he certainly cannot be depended upon because his will changes with the seasons, and with each generation, so, who can tell what the end would be.

This does not even remotely resemble the God of the bible, who appeared unto Moses and told him to go and lead his children out of the Egyptian bondage. He was not subject to man, or any principalities or power that exists or will ever exist in the world. When God appeared unto Moses, in the back side of the desert, where he was tending his father-in-law's sheep, he first told him who he was, for he said, I AM THAT I AM, and appeared unto him in a flaming bush that was not consumed by the fire, and then told Moses what he would have him to do. It was not in the form of a request, subject to Moses' approval,

but rather it was in the form of a command, for him to perform the mission that he would have him to do. He told him that he would be with him, saying, certainly I will be with thee, and this shall be a token unto the children of Israel, that I have sent thee, the evidence being the many miracles that he was to perform before Pharaoh to cause him to release his people.

God is with his sheep at all times, caring for them and leading them in the paths that he would have them to go, for he said, *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,"* so that they may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me. This is very different from the statement of the followers of that god which cannot see, speak, walk or move from the place where he has been set: very different from the one who has been created by man, and changes with the each succeeding generation, having only the power that they ascribe unto him, and that according to the whims of man of that era.

I recently heard one television minister say, *"If you will send me so much money, God will bless you, and I will guarantee it,"* Now, it seems they are even having to pay his debts for him, because he cannot, he does not live, move or have any real existence in the world, so how could he possibly fulfill that man's promise. Now this may be, being facetious, but that's what the

man said, and before millions of the followers of that god. If I want to know what a man believes, I want him to tell me, not someone else who will give me their version of it, and this statement came from the lips of this minister.

Now, let me get away from the negative and foolishness of the false doctrines, of false gods, and end on a very blessed, positive and solemn note, by paraphrasing a benediction of the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews. This is, (as Elder Paul Poyner, of the Soldier Creek Association used to say) the very quintessence of the faith of the Lord's portion and it will stand the test of time and eternity. *"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 us perfect in every good work to do his will working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."* This is the very foundation of our faith: that we are in the hands of God who does the working out of our salvation in us, and solemnly said, it is finished, when he had completed the work that his Father gave him to do.

In bonds of love;
Elder Richard H. Campbell

CORRESPONDENCE

March 31, 2006

7003 Flagstaff Ln., 103
 Richmond, VA 23228
 April 7, 2006

My dear Elder Terry,

I hope you and your family see blessings of the dear Lord each day. I find myself begging Him for strength of mind and body so often. I confess He is God and I love to think of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

Brother Terry, please renew Sign another year for me. I have enjoyed Signs for many years. I've kept them and at times read older issues. I like editorials, letters and even read obituaries as with a new issue. I feel I have love for some Elders I never saw or heard speak. I do believe and hope God Himself gave me such love. The God we hope to love is our "all and all."

I realize there is work involved in getting the Signs. May the dear Lord be pleased to continue blessings to all editors, writers and those who contribute to publication of Signs.

With love I hope,
 Reidy Pickral

JOHN 4:48.

Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

Dear Elder Terry,

Please forgive my slothness, for I have no excuse, and there can be none for letting this go so long. I am sending the amount of \$100.00 to bring my father's subscription up to date and to also extend mine. Please use any left over as a contribution.

I enjoyed the conversation we had when I called you and hope that we can meet someday.

Our church is called Pilgrims Rest and we meet the second and fourth Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Also on the Saturday night before the 3rd Sunday at 7 p.m. We are a small church as membership goes, but do enjoy the sweet blessings that He supplies us with as He sees the need. I feel and believe that it was a type and a shadow of the visible church when Christ fed the multitude with the small fishes and bread and set them down in small groups apart from each other that they represented the small churches of today.

We stand as an independent church, but correspond and fellowship with the churches in the Poccatallico Association here in West Virginia.

Our moderators name (Pilgrims Rest) is Elder Hubert Sears and our joint Moderator is Elder Ronald Sargent. We have two deacons Brother Brad Nettles and myself.

Our church clerk is Sister Hazel Staner.

Brother Terry, I thank you and all the other Brethren who spend their time to bring us these wonderful messages. I have been reading the Signs for quite a few years as my Father would save them for me. Now, I hope to pick up where he left off.

I pray that you all will continue to be blessed in your efforts.

Yours in hope,
Gary D. Whaling

VOICES OF THE PAST

ELDER HOWARD WALLACE MAY

Having been born January 26, 1873, I am 58 years old at this writing. Born on the head of Pond Creek, Pike County, Ky., the days of my pilgrimage have been few and evil. I was raised a poor boy by a kind and loving mother with the aid of two brothers, John and Harvey. I grew up a vile wretched boy. Only at times, I would have some serious thoughts but was mostly unconcerned until the age of 22. I plainly saw my state as a vile and wretched sinner condemned to die and go to an awful hell indeed. I went on in that condition for some time; there seemed no mercy for a poor sinner like me. One Wednesday evening about 3 o'clock I thought the time

was up for the execution to be made on poor wretched me. My natural strength seemed to be gone. I laid down on the upper end of the family porch not expecting ever to get up when to my surprise a still, calm and loving voice seemed to say in my poor burdened heart, son, thy sins, which are many are all forgiven you for Jesus' sake. I was made to praise the Lord, I hope for saving a poor sinner like me. It was the happiest time I ever experienced before or since. Then and there I received what I have thought was a blessed hope for heaven not something in me but ME, which was worth all the world to me. Since that time I have had many, many doubts and fears and thoughts that I was deceived. These fears I have daily and hourly. O how could I ever live without this God blessed hope. Then something began to press this poor mind of mine. You must go and stand before my people and tell them what the blessed Lord has done for you by the way of grace, but my thoughts were O Lord I never can, I am too vile too weak, and I am slow of speach and slow of tongue but this impression was on my mind. I would often dream of trying to preach the blessed Gospel of Christ, yet I would think that I was deceived. Sometimes I would go to meeting and after trying in my weakness to pray in public when it was time for the meeting to commence I would go out of the house until it began. All, this time this heavy burden was on this poor

mind of mine. Since those times I have made many attempts though I often think it has all been a failure. The Lord knows I have never reached the place that I can feel that I have been a comfort to God's blessed children.

Most two years have passed since I began this wrestling and I have thought many times I would not finish it, but of late have thought to write some more before I go hence and be no more. I want to leave a record behind me as to what I do believe in regard to the doctrine I believe and enjoy; God and his sovereign will over all things; that he created this vast universe, and that he (God) had a purpose in everything that he created, and there was nothing created or made only what God created or made and to say that he does not use it for the self-same purpose that he created it for is a false reflection on the thrice holy God for he says he created "*even the wicked for the day of evil.*" *Prov. 16;4.* Also in Romans 8:24 to 30 inclusive; "*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. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the*

hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." God is sovereign over all things, he (God) is unchanging and his purpose is as certain and as sure as he is: for he says in Psalms 33: 7 to 9 inclusive, "*He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap; he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. I would as well believe that God himself would fail to be God as to believe that one of his purposes would fail. One often hears it said, Oh, I believe his eternal purpose is sure. There are none but that are eternal and the eternal salvation of God's people is sure. There is but one salvation and that is Jesus Christ, the Lord, and that*

salvation is enjoyed here in this time world. I believe that it is all of grace and there is nothing left on condition. The enemy of truth says, "If you will, God will; If you will not, God cannot." Lord save me from such delusion and falsehood. God says concerning Jacob and Esau. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil;" "Jacob have I loved but Esau, have I hated." Was this not a predestinated purpose of God to love Jacob and to hate Esau? "behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy." Isa. 54:16. If he created the waster to destroy how can he keep from it? "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." Isa 45: 6,7. We will have to admit that God made and created these things according to his will or against his will and I would hate to believe that the thrice holy God ever did anything that was contrary to his will. Amos 3:5, 6, 7 says, "Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth where no gin is for him? Shall one take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all? Shall a trumpet be blown

in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants and prophets." When one scripture says a thing we need not hunt for anything else in the scripture to condemn it for all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It was impossible for those men to pen the scriptures except when they were moved by the Holy Ghost and at those times it was absolutely impossible for them to make mistakes.

There are some that claim to be Old School Baptists who say they believe in Predestination but not in Absolute Predestination. Anything that is not absolute is not predestinated at all. Take the word water and say there is a cup of water; does it not imply that it is wet water? Say there is a fire in the grate; does it not imply that it is hot? Using the words ice and snow; does it not mean that it is cold? The word predestination implies that it is absolutely fixed, settled and unchangeable. There is an unchangeable God, "and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth."

I know I shall soon go the way of all the earth and be no more, but that is in God's purpose. This is a dark and cloudy day with God's people and I sometimes think I

would be glad and rejoice to leave this unfriendly world, then I think of leaving God's blessed children in this poor world and want to stay with them. I want to quote one scripture, Acts 4:24 to 28 inclusive; *"And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that in them is; Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast annointed, 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 to be done,"* If they were gathered together to do what before was determined to be done, was it not the unchangeable purpose of an unchangeable God, and they were gathered together to do that for the inspiration of God says they were. I would as well believe that God would fail to be God as to believe that his people could fail of being together, or have failed at doing what his hand had before determined to be done, no more or less. All scripture was given by the inspiration of God and holy men of

God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Could we believe that the Spirit of the thrice Holy God ever moved men to speak in any way that was wrong, or speak something that he (God) did not want left on record here for his dear children to see? His afflicted and poor people is the object of his love, and he is the same yesterday today and forever, and changes not. He does not teach some one way and others another way; he does not teach some that God's mercy is bestowed on them here in this time world by their good works, and teach others *"that it is the gift of the the Lord. God does not work that way. He teaches that it is of free and unmerited grace of God bestowed on poor mortals, men and women of Adam's race, and it was according to his love and mercy that his darling Son came into this low ground of sin and sorrow to suffer, bleed and die for his people who were given him before the world began. David said, He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure for this is all my salvation, and all my desire although he make It not to grow."* This blessed covenant was made just as God wanted It to be. God's purpose is like a great chain, link in link. If anywhere in the chain one link was to fail it would separate the two ends of the chain. If God's purpose was to fail in one thing there would be no certainty of the

Lord's poor people being taken to that God blessed home where they will never have to suffer. If one thing had failed, with Joseph being in Egypt, the corn would not have been stored up for the famine, but Jacob sent Joseph to see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flock, and when he (Joseph) came to where his brothers were they aimed to kill him, or some of them did. Reuben aimed to deliver him back to his father, but God over-ruled both of their intentions for he (God) had decreed from all eternity, within himself, that Joseph should be sold to Pharaoh's officer and captain of the guard, to be lied about, to be cast into prison on a false accusation, and to interpret the dreams of the chief butler and baker. If this lie had not been told on him he would not have been in prison, and he would not have interpreted their dreams; then the chief butler could not have told Pharaoh, I remember my faults, there is a young man, an Hebrew, that can interpret dreams. Joseph was brought before Pharaoh and he (Joseph) told Pharaoh what God was going to bring to pass. The hand or power that caused the dreams to be dreamed caused these three to be in the prison The chief butler, the baker, and Joseph were all there according to God's will and purpose. The same hand or power that sent Joseph down there caused these dreams to be, and the way was fixed of God from all eternity, and God watched over Joseph and took care of him all the

time. Joseph said to his brethren, *"be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; For God did send me before you to preserve life."* It was all of the Lord from the start to the finish like everything else both in heaven and in earth.

I believe it was God's purpose for sin to be in the world. He did, from all eternity, purpose that his name should be praised by poor sinners here in this time world. Had there not been any sin there would have been no sinners to praise his blessed name, but God, unchangeable, fixed that sinners should be in the world. Paul said, *"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."* If there had been no sinners Christ Jesus never would have come into this sin-cursed world, if there had been no sin there would have been no sinners and God's name never would have been praised, but it was all fixed in God's eternal mind for each and everything to be just as it is without any failure, that God's name might be praised by poor sinners which was the object of his love. Paul says, *"of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question."* He also says by the authority of high Heaven that these bodies shall be changed from natural to spiritual bodies, *"It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual*

body.” If Paul was not talking about the bodies of God’s children pray tell me what he was talking about. Who ever heard of a spiritual body being changed. He was absolutely talking about these mortal bodies of God’s children. It makes no difference what anyone says they are to be made like him, Jesus. If it is something in this mortal body why did Paul say, “*O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*” If all that ever goes or is taken to Heaven and Immortal Glory is when God’s blessed children die the common death of all men, what did the grave have victory over and why would Christ appear the second time without sin unto salvation if he, Christ, is not coming after the very thing the grave has the victory over? Thes. 4:13 to 18 inclusive. “*But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive and remain*

shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words,” Paul was talking about the dead that had died the common death of all men, and was buried in the grave, or wherever they be if it be in the bottom of the mighty deep. The Lord knows where they are and he will bring them with him at his second coming without the loss of one of them. What words are we to comfort one another with? That the Lord himself shall descend the second time and that he, the Lord, will raise the dead from their sleeping dust. Brethren and friends I believe the dust of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with all the rest of the redeemed family of God will raise then to meet the Lord in the air, and God’s people that are alive at that time will be changed in a moment from a mortal body to a spiritual body. Brethren, Paul was talking about the dead that had died and they that were alive of the redeemed family of God when time will be no longer. This is as plain as the sun at noonday when there is not a cloud to be seen and cannot be explained away to mean anything else. Men can say they do not believe it, but that does not change God’s purpose in raising the dead and changing the living. If Paul was not talking about when this world was coming to an end, pray tell me what was he talking about? If the dead are not going to be raised

from the graves, and the living are not going to be changed, and all caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and ever be with the Lord, Heaven will be a blank for we know that we take our people out and bury them in the grave, and if that very body that is laid down in the grave never is raised from the grave it would never meet the Lord in the air to ever be with the Lord. All the arguing that men and devils can do will never keep this from coming to pass at God's time. God's people are saved by grace and grace alone in time and eternity for the scripture says in Gal. 3, 21, "*Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, but there was no law given that could give life, life comes by Jesus Christ, the Lord, and by him only. By grace are ye saved.*" I want to say regarding the time on the end of the old family porch referred to at the beginning of this writing, the first Saturday in August 1895, that I went down to the Little Hope Church and tried to tell those good old baptist people what I hoped the blessed Lord had done for poor, unworthy me by his work of grace and was received. The next day, Sunday, I was baptized by my uncle Elder W. J. May. I had been in water many a time

before, but never that felt like that time, and went home that evening with an easy mind. The next day my wife and I were out in the woods singing when I just lacked one step of stepping on a large copperhead and I thought then it was God's eternal purpose that I should not make that step. John 9:22, "*These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.*" The same threatening is going on in this world in our day and time. If you preach the Absolute Predestination of all things, Salvation by grace and grace alone, that God is Sovereign, and that Christ Jesus is the obedience of his children they put you out of the church. You have to preach that you can do something of yourself to merit God's blessings.

(The late)

ELDER HOWARD WALLIS MAY

*Copied from the
Signs of the Times*

John 6:32-33.

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

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

JONAH AND THE GOURD.

More than eight hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ, God commanded his servant to go to Nineveh and cry against it. Jonah refused and attempted to go to Tarshish, but was prevented by a great wind and tempest. When lots were cast it was decided that Jonah was the cause of the tempest being sent, and he was cast out into the sea. God had prepared a great fish or whale to swallow up Jonah, and it swallowed him. And, after three days, and nights God's command, the fish vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. Thus Jonah was made willing to go, at God's command, and preach to the Ninevites, saying, "*Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.*" This was sounded out by Jonah. Could any other mortal man have had more convincing proof than he? and could there have been any doubt regarding such a call? Even the wicked Ninevites believed and repented at the preaching of Jonah. Yea, even the king arose from his throne, laid aside his robe and sat in sackcloth and ashes. When such repentance was manifested, God repented of the evil that he said he would do, and did it not. But where is Jonah, his words and his integrity? Jonah became angry and said, "*I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.*" Then he desired the Lord to

take his life, saying, "*Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live,*" Jonah then prepared himself a booth, "or tent"; but God prepared for him a gourd. The original Greek meaning is "nauseous," to vomit or spue. This gourd came up in a night to be a shadow over his head, and "*Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.*" Then "*God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd so that it withered.*" And it perished in a night. In this way did God teach Jonah.

Dear reader, do you see your experience in this? Have you ever felt that God had spoken to you? Have you ever felt that, afterward, he had left you in doubt and in shame? Have you ever felt that you could never maintain your own integrity and make an open confession of religion? Have you ever been made to fear that the little hope you have was not sufficient to rest upon, and that you must build you a tent or booth of your own works, under which to shelter?

Have you ever decided that, if you could live up to the requirements of God's commands, you could rest in the church, or in the confidence of the brethren? Has there ever come, for a short while in your life, when, for some reason, your will was fastened upon some earthly thing; and, for awhile, you could rejoice in this object or that

occupation? Perhaps God has given to you a loving husband, wife, or child, and you rejoiced for awhile. Perhaps he gave you earthly prosperity, and for awhile you rejoiced in that. But, alas! these things – though they were given to you – were taken away, ere you were aware, and you could not tell why. The husband, wife, or child died, or your prosperity fled, the tent was torn down and the vine withered suddenly, and your joys were gone. Is not the worm at work? A parching wind dries up the gourd; its beauty and comforts fade, and nothing is left, except bitterness and sorrows. O, that I could die! *“It is better for me to die than to live,”* Have you not some of the experience of Jonah? And does not the Lord love you, even as he did Jonah? And is not God merciful unto you, even as he was to the Ninevites? There is so much sameness in the experiences of God’s people that they love one another for Christ’s sake; and they love God for his mercies and goodness. Like David, they can sing: *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”*

Elder Jesse A. Ashburn
Sent in by Keith Hiatt

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

Dear Readers of the Messenger: for some time my mind has been exercised with the desire to write an article on the subject of Christian fellowship but have been so cumbered with cares that it seemed that I could not get the time; and have been down in the valley so much I feared to try to take my harp down from the willow, fearing I might find it out of tune. But now I feel that I can no longer find excuses, as my son has recovered his health, and the doctor says my wife is out of danger from her trouble. Yet all is not clear to me.

Hoping my brethren will read with a spirit of charity, I will attempt to write. “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that she might be saved.”

Today has been set apart by those in authority as a day of thanksgiving, and I trust that I do really feel thankful for the numerous blessings which almighty God hath so abundantly bestowed upon us for another year of peace and plenty, and the many other natural blessings, so numerous that they cannot be counted. But, most of all, I do feel thankful for the gift of God’s only begotten Son, through whom we have eternal redemption and Christian fellowship, one with another.

When I look back to the pit from whence we were digged, then to the rock from whence we were hewn, I realize that all was accomplished by

that "Amazing grace" of God, which fills my heart with emotions too big for utterance. Still I desire to continue in his praise, to mingle with my brethren, though feeling so unworthy and to be less than the least of all. I desire to meet them in peace and love. I hope I love them all, and desire to see all live in peace, love, union and fellowship, praising God in sincerity, with all meekness and lowliness, with a pure heart.

I have noticed in the past, sometimes, we do not exactly understand each other, and, instead of getting together and trying to work for unity, we speak of each other's faults or wrong interpretation of the scriptures in the pulpit, or through some periodical and wound the feelings of some for whom Christ died. Then the matter is talked and agitated by the friends on both sides and division follows. Especially is this the case sometimes in speaking or writing on the doctrine of predestination. Some brother desiring to show the certainty of the salvation of God's elect will speak in very bold terms of certainty of God's purposes being carried out and to show "*that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things to some, 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.*" Perhaps he will dwell at length on the predestination or purpose of God in bringing this to pass and he may, perhaps,

get so bold as to assert that all the powers of Satan combined cannot destroy one saint, that God's purposes are so absolutely fixed that all the powers of earth and hell cannot frustrate them. He may not be skilled in language or fluent in speech, or we may not be able to fully get his meaning. Then some person or persons will say, He made God the author of sin and sets out to slay the man or preacher, to save the cause. We are all zealous for the cause of Christ. Then the fight begins. He has friends and the opposite has his friends and division follows. Or, vice versa, a preacher desirous of seeing God's children living obedient to the heavenly calling, keeping the body under subjection, not walking in vanity, but living "soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," will grow very bold and assert that to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." He may go so far as to say that much of our happiness in this life depends upon our obedience to God. He, likewise, may not be very well skilled in language, or we may misunderstand him; "not, at once, we begin to say, He is soft; he preaches conditionalism, or Arminianism. So, the first thing we know, we have two factions "Softshell" and "Fatalist," or perhaps three, "Softshell or Conditionalist," "Absoluters or Fatalists," "Orthodox or Regular" Primitive Baptists.

Now, brethren, I have not writ-

ten these things with any other purpose other than to show the danger of extremes. The apostle Paul shows how the church at one place (Corinth, I believe,) was divided into four factions. It is very unpleasant to see brethren divided. It grieves us to see our brethren, the church of God, divided. Extremes cause divisions. Let us avoid extremes. Let us avoid hard expressions, such as Softshell Conditionalism, Absolute, and all such terms as generate hatred and strife.

I suppose there is not a Primitive Baptist on earth that would disclaim his responsibility to God. I have never heard a man preach "Infants to torment," or preach that man is not responsible to God for his actions; all agree that God chastens, even them that he loves, and that we all learn obedience by the things we suffer. This being true, why not strive "*to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?*" I have never heard any Primitive Baptist preach that eternal life is based on acts of obedience.

So, brethren, let us all labor in love like a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots, or a flock of sheep that came up from the washing.

We all know that the world hates us; and, hence, it is folly for us to bite and devour each other. So let each preacher, editor, associate editor, deacon and lay member strive to avoid hard expressions, such as generate strife and divisions. If it be-

comes necessary to reprove let it be done in love; better none present save the reprover and the reprov'd. If open rebuke is necessary let it be done tenderly and in brotherly love, in such a way to cause the rebuked brother to feel that you love him and want to save him.

If a preacher is in a habit of travelling through our section and preaching in such way as to divide our flock would it not be better to talk with him privately and advise him that he is causing trouble; then, if he loves the cause, he will go elsewhere.

So, brethren, I will conclude by saying, by way of quotation, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, Good Will toward men."

Elder Jesse A. Ashburn

... PRAYER ...

No subject of the Bible holds more interest than this. Perhaps, we do not understand much about it. I am sure that I do not, and I realize how presumptuous it is for me to think I could teach anyone how to pray. This world professes to teach that and some theologian has gone to the trouble to write a book called "God's Minute." In the book he has a short prayer for each day in the year. Not being able to give you that many in advance. While I do not know that I have ever prayed, and if I have that I will ever be blessed to

do so again it does not mean that it is not gospel subject. If it is, it certainly is profitable, under spiritual guidance, for our discussion and examination.

By way of encouragement to the dear saints I want to say to you that none of our leaders have a monopoly on prayer. Although prayer is a gift it is not one we can use any time men call on us to pray. If I am mistaken about it do not follow me, but I believe that any minister feels a great hesitancy offering prayer at times.

Prayer is, after all, a close-up with God, a veritable talking face to face. When we are really and truly given to see our sins, it is enough to cause a trembling in body and spirit to ask God for anything, seeing that it is the prayer of a righteous man that avails anything. In this connection let me say that I have impressions to pray just like I trust I do to preach. At these times it is the sweetest yielding and compliance to his blessed command as it is in standing in the pulpit and preaching the doctrine of grace. Trying to pray is like trying to preach-it is mighty hard work-in fact it cannot be done. While trying to pray, we invariably are in the flesh and our object is selfish, begging for the things that we want. But that is not all, trying to accomplish a thing not only shows a lack of how but of what and why. I believe we pray as we preach and live and die, depending on the eternal fixed purposes of God. It is in

faith that we come to him at all. This faith, at all times, is the substance of the things hoped for. This has never been changed and, although it moved Abel, Daniel, Jacob, Paul and all those gone before and will move every communicant that is yet to come, it is as unchangeable as God. In every step of our obedience to his commandments, it is faith that goes before, revealing the eternal perfection and sovereign purpose of God in disposing of all created things. Faith does not go before, bringing to light the unfinished things of God, as though he was a little undecided as to his rule of conduct, but it is the substance of our hope.

Now come hither little child and let us look at our hope. We do not hope that we will exercise faith to the end, but we hope that God eternally arranged for our salvation in Jesus Christ. Our prayer is not an effort to change God, but it is because he is unchangeable. The world (that is, the ungodly world) may swerve and tauntingly tell us that if they believed everything was fixed they would not pray, we know better things than that. We know our eternal destiny is fixed and that all our spiritual blessings are as settled and stable in the mind and purpose of God as is his choice. Furthermore, we are assured that he has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness. It is according to this knowledge that every prayer is uttered. If we must try to pray then we must guess as to what to pray for. Guess-

ing, we are told is all right when it hits, but unless we ask according to his will, our will would, if permitted to pray, ask for things that would forever remove us and land us away from every providential and parental blessing. If we must try to pray (that is, if we must pray more often, or more fervently) then we must guess as to what to pray for and, on that conditional basis, we would have a right to ask why if it was not answered.

A prayer is not something excited in you by the wisdom of this world. Just think of the prayer (that is, words called prayers) addressed to God (as they suppose) for favor in converting the heathen. That is a conditional, selfish, carnal utterance. If it was asked according to the will of God he would certainly grant it, because God answers that kind. We sometimes are motivated in like manner in the dear old church. We get over zealous and ask God promiscuously to bring the regenerated into the church. He does not answer this kind of prayer because it is not prayer.

This is a wonderful subject, it is a blessing from God. We cannot pray unless blessed in spirit, yet the apostles commanded us to pray. We are told that we ought to pray. Now we realize that it is a gift from God. Would God give us a gift to ask that any will be done except his own? Is not all prayer a complacent acknowledgement of his will being done in heaven and in earth? Having been

taught his sovereignty, and being kept by his power do we not have a desire to see and feel the doing of that will?

Elder W. D. Griffin (Sept., 1947)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” - Colossians iii. 16.

This surely means something more than merely reading the word in a careless, formal manner. It is *“to dwell in us,”* that is, take up its firm and lasting abode in our heart, and that *“richly;”* not poorly and niggardly, but copiously and abundantly, unfolding to us and putting us into possession of the wealth of its treasures; and that in *“all wisdom,”* making us wise to salvation, opening up to us the manifold wisdom of God, and how it displays itself in the great mystery of godliness. Now we shall not attain to this rich and heavenly wisdom unless we search and study the Scriptures with prayer and supplication to understand what the Holy Ghost has revealed therein, and what he is pleased to unfold therefrom of the will and way of God for our own personal instruction and consolation. We very easily fall off from abiding in Christ; nor can we expect to keep up sensible union and communion with the Lord Jesus

if we neglect those means of grace which the Holy Ghost has provided for the sustentation of the life of God in the soul. When we get cold, sluggish, and dead, to read the word of God is a task and a burden; but not so, when the love of God is warm and gushing in the soul. Then, to read his holy word with prayer and supplication, entering by faith into its hidden treasures, and drinking into the mind of Christ as revealed therein, is a blessed means of maintaining the life of God in the heart, and keeping up union and communion with Christ.

Elder J.C. Philpot

*“Thou wilt cast all their sins
Into the depths of the sea.”—
MICAHA vii. 19.*

WHEN God takes all our iniquities with his own hand, and casts them with his own arm into the depths of the sea, they will never come out of those depths to witness against the family of God in the great and terrible day. Your sins now may seem to be all alive in your breast, and everyone of them to bring accusation upon accusation against you. This sin is crying out for vengeance, and that for punishment. This slip, this fall, this backsliding, this foolish word, this wrong action, are all testifying against you in the court of

conscience. Do what you may, be where you may, live holy how you may, watch and pray how you may, keep silent and separate from the world or even from your own family how you may, sin still moves, lives, acts, works, and often brings you into guilt and bondage. But if God has had mercy upon us he has cast all our sins with his own hands into the depths of the sea, and those sins have no more eyes to look at us with angry indignation, have no more tongues to speak against us in voices of accusation, have no more life in them to rise up and testify that they have been committed by us, that God's law has been broken by them, and that therefore we are under its condemnation and curse. And there is no truth in God's word more certain than the complete forgiveness of sins, and the presentation of the Church of Christ at the great day faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Elder J.C. Philpot

Phillipians 2:2-3.

Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Let nothing be though strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

MEETINGS

The Annual July 4th meeting will be held the Lord willing; on Tuesday July 4th with Union Church, Patrick County Va. Meeting to began at 10:00 AM.

The Church is located on State road #623. Those traveling Rt 57 east or West Turn on Fairystone park road (Rt 346) travel a short distance and turn left On Rt. 623, follow to Church on right.

Those traveling north or south on highway 220 turn on state road 605 north of Oak Level (at blinking light designating sharp curve) stay on road 605 (Henry Road) thru Henry , cross railroad tracks for several miles. Turn left on 623 to church on the left.

Those traveling highway 40, east or west turn on state road 605 about 5 miles West of Ferrum, Va. At Crossroads Market. Go through Ingramville over hill, turn Right on 623 and follow to Church on the left.

We invite all of our faith and order to come and be with us.

Tony R. Horton

CONTRIBUTIONS

- Elder Gene Lupton -NC 5.00
- Katherine Mathews -LA 10.00
- Steve Everett -VA 15.00
- J. D. Neely -AR 5.00
- Andrew White -MD 5.00

- Gary Whaling -W.VA 10.00
- Eva Wyatt -NC 5.00
- Flora Vest -VA 5.00
- Rosalie Walker -VA 10.00
- Reidy Pickral -VA 25.00
- E. H. Chandler -LA 5.00
- Armedia Taylor- LA 10.00
- Dan Sokolovic -NC 5.00
- Jerry Morgan -LA 10.00
- Pauline Toney- MS 5.00

OBITUARIES

GERTRUDE LOIS COX

As I attempt to write this Obituary for our beloved Sister in Christ, (Gertrude Lois Cox), I pray the Lord will guide my pen and my thoughts. Sister Gertrude was born February 22, 1925; and fell asleep in Jesus on March 22, 2006, making her stay on this earth 81 years. She united with Old Union Church and was Baptized in October, 1980; by her Pastor, Elder Hale Terry.

Sister Gertrude attended the meetings at Old Union Church so faithfully. She loved the doctrine of Salvation by Grace and Grace alone. Her walk and talk manifested the love she felt for her church and the members at Old Union. She dearly loved her Pastor and his family, always concerned about his welfare.

In her later years her memory began to fail her, but she was blessed to be able to remember when her meeting day was at Old

Union. Her children said that was the one thing she did not forget.

Sister Gertrude always seemed to rejoice in the singing and the preaching of the Gospel, and knew where all her help and strength came from. And as I have heard our dear Pastor say in his preaching; we have more to die for than we have to live for. I am most sure that Sister Gertrude believed that with all her heart. She suffered many trials and afflictions during her lifetime, and was given strength to bear it all.

Her children were so faithful to see that she came to her meetings when her health started to fail her. Sister Gertrude's family manifested the love they had for her in the much needed care they gave her in her last days here on earth. She was a precious Mother in Israel.

Her funeral service was conducted at the Maberry Funeral Home in Floyd, VA by her Pastor Elder Hale Terry and Elder Larry Hollandsworth. She was laid to rest in the Sumpter Cemetery, beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the Second coming of her Lord. May God make us all reconciled to His will and purpose, and that some sweet day we will all be joined together praising God forever .
Done by order of the church in conference, Sunday March 26, 2006; one copy to be sent to the family, one to the Signs of the Times for publication and one for our Church records.

Elder Hale Terry, Moderator,
Sandra Hollandsworth, Clerk

SIS. ELIZABETH MAYHEW JONES

Sister Elizabeth Mayhew Jones was born December 30, 1921 in West Virginia. She was a daughter of the late Oscar Harris Mayhew Sr. and Mary Crouch Mayhew.

Sister Jones passed from this life January, 2006 in Franklin Memorial Hospital.

Sister Elizabeth was predeceased by her husband, Robert Harry Jones, a sister Olive Mayhew Simpson, three brothers, P. C. Mayhew, Oscar Harris Mayhew Jr. and Elton Titus Mayhew.

She is survived by a daughter Lee Mayhew Jones of Santa Monica California, two grandchildren, Dora Delarrey and Tatyana Tureen Jones, two half brothers, Jerry Mayhew and Donald Mayhew; three half sisters, Perry Miller, Billie Jean Ingole and Alice Shaw, nieces Joyce S. Mayhew of Gretna, VA, and Pat S. Beck of Danville.

Sister Jones was a member of Springfield Primitive Baptist Church. She was received by experience and Baptism May 11, 1986.

She always enjoyed the meetings, love and fellowship. She attended services as long as her health permitted.

Sister Elizabeth's funeral was held January 2, 2006 by her pastor, Elder Marvin Brumfield and Elder Raymond Goad. She was laid to rest in the Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery.

May all be reconciled to God's Will.

Written in Love and Hope,
 Carol R. Pickral
 Elder Marvin Brumfield,
 Moderator:
 Oscar Pickral, Clerk

CLARABEL JONES MASSEY

On February 19, 2006, Clarabel Jones Massey of Elberton, Georgia, passed from this earth to her eternal home. She was 86 years of age and the widow of Stuart B. Massey. She was preceded in death by her daughter, Merrel Jane Massey Ginn; five Jones brothers: J.V., Clint, Horace, Fred and Sam; and two sisters: Ruth Kidd and Mary Emma Seagraves.

She was born April 9, 1919 in Bostwick, Morgan County, Georgia and was the daughter of the late Samuel H. and Mary Eberhart Jones. She resided in Athens-Clarke County and Madison County, Georgia most of her life. She retired from the Navy Supply Corps School, Athens, Georgia and received many awards during her career. She was the tour hostess in the City of Athens, Georgia for the new Navy officers.

She joined the Primitive Baptist Church April 20, 1957 and was a member of Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church, Athens-Clarke County, Georgia, when she died. She was

Assistant Clerk for Mt. Zion for many years, doing a beautiful job. She also wrote "Historical Notes on Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church" while she was taking a journalism class at the University of Georgia. Her health prevented her from attending her Church that she loved so dearly for the last several years.

Survivors include one son; Stuart Lynn Massey, six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren, and two sisters, Agnes Marshall and Betty Ford, who are the only ones left out of a family of ten children (five boys and five girls).

Services were held February 22, 2006, at Little-Ward Funeral Home, Commerce, Georgia with Elder Kenneth Adams officiating. A eulogy was given by her grandson-in-law, Patrick Cramer. She was laid to rest in Gordon's Chapel United Methodist Church Cemetery beside her beloved husband.

Written By:

Sister Betty J. Ford, Clerk and
 Brother Meredith Watson,
 Assistant Clerk Mt. Zion
 Primitive Baptist Church
 Approved in Mt. Zion
 Primitive Baptist Church
 conference on April 9, 2006

Matthew 14:27.

But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of Good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

202 Carousel Lane, Meadows of Dan, Va. 24120-4403

SONG

*DESCEND, celestial Dove,
And make thy presence known ;
Reveal our Saviour's love,
And seal us for thine own ;
Unbless'd by thee. our works are
vain
Nor can we e'er acceptance gain.*

*When our incarnate God,
The sovereign Prince of light,
In Jordan's swelling flood
Received the holy rite,
In open view thy form came down,
And dove-like flew the King to
crown.*

*The day was never known
Since time began its race,
On which such glory shone,
On which was shone such grace,
As that which shed in Jordan's
stream
On Jesus' head the heavenly beam.*

*Continue still to shine,
And fill us with thy fire ;
This ordinance is thine,
Do thou our souls inspire ;
Thou wilt attend on all our sons :
Till time shall end, thy promise
runs,*

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 146
 Elder Richard H. Campbell

CORRESPONDENCE 151

VOICES OF THE PAST 154
 Elder C. A. Vipperman
 J. A. Ashburn
 James Wagner
 Addie Snyder

MEETINGS 167

CONTRIBUTIONS 168

OBITUARIES 168
 Dannie Moore Strickland

EDITORIAL

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isa 55:8-9)



Elder R. H. Campbell

I heard them quoted many times, and I believed what was said, regarding the subject which they were dis-

In these two verses Isaiah sets forth a very basic truth that I had never considered actually seriously before, although, I have

cussing. As I read it the other day, it seemed to me that there is a very great separation between the realm in which God dwells, and the realm in which man dwells in the realm of nature. This separation between the two extremes are as great as that gulf which was placed between the place where Lazarus was, which was in the bosom of Abraham, and where the rich man was, which was hell. It was said at that time that, between them there was a great gulf fixed; so that no man could go from one place to the other.

I believe that the same condition exists in the above text, so that no man can breach the great gulf between the wisdom and thoughts of God and the wisdom and thoughts of men. This truth is set forth very clearly in, (1 Cor. 1:21) *“For when in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”* The natural man with the wisdom of the world, cannot understand the ways and thoughts of God, and neither is he in a position to judge God for the decisions that he makes concerning the affairs of the world in which man dwells. All communication between these two realms must originate with God, by means of the Holy Ghost, for this is the only way that man can understand things of the spiritual realm It is even as David said, (Psa. 139:6) *“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high. I cannot attain unto it.”*

God sent Paul to preach the gospel, which is foolishness to them that perish, but, unto them that are saved, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. The reason that the same message that is foolishness to some and salvation to others is that the elect have been born again, and a line of communication been opened unto them, and the remaining are left in the state of darkness into which all men are born into the world of nature. This is by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, as is stated very clearly in, *(Rom 9:22-23) "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also to the Gentiles."*

The reason behind all of this is that God's thoughts and ways are so much above the thoughts and ways of man, that the natural reasoning and intellect of the creature, cannot fathom the depth of these truths, so that Paul could only say, *(Rom 11:33-36) "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been*

his counselor? Or who hath first given unto him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." The entire plan of the salvation of the children of God, is in the fact that it was completed before man was even created, and is just as sure and certain as all of the rest of the creation of God, and we all are witnesses to the sun coming up every day and going down at night as was decreed at the same time.

This leaves man with no valid reason to boast, or any claim of any credit, for his being able to understand the ways and thoughts of God. It was not because of any intelligence that he has above others, or any lineage that he received from his forefathers, but strictly because he was chosen of God and elected unto this high and lofty place among the children of God, before time began, and this fact is plainly stated by the prophets and apostles in their writings. Isaiah said, *(Isa 43:1) "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name; thou art mine."* And again in (verses 6 and 7) *"I will say to the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth: even every one that is called by my name: for I have*

created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him."

In the beginning, God made man, and when he had completed the creation of all things, he pronounced that they were very good, and this included man, as he was created. Then man put forth his hand and partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God had commanded him to not do, and because of this, God, because of man's disobedience, drove man from the Garden of Eden, and consigned him to the earth, which is the devil's domain. When God saw that the wickedness of man was very great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually, it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth and it grieved him at his heart. This was his assessment of the man that he had made, after he was driven from the Garden of Eden, and this is the nature of the man when left to his own devices. Solomon said, (*Eccl. 7:29*) "*Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.*" Now, with this in mind, is man saved because of what he may be able to do, or in spite of what he has done? If justice had been meted out to the man, at the time, God would have destroyed all men, because they were all equally guilty, but, by the mercy of God, Moses found grace in the eyes of the Lord,

and a remnant was spared. It is even as Paul said, when speaking of the seven thousand whom God told Isaiah that he had reserved unto himself, (*Rom. 11:5*) "*Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*" This can equally be applied unto the elect of God in all ages, because the seven thousand is the whole household of faith.

It is because that God's ways and thoughts are not as man's, ways and thoughts, that there are any who remained to fulfill the commands which God gave man, in the day that he was created. When God created man, he blessed him and said unto him, be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth, and for this to be fulfilled, a remnant was spared that God's command concerning the population of the whole earth would be accomplished.

The Lord told Noah that he had found him righteous in this generation, and that he was to build an ark and take two of every species of his creation, male and female into the ark, because he was going to destroy the rest from the face of the earth. By faith Noah built the ark, and took himself, his wife, their three sons and their wives and all of the animals into the ark. God caused it to rain forty days and forty nights and destroyed all living creatures

from the earth. After the flood had receded from the face of the earth God told Noah, (*Gen 8:16-18*) *“Go forth of the ark, thou and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him:”* Noah then built an ark unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar, and the Lord smelled a sweet savour: and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.” and this promise remains unto this day.

God is a merciful and forgiving God, unto those whom he hath chosen, those for whom he has blessed with his loving kindness. (*Isa 43:3-4*) *“For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy one of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thy life.”* He

has had an elect people that were given grand and glorious promises before the foundation of the world, and because of his command given unto them, that they were to go forth and replenish the earth, all future generations must fulfill their allotted time on earth, be redeemed from their sinful and corrupt condition and receive the inheritance that was laid up for them from the beginning. This was assured when Noah found grace in the eyes of the lord, and he was sent on his mission to perpetuate the fulfillment of the purposes of God.

God then made his covenant with Noah and his sons after him, saying, behold I will establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you, and I will set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

Because God’s ways are higher than man’s ways, he dispenses his wrath upon the vessels of wrath whereunto they were appointed, and at the same time, grace to the vessels of mercy which he hath afore prepared unto glory. The man in nature will say, now that’s not fair, but fairness has nothing to do with it: all men are in a state of just condemna-

men are in a state of just condemnation for their actions; but because of the love that God had for the chosen vessels of mercy from the foundation of the world, they are redeemed from their condemnation by the blood of Jesus, and the rest are left, as they were, in the care and control of their father the devil. Jesus did nothing to justify them, and therefore they will receive their just reward in the lake of fire and brimstone, which is their true heritage. This is not done in the sense that man dispenses his favors or enmity unto his enemies, but rather, in the fact that God blesses all men with many favors in the things of nature, but also dispenses spiritual blessing unto the elect, which is reserved for them alone.

There was an occasion where David sinned against the Lord by numbering the children of Israel, and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant: for I have done very foolishly. The Lord's response to David, by the prophet Gad, was I offer thee three things, choose one of them, that I may do unto thee. Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? Or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? Or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? Now advise, and see what answer I shall return to the Lord. And David said unto God, I am in a strait: let us fall

now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

David was aware that the ways of the Lord were not as the ways of man, for he had suffered many years, at the hand of man, and knowing that God is merciful unto those that fear him, whatever happened unto him would be for his good and for the good of the house of Israel; for he said I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house, meaning his earthly father's house. All of God's children would respond in like manner, because, they know that all of their salvation is by the grace of God, and believing that he has begun a good work in them, he will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ, and that all things will work together for good to them that love the Lord.

May God's longsuffering, mercy and grace, follow us all the days of our lives, and may we ever be mindful of the fact that the Lord's ways are not as our ways and that we will not be dealt with, as we deserve, but, have been given a blessed hope that we have been judged worthy. This is not because of anything that we have done to merit that blessing, but rather, as a member of the body of his only begotten Son we are justified, if we be one of his. It is all in Christ Jesus, who of God, who has been made unto us wisdom, and

and redemption; and as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

In bonds of love,
Richard H. Campbell

Thanks to you Elder Terry and to those of like faith who contribute so much talentt in publishing the Signs of the Times.

Alma F. Coate-Wilson

CORRESPONDENCE

May 15, 2006

May 10, 2006

Dear Brother Terry,

Please accept my apology for being late in getting my renewal money to you. At my age of 97, I realize my usual doing my business duties on time has often failed me. Thank you for continuing to send the Signs and reminding me of the time to renew. (This time for 2 years)

The Lord continues to bless me with good health. My eye specialist told me that my vision was in the upper 10% of all people my age. How thankful I am to be able to enjoy all the precious spiritual writings of those who contribute their God-given words of comfort to the flock of those of us who love the risen Savior. The Lord remains very close to me in personal comfort and advice. I feel that I am being led by His almighty hand as He so clearly answers my prayers.

I feel like I would like to offer a writing of what these spiritual episodes have done for me in praise of my Lord Jesus and eternal God.

Dear Elder Terry,

I see my subscription is expiring with this month's issue. Enclosed is a check for \$25.00 to renew my subscription for another two years.

Thank you for all you do in getting the Signs out every month. My mother and I look forward to each issue. I keep them and re-read them at various times.

May God continue his blessings on each of you at the Signs.

In Christian Love,
Gloria B. Reese and
Violet M. Barton

Dear Elder Terry,

Enclosed is my check for 1 year renewal and \$5.00 to help with the paper.

Your editorial in the May issue by Elder Farmer was just the message I needed to hear.

May God bless you,
Grace Manly

Dear Elder Terry,

My grandpa, Ed Johnson ordered the subscription for the Signs. He liked for me to read aloud and we spent many happy hours doing this. I see that the subscription is due. I have enclosed a check for 2 years. Please deduct any months due and send me the rest. I would like to continue getting it. I have a love for the Old Baptist people and the Gospel that is preached there. I work weekends and don't get to go much.

If I may I would like to tell you my grandpa's experience. Grandpa went to a Methodist church when he was a boy and changed to The Holiness later, where he joined. This is the story in his words – "I thought I believed what the Holiness said and did, I tried to shout and roll on the floor like everyone else did but it just never felt natural to me. When I married your Granny her mama and papa believed in the Old Baptist and so did she. Bob and Lucy Carter were some of the finest people I ever met and it was interesting to see her talk to some of the preachers and read the Bible and go deep in scripture. They sometimes asked her questions and she tried to answer, they would sit on the old porch for hours.

Well Martha, and I, went first one Sunday to her Old Baptist and next Sunday to the Holiness. One day she and I were cutting wood with an old two man saw that Johnny Carter

gave me from the sawmill. We were talking about what I believed and what she believed. She said only the ones pre-elected would go to Heaven. I told her if old preacher George Dye with all that cigarette smoking he did, went to heaven, then everybody in the world would go. It hurt her feelings and made her mad. She threw down her side of the saw and went inside.

That same night I had a dream. I thought the whole sky was on fire and when I looked up the Lord was as big as the whole sky. I could not see his face but I heard his voice. He said "Don't believe on cigarettes but believe on me." That dream was more real than any I've ever had before or after. When I woke Martha up and told her. As I remember she shed tears with me, I couldn't get that dream out of my head. It was like it really happened.

The next week my church was having some kind of play about Christmas, Martha went with me but she really didn't want to. About half way through the play they had a baby doll that was suppose to be Jesus, none of it seemed right to me. The play or what the preacher said. – I asked Martha if she was ready to go and she said "yes" she sure was ready.

The next weekend we went to Union Church, as I sat there everything that preacher said seemed right to me. I was filled with tears, how could I have ever believed what The Holiness Church said. I guess I

never really did believe or feel right, at the Holiness Church. I never stepped back in that church again. The Old Baptist that was the place for me.

Every time someone went forward to ask a home with the church I thought why can't that be me. One Sunday at the end of handshaking I looked up and saw Martha at the front of the church with tears rolling down her cheeks and I thought this is our day. We both asked a home with the church at Republican and were accepted. What a good day. When we got baptized there was ice on the water but Martha or I never felt cold much. It was so special, we couldn't change ourselves but the good Lord had a plan for us and we hope that we are thankful.

My Grandpa's love for the Old Baptist faith and its people was strong. In his last months and weeks on this old earth the most important thing to him was to be with and serve God's little children.

When he was too weak to walk from one room to the other and had to have help with the smallest daily things, somehow he would, with a little help, get dressed and go to church. We took his power wheel chair and he rode it inside. He rode that chair up and down the isle to serve communion. And do his part as a deacon.

When I asked him how he did it he said "When I get in the church a feeling of comfort and strength comes over me and I am able.

The good Lord gave me that, and I always hope that I am thankful to him for it. I feel unworthy of such a blessing."

We all love and miss my grandparents. They were sweet and kind and precious to me.

Thank you,

Deborah Ingram Heath,
Granddaughter of
Ed and Martha Johnson

1 John 4: 1-6.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

VOICES OF THE PAST

EXPERIENCE

Elder F. P. Branscome, Dear Brother: I have thought for some time I would try to write some of what I hope is the dealings of the Lord with me. I don't know just when I began to fear the Lord, but it was at a very early age. When I was nine years old I remember getting in a fearful condition, so sleep seemed to leave me and I feared I would be lost. My father was killed when I was a baby. I had a good mother; she was the daughter of Elder A. J. Cassell. She gave me the best instruction a christian mother could give, but for all this I was often doing things to grieve her. Shortly after this I dreamed of throwing a rock and killing a boy, I thought I was certain for torment then; and when I awoke I thought surely the dream was intended to show me that I was to be lost. When ten or eleven years old I dreamed that I and one of my playmates were confined in a large pile of wood, and all it lacked of being torment was being set on fire, and I thought he was trying to set it. This was still more evidence that I was to be lost. Soon after this I dreamed of being at Concord church and being baptized by Elder J. M. Blansett and realizing the happiest time that I had ever witnessed at that time. That gave me some hope of heaven, still I didn't know any-

thing about what preaching was; I had never been to preaching many times. Sometimes after going to bed there was such a burden on me I would cry, but no one knew of, neither did I tell my dreams; yet I enjoyed the things of the world. Time went on, and I grew no better. When about sixteen years old I went with my mother to an Old Baptist meeting to hear Elders J. M. Blansett and J. W. Barnard. I sat down on the outer edge of the crowd, but when Brother Blansett took his text that was the first preaching I ever heard, or the first that ever took hold on me. I believed he was a preacher of the gospel and I was an awful sinner. I thought I would try to live a better life from then on. I verily thought I could live in such a way that God would forgive my sins. Sometimes I would look around and think that I was just about as good as anybody; I didn't curse nor steal; I tried to be truthful. I would think sometimes I almost had religion, but still I would sing bad songs, would play marbles, hunt and fish on Sunday; and sometimes when I would lie down at night I would think how I had spent the day and try to promise I would do better. Sometimes I would think about trying to pray, but I did not know how and thought it would be a sin for me to try. When about nineteen years old I married. I thought then I could be better. I still believed in works. I would go to preaching and enjoy it.

I would try to conceal my tears. I would look upon the church with

admiration and longed to be numbered with them, and when one would go to the church I would think "there is mercy for others but none for me." I gradually grew worse until I was about thirty years old, when I took typhoid fever. While very low one night, I thought I had to die, and I begged God to have mercy on me. I thought I was dying without any hope. It seemed that I could realize the pains of torment take hold on me. I wanted my mother to pray for me, but she was out of reach. I believed that Brother Blansett was a servant of God, and I thought if he could only pray for me perhaps the Lord would hear him, but there was no way of letting him know. So after a while I became reconciled to the will of the Lord.

I thought if it was his will he would save me anyway. So I became willing to die and after a while I began to get better, and I had a great desire to be baptized. So one day I told my wife I wanted to be baptized and she said, "*Well, you can when you get well;*" but it was not long till it began to bother me I thought I knew I was not fit to be baptized, but I tried to promise that if I ever got well I will live a better life, but instead of getting better I seemed to get worse, until about three years had passed. By this time I had almost given up ever having any hope. My confidence in man, I thought was already lost, there was but one chance, and that depended alone on the mercy of God, and it seemed so unreason-

able for Him to remember such a sinner as I was. It seemed that I had sinned with a better informed judgment. I would often go to bed desiring to dream of something for relief, but instead of that perhaps I would dream something wicked. But if my memory serves me right, about the 22nd of December, 1899, I went to bed very much unconcerned, and dropped off to sleep, and about midnight I dreamed the end of time came. I thought the Lord came down and immediately returned toward heaven, or a light above, and I thought I was lifted up with him, together with my wife and others when some were left, and I wondered what power was carrying me up and I thought it was the power of the Lord; I awoke and the first thought was, "*Is this a hope?*" and a few moments and my soul, I trust, was filled with love and thanks to God for his mercies. I could for one time claim a hope. I thought of some and wanted to tell my experience to just them, but I decided to wait until morning, but when morning came I was fearful I had no hope and kept it to myself about three months before I told anybody. On Saturday before the fourth Sunday in May, 1900, I offered myself to the Primitive Baptist church at Dan River and was received and was baptized by our much esteemed Eld. J. M. Blansett.

C. A. VIPPERMAN.

TO OUR MINISTERS

Dear brethren: There are no people who stand so close to our heart as the gospel ministry, especially our young ministers. None but the minister himself can sympathize with them. Their struggles, weakness, doubts and fears, forebodings and sorrows, temptations and dark feelings of unfitness, with the desire to be clothed with righteousness from on high, trials and tribulations too numerous to mention, all appeal to us in no uncertain manner. The God-called ministers feel all these aches, pangs and pain, and the bitter groaning says, in itself, that "*Deep calleth unto deep.*"

But, my dear fellow-suffers in the ministry, these are essentials to each that he may see his own weakness and the sinfulness of his nature, so as to be able to understand something of the love, mercy and grace of God in the salvation of sinners. You will, no doubt, often feel that everybody is against you, even your nearest friends and neighbors, your brother preachers, members of the church; and, at the same time, you may feel that God Himself is against you. But, my brother, our pride must be humbled, and our poor sinful flesh is so haughty, selfwilled, stubborn and proud, that these things are necessary in order that we may walk humbly before God and his people; and, while the flesh and the devil, with all opposing, are trying to persuade you that "All these things are

against me," yet they are necessary to prevent us from being puffed up with pride, thereby falling into condemnation of the devil. The devil (your worst enemy) will continually try to stir you up to envy and hatred, and, should you fail to watch and keep your members in subjection, he would utterly destroy your usefulness, and yourself become a castaway. But your gift will make room for you. You may desire to preach at some time or place where God has not sent you; you may fail and satan induce you to put the blame on some one for your failure.

Perhaps satan will tempt you to desire to preach to the largest audience and try to get you to take the time of some pastor, or take the time belonging to the preacher who made the appointment. This is one of satan's "tricks," to stir up confusion. At regular meetings where churches have pastors the people, as a rule, go out to hear their pastor. When others make appointments the people go out to hear them: but all this does not release you. You must do the preaching God bids you, and you will have to bear a cross—A great cross—to do it, but take up that cross. You can make your effort on Saturday before the church itself – this is a cross – and let the church judge. Any God-called minister feels that the church is able to "*Judge angels*" and ministers but perhaps you are not satisfied with this and if your gift is profitable for others you will feel im-

pressed to preach to others. Now here is another cross, satan will whisper, *What if you fail? But you must "Make full proof of your ministry."* Make an appointment yourself, then the people will come out to hear you. Let some minister or deacon go with you. They will be glad to do so. You will find a freedom here you have never found before, and you will also feel a responsibility you have never felt before. As soon as your appointment is arranged satan will, no doubt, begin to discourage you. Perhaps, you will spend sleepless nights trying to pray to God to be with you, and the meaning of your prayer will be, *"Oh Father glorify thy son that thy son may glorify thee,"* You remember that you are preaching for the glory of God and not your own glory. Your glory must be laid at the feet of Jesus. God must be glorified, and whether you preach or fail, remember that God is the one that the glory is due. Remember what the Apostle Paul enjoined on Timothy and Titus relative to their duty as ministers of the Gospel. Give attendance to reading. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"* &c. *"Search the Scriptures,"* said Jesus. *"Preach the word."* *"Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."* Said the Apostle Paul, *"put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to*

obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."

We might dwell more at length on these, but will close by saying that there is a way of saving both thyself and them that hear thee.

J.A. Ashburn

WHAT SHALL WE SAY

"What shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" - Rom. 6:1.

We are saved by grace. This doctrine has been assailed ever since the dawn of the gospel day, when Jesus was here on earth in person, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers and raising the dead. We learn that the accusers were here heaping accusations upon Him, while he taught that salvation is the gift of God; that eternal life came from heaven by the will of God. Now all who have received this life, and peace, and love, are willing, while under the influence of the Spirit, that God shall have all the glory; are willing to the knowledge that we are kept by the power of God from sin unto salvation; willing to confess their sins, and even to say, *"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing."*

But the enemies of salvation by grace, the enemies of the righteous-

ness of Christ, and of the salvation of God, even in the apostolic day, accused the apostles of saying, *“Let us do evil that good may come.”* This expression is a slander to believers in Christ, because all of them realize that they are begotten unto good works. They do not wish to continue in sin, but desire to walk humbly before God, realizing their continual dependence upon God for continued grace. We may do all the good in our power, and still we are sinners and need his abounding grace every day, every hour, all the time. But, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? *“God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? We cannot. Yet it is true that our bodies are filled with corruption; that sin is condemned in the flesh; that the flesh must die, the penalty which none can escape.”* *“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* While we are living in vanity we are living after the flesh and dying daily, for death is working in us all the time. But as we “were baptized into Jesus Christ we were baptized into his death: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. *“In this we mortify the deeds of the flesh; and, as this”*, mortification takes place, we walk in newness of life: for we are born

again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God. And yet, while this is all true, we are carnal, sold under sin. Of this, Paul said, *“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing. for to will is present with me; but how to perform that, which is good I find not. For the good that would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”* — Rom. 7:15-25.

So, brethren, if I can use the above in spirit and in truth,

I must be content.

J.A. Ashburn

Dear Brother Mitchell: - Supposing you are still on time's side of the river of death, I feel like writing to you. I have often thought of your. And, by your permission, I will write also to the readers of the Messenger, many of whom are my acquaintances and former religious associates. This is, in all probability, the last attempt I will ever make to write, as it is with much difficulty that I write, owing to the weakness of eyesight. I have never been able to express my thoughts either in writing or speaking as they were entertained in my mind.

In connection with the above texts; I desire to write some of my thoughts or experience in the christian warfare: and; as the theme is so copious I can only give a short sketch in this letter.

"These are they that came out of great tribulation." Rev. vii. 14. *As thy days thy strength shall be.*" Deut. xxxiii. 25. In all the checkered and varied scenes through which the Christian is led or driven, almighty power and sovereign grace shine with resplendent glory, and this, sooner or later, is realized in the experience of the tried saints, and they are only led or driven where their best and surest may abide.

Here I wish to refer to some of my own travels. When, in my twentieth year, on Friday I was walking in my father's orchard, as quick as thought I was made to realize that I was the most miserable and undone hell-deserving sinner that ever drew

the breath of life, and that eternal banishment from my offended sovereign was my certain doom. To the heavy charge of guilt that then racked my soul; I plead guilty, yea thrice guilty: for at the same time He made known to me my awful state by reason of: sin and incessant rebellion. Under the weight of such trying scenes we can only imagine *the* pensive moans, the bitter, but, penitent tears, and plaintive *cries for* mercy. A poor soul thus envied with "a deep felt sense of *his* desperate condition has, for the first time in his life, a thought of pleading for mercy. In and with this view I retired to a secret spot to try to ask for mercy: but, before retiring to the place, the thought occurred that if such a vile wretch attempts to address such a holy, just and glorious being as then impressed my mind, He would surely strike me dead, and then my portion would be with the damned. But as my troubles seemed to increase and grow intense, I finally knelt and plead with my offended Sovereign for mercy, but it seemed that my words fell unheeded before me; and being thus barred from His throne and presence, my condition became desperate, and I was driven to the necessity of making a full surrender. So, on the ensuing Sunday evening, as I returned, as I thought, for the last time to try to plead for mercy, and, after walking to and fro in a dense grove of timber, I prostrated myself on the ground, having become perfectly

willing from my Maker to dispose of me as seemed good to Him.

The change that now took place and the emotions of soul that animated and moved my entire being, can never be fully portrayed by men or angels. Imagine a poor, hell-deserving wretch, whose numerous sins from early youth, with all their aggravated enormity, are sufficient to sink him to the lowest hell. He is brought before the fiery tribunal of his offended Sovereign, the high God who alone inhabits eternity, whose every perfection shines with the most resplendent glory. Yet, having charged his Son with all this heavy load of guilt, He issues to this poor self-condemned culprit a free and full discharge; Yea, He takes him to His banqueting-house, and His banner over him is love.

This is a wonderful and miraculous change, indeed; for it seems to be an instantaneous exit from the dark and dismal regions of despair or hell to the portals of the most dazzling glory. Instead of being cast off as an alien enemy, he is caressed and nurtured as a dear son; and, like the poor Gadarene he is clothed, and in his right mind, and at the feet of his dear redeemer, whose righteousness covers and hides all his guilt, his happiness seems complete, and adoring gratitude fills his heart, warms his affections. He feels as clear of guilt as though he had never committed a sin. All nature seems to join his happy soul in ascribing praise to his ever-blessed

Lord. His transformation seems so complete that he concludes he is changed in both soul and body, and that the principle of sin is completely eradicated, never more to return to annoy and vex him; and it does seem that such transporting views and exuberant joy as then possess and animate his entire being would be sufficient to impress his mind and influence his conduct his remaining days. But alas! he soon finds that the strong man that possessed and ruled in his palace was only bound. When, as I hope, I was favored with a view and realized the blessed influence of the scenes through which I was passing, I made a solemn vow that I would serve Him the balance of my days, and verily thought I could live in strict conformity to His will and word. (I was then about three hundred yards from the house). The thought occurred to me of telling my mother, who was a Baptist and a Christian, My father was dying when I left the house to go to the place above named. After proceeding a short distance toward the house, the thought struck me that I might be too hasty in telling what had taken place with me, and maybe deceive mother, So I was in that short lapse of time doubting, and could say but little, and that in a doubting way to her. When I returned to the house my father was dead. I suppose that his, natural death and my spiritual birth, as I hope, occurred about the same time. From this time on for fourteen years I lived in a state of incessant

rebellion, so far as practical obedience is concerned; for it was not until 1854 that my hard and rebellious heart, seemingly by stress of sore afflictions, yielded obedience, and I joined Old Macedonia Church, in Franklin County, Tennessee, and" was baptized by Elder John P. Walker. I felt, when coming out of the water, an ease of mind and peace of conscience, that led me to conclude that my troubles were over, and so expressed myself to the brethren. But how soon my fancied hopes were blasted! For soon after uniting with the church my mind was deeply impressed with the duty of appearing before my brethren and fellowman in a public capacity. And I cannot think that any poor creature ever had better or more solid grounds to enter a protest against such a duty that was seemingly absolutely impossible for him to fill. To just think, a poor little illiterate creature, unaccustomed to mixing much with society, without any training or qualities that would admit of such training, and with a felt sense of his corruptions and depravity of heart, and of his supreme ignorance of the inspired word of God, and the great fear of provoking the censures of brethren and the jests and derisive merriment of the world, with numerous other obstacles, but above all, to bring a reproach upon a cause that he held dear as life.

And yet the half, and most important half, is yet to be told. For, notwithstanding this formidable array of

unfitness, he is called to appear as an ambassador or witness before the mighty God of Jacob, before whose throne angels cast their glittering crowns, ascribing greatness to His adorable name. The disciples on the holy mount, when favored with a view of His divine majesty, prostrated themselves before Him. And when Isaiah had glimpses of His glory, he cried out, "*Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts Job, when favored with a view of the divine glory, said; I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.*" And the apostle Paul, the greatest luminary of the Christian church, said to his Corinthian brethren; "*I was with you in weakness and fear and in much trembling.*"

The striking contrast thus drawn between the creator and creature is well adapted to strike our senses with the most profound awe and reverence. But notwithstanding this, it seemed that I was well fortified with objections. I was again driven to the necessity of yielding all. And though it seemed the most fearful and startling enterprise of my life, in the short space of time from the time I was baptized to the next meeting, all my scruples seemed to be entirely overcome, and I rose in conference and told the brethren some of my impressions, among

other things saying, that I had become willing to fill or take the place of a little child in the church. This was so unexpected to most of the brethren that they seemed almost panic-stricken. They gave me liberty to exercise such a gift as I had. As the seeming excitement subsided and I had time to reflect on what I had done, I was so ashamed of myself that I left the place as soon as possible, and I thought if I had it back I would not divulge it again for the world. To be deceived myself was bad enough, but to deceive my brethren in particular, and provoke the derision of the world, seemed awful indeed, and beyond my powers of endurance. With a sad and distressed mind, I tried to ask the Lord for help in this time of utmost need to enlighten my darkened mind, soften and rectify my hard heart, and speak peace to my troubled soul. I was and am yet very desirous of having a correct understanding of the inspired word of God, and to learn more and more of His glorious character, and read the scriptures daily, and frequently got up at different hours of the night to examine some passage of scripture that was bearing upon my mind. I will here name one incident that occurred during my distress. While striving against my impressions to preach, it seemed indelibly impressed on my mind that, in the parable of the talents, I was the slothful servant entrusted with one talent, and my condition was equally deplorable. While

in this sad plight I asked Brother Walker for his views on this parable.

Though he was illiterate, he was well versed in the scripture, and was regarded as one of the ablest preachers among the Baptists.

In treating on this parable he referred to other scriptures, and reached the conclusion that this man only seemed to have the talent. From this standpoint I very readily concluded that I was a hypocrite of the deepest dye, and of course my distress, though very trying, was much intensified, as though I had almost unbounded confidence as a man and his ability as a teacher, nor could I be driven from my conclusion of being the man with one talent. Soon after this I received the "Southern Baptist Messenger" published by William L. Beebe, containing an article written by Elder W.M. Mitchell on this parable, in which he traced and lined out my travels seemingly with as much precision as though he knew the secrets of my heart and travels of my mind. He held that the man with one talent was a rebellious and disobedient servant and as it fitted my case so well, it was like cooling streams on parched ground healing balm to a distracted mind: for above all things, I abominated the thought of being a hypocrite. I here learned that it was too much wrapped in men, and that they all have their failings, and that God often when dealing with His people makes trivial and unlooked for means subserve His purpose,

and turns the current of events in order to their relief. I will here say that, after beginning this scribble, my mind has become much impressed with some trials and conflicts through which I have been called to pass. I designed writing on the Christians warfare in general. In conclusion I will say that I hope the Lord has of late blessed me with more and brighter manifestation of His love and more resignation to His dealings with me, and more constancy in seeking His presence or closer communion with Him: and though the strokes of His chastening rod have been very heavy and very trying, yet they were not as heavy as my guilt deserved, and were given for my correction. I have no complaints to make, but in the bitterest trials, I wish to say with good old Eli, "It is the Lord, let Him do as it seemeth Him good and with the poet —

"Wait, O my soul thy Makers will,

Tumultious passions all be still:

Nor let a murmuring thought arise-

His ways are just, His counsels wise.

I think in my travels I have often realized text at the head of this article, that tribulations more or less attend every true believer, and that as their days their strength shall be. Also what Elihu, in the book of Job

says;

"When He hideth His face, who then can behold Him?" and what Watts says --

"When He shuts up in long despair,

Who can remove the heavy bar?"

The Lord is pleased to exercise His people in these sad desertions and fiery, but always for their good and His glory.

"These inward trials I employ

From self and pride to set thee free,

And break thy schemes of earthly joy,

That thou mayest seek thy all in Me."

Sometimes it seems that we are reduced to such straits, and dark and gloomy clouds prevail to such an extent, that we can derive no comfort from what we hope the Lord has done for us heretofore; past deliverances will not always suffice to relieve us of our present distress: Yet God is as near and as much our shield and preserver as when we are on the mount enjoying His smiles. For as He loves us in their relation to His dear Son, His love to us is everlasting and unchangeable. So thine are still the objects of His care while smarting under His rod. Here the language of the poet seems very

appropriate:

*“Wait, then my soul, submissive wait,
Prostrate before His awful seat;
And midst the terrors of His rod,
Trust in a wise and gracious God.”*

All the saints have a rugged road to travel from grace to glory yet they have a safe escort, grace within to guide, and providence without to guard them..

Brother Mitchell, I submit this to your disposal.

Your brother, I hope, in Gospel bonds,

James Wagner.

Note: These are they that came out of great tribulation. As thy days thy strength shall be. Deut. xxxiii;25.

These are the texts referred to at beginning of article.

(copied from THE GOSPEL MESSENGER, November, 1897)

PSALMS 26:7.

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

EXPERIENCE OF ADDIE SNYDER

Elder J. A. Ashburn, Dear Brother in Christ: I cannot be satisfied to be received into the church and baptized without telling you something more of myself; and so, by the help of Him that reigneth on high, I will try to write some of my feelings. If He is in the matter, I feel quite sure that He will guide my pen.

At about the age of eight years, as I told you, I became seriously concerned about my eternity, as to where I should spend it. I then knew nothing of salvation by grace; and of course, I felt that I could get religion, if I would try. I then began reading my testament, and trying to pray. This continued for sometime and I found no relief, but only became worse. I would go to revivals and see the people shouting, and wished that I could feel as happy as they seemed to be.

But I soon found that I had not the power to save myself, that, if ever saved, it would be through the merits of Christ. And, although I had never heard the doctrine preached, I felt that, if He had the will to save me, He had the power, but I felt so small that it seemed He would never notice one so small and foolish and sinful as I felt myself to be.

At last I became less concerned and soon forgot about those things until one day, when I was eleven years old. My little sister and I were at home alone, and it seemed I must soon die and enter into eternal pun-

ishment. A few weeks later we went to hear Elder O. J. or C. F. Denny, I do not remember which; but it seemed that they (Primitive Baptists) were a very peculiar people. After that they rented a hall in town, where they held their meetings. I loved to hear them, and it seemed that they were the sweetest people I ever saw. I wished to be like them, and was always ready to go through any weather to hear them, when any one would go with me.

It is almost useless to try to express my feelings. But I felt to be one of the worst of sinners. I would read my Bible as much as I could, trying, if possible, to find some relief. I did sometimes, feel relief while reading. But my troubles would return again. I went begging the Lord for mercy day after day. I could hardly keep back my tears when I saw one whom I believed to be a child of God.

One day, while in a terrible condition, I seemed to lose all sight of natural things, and all my breathings were prayers to God for mercy. Then, at once, I found myself singing, *"How happy are they who their Savior obey,"* and, *"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!"* Never before did the words sound so sweet to me. Then the scripture, *"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"* came forcibly into my mind. I then felt very much relieved for a short while, but was soon as low as ever. I went on in trouble, as before, until one beautiful spring day. I was looking out thinking how

beautiful everything was, when the twenty-third psalm came into my mind. I had known every word of this psalm well for sometime, but never before had I seen it as I did then. I felt, deep down in my heart, that, *"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."* I again lost sight of earthly things and felt that, *"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."* I felt very happy.

Later I felt that it was my duty to offer myself to the church, but, O! I felt that they would not receive me, as I was so young. I was then about fourteen years of age. I love the church and longed to be a member.

Later, we went to the association at High Point. It was a time I will never forget. I enjoyed the meeting very much, especially on Monday. Elder Jones, of Burlington, preached a wonderful sermon. But it seemed, when Elder Flinchum arose, that the very heavens were opened before him, and that he was looking into them. That sermon I often enjoy yet.

Still, after that, I became so low in feelings that I decided that, perhaps, I knew nothing of God, and feared that I had never felt the pardon and forgiveness for my sins.

I attended a revival meeting; and it seemed that I could hardly stay away from the altar, but did not go. But one night my sister and I went to a little prayer meeting near our home. I was greatly distressed because of the death of my grandfather; and, also, because of my con-

dition. They asked all who wished to be prayed for to kneel there at the altar, and pray with them. I did not go forward, but buried my face in my hands and began crying. The minister noticed it and came up and began talking to me. I had promised myself that I would never make a confession to any one until I felt that I was really changed. He said, "I believe you have been converted already and asked me if there was any scripture that I wished him to read I asked Him to read the fourteenth chapter of St. John. This he did, and I (remembering the comfort those words had been to me) arose and gave him my hand; and, as soon as I did it, a great darkness fell upon me. I felt that I had committed the unpardonable sin. I could not sleep that night, and was afraid to close my eyes.

Mama asked sister about the meeting that morning, and it seemed like a sentence of death upon me for her to tell what I had done; and for many weeks, yes, months. I was afraid to close my eyes, lest I should be hurled into eternity. I cried, "O, the miserable wretch that I am!" But, at last, I was shown that "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," except blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. And again I felt it my duty to go before the church; but, because of a feeling of unworthiness, I stayed away as long as I could. At High Point, the other Sunday, it seemed, if I should fail to offer myself to the church then that I never would have the opportunity

again. So I went and you all received me, I cannot tell why, as I could not say anything much.

I will try to stop now. Please excuse me for writing this. But I desire your earnest prayers, that I may always be faithful.

Your little sister in Christ,
I hope,
Addie Snyder.

PSALM 142

I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication.

I poured out my complaint before him: I shewed before him my trouble.

When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.

I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.

Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

MEETINGS

Abbott's Creek Association

The 179th Annual Session of the Abbott's Creek Association will convene, the Lord willing, with Lamm's Grove Church, Moore County, NC on Friday before the fourth Sunday in August, 2006, and will continue through Sunday. These dates being August 25th through 27th.

Lamm's Grove meeting house is located in Moore County, NC about 200 yards off southeast side of U.S. Hwy 15 and 501, six miles east of Carthage, NC and about ten miles southeast of Sanford, NC. Those coming by way of Sanford, NC leave U.S. Hwy No. 1 onto U.S. Hwy 15 and 501 and continue westwardly for about 5 miles to church on your left. Those coming eastwardly by way of Carthage, NC follow U.S. Hwy 15 and 501 to the same point.

We cordially invite our ministering brethren, brethren, sisters and friends to be with us this year, 2006, in our 179th session.

James M. Jones, Clerk
Katherine Harward, Asst. Clerk

Matthew 8:13.

And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

PIGG RIVER DISTRICT PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

One hundred eightieth first session of Pigg River District Primitive Baptist Association will be held with Town Creek Church August 4th, 5th, & 6th, 2006.

Direction to church from Rt. 220 to Town Creek Church on 605 Henry Rd. mileage is 3.3 miles, church on the right. State Rd. 40 to Town Creek Church take 605 Henry Rd. and mileage is 10 miles.

Elder Thomas Solomon, Clerk

STAUNTON RIVER PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The Staunton River Primitive Baptist Association will convene, the Lord willing, on July 8th and 9th, beginning at 10:00 A.M. Saturday and will continue through Sunday.

The host church Canaan will entertain the association at Weatherford Church as this is our permanent association location.

Weatherford Church is located at the intersections of Music Street and Weatherford Drive (Hwy 760 and 763) about 5 miles from Gretna, Va.

We invite believers of our faith to attend.

Burnell B. Williams, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR MAY 2006

Agnes Sutphin, VA	3.00
Charlie Fox, AR	3.00
Edna Graves, AL	5.00
Sarah Barker, VA	5.00
Gladys Shelton, NM	15.00
Dan Anders, AL	5.00
Maxey Delp, VA	5.00
Miles Bird, LA	5.00
Cleo Underwood, VA	5.00
Nancy Pollack, NC	50.00
Grace Manley, AL	5.00
Dan Delp, VA	5.00

OBITUARIES

Dear Signs of the Times,

I would like to submit my mother's obituary. She looked forward to getting each issue. It fed her soul so long as she was able to read.



DANNIE MOORE STRICKLAND

It is with a sad heart to report this dear sisters death. A time

to be born and a time to die. That time was October 15, 1915 and March 22, 2006 her earthly life ended, living to be 90 years old. She was a wonderful person believing God had a plan. She asked for a home with Pleasant Ridge Primitive Baptist Church in the Buttahatchie/Hopewell Association in Alabama 1st Sunday in September 1950. She attended her church and was church clerk for many years also attended sister churches as long as her health permitted. During her last 6 years she was confined to her home and the last 8 months was confined to bed with her children staying with her.

Sister Dannie was preceded in death by her husband Tom Strickland also a member of Pleasant Ridge. They were married 52 years. Of their union they had one daughter and 4 sons, 11 grandchildren, 16 great grandchildren.

Her funeral was held at Pleasant Ridge with church pastor Elder James Pugh, March 25, 2006. Sister Dannie was an avid singer. She loved sacred music. Service began with one hour of sacred heart music with special singers. It was a beautiful service. Burial was in the church cemetery.

May we be blessed to cling to the hope our loss is her heavenly gain.

Thank you so much for printing this.

Benay White, Daughter

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.

202 Carousel Lane, Meadows of Dan, Va. 24120-4403

NELLIE JOBE KEY



Nellie Jobe Key

GREENSBORO-
Mrs. Nellie Jobe Key, 84, of 721 Willard St., died Monday, July 17, 2006 at her residence.

Mrs. Key's funeral will be held at 4 pm

Wednesday, July 19 in the Forbis and Dick North Elm Chapel with Elder William Hale Terry officiating. Interment will follow in Lakeview Memorial Park.

Nellie Key was born in Guilford County on April 14, 1922 to the late Thurman and Ethel Stout Jobe. Mrs. Key was a 1941 graduate of McLeansville High School, a homemaker and faithful member of Greensboro Primitive Baptist Church.

Mrs. Key is survived by her husband, Elder Kenneth R. Key, Sr. of the home; sons, Kenneth R. Key, Jr. and his wife, Sharon and Gary Van Key; sisters Irene Sharpe and her husband Dwight, and Annie Fomberg and her husband Bob, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

The family will receive friends from 6 to 8 pm tonight at Forbis and Dick North Elm Street and other times at the residence.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	170
Elder Cleo D. Robertson	
ARTICLES	174
Howard T. Edwards	
VOICES OF THE PAST	175
Rufus Hutchens	
Elder Francis Preston Stone	
Elder E. J. Lambert	
MEETINGS	190
OBITUARIES	191
Mrs. Gertie C. Holley	
Victor Calvert Phillips	

 EDITORIAL

LUCIFER

Isaiah 14:12-15, *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most high. Yet thou shalt be brought*

down to hell, to the sides of the pit."



Elder Cleo D. Robertson

The most common use of the name, Lucifer, is in reference to Satan. The most prevalent belief is that this is an angel who turned evil and fell from the eternal heaven and became the devil. O dear people, if this were true, what hope would we have that the Lord could keep us! But, bless your heart, I want to emphatically say that God has never nor will He ever lose one of His chosen, man nor angel. St. John 6:37-39, *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."* I believe that God created Satan as He did everything else. He created him as an adversary and tempter of His people. 1 Peter 5:8, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."* Matthew 4:1-3. *"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted*

forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Hebrews 2:18, "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Hebrews 4:15, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." In John 8:44, Jesus said that the devil was a murderer and a liar from the beginning. There is no truth in him and there never was.

I do not believe Isaiah used the name, Lucifer, to refer to Satan. I believe Isaiah is referring to the king of Babylon as evidenced by Isaiah 14:4, "That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! The golden city ceased!" Though he does not mention the king by name, I believe he is referring to Nebuchadnezzar. In the fourth chapter of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar relates his experience. He dreamed of seeing a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great. The tree grew and was strong and the height of it reached unto heaven and the sight

of it to the end of all the earth. The leaves were fair (beautiful) and there was much fruit. There was meat in it for all. The beasts of the field had shadow under it and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs, and all flesh was fed of it. In his dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a holy one come down from heaven and command to "*hew down the tree, cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit. Let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches. But, leave the stump of his roots in the earth.*" Daniel interpreted the dream for the king and told him things he would have to experience to be taught that the most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He will.

Nebuchadnezzar conquered many nations including Judah when he invaded Jerusalem. He destroyed the temple taking items in it back to Babylon. He also took many of the inhabitants to Babylon as slaves. Daniel was one. Other nations and people were subject to his rule and were dependent upon him for their protection and livelihood. Thus, fulfilling his dream that "*the beasts of the field had shadow under it (tree) and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs, and all flesh was fed of it.*" During his reign, Babylon was considered to be one of the most magnificent cities of the world and his palace one of the most beautiful. This fulfilled the de-

scription of him as the great tree in his dream. He was puffed up with vanity, pride, self-importance, and filled with the belief that he had all power, majesty and honor. He exalted himself like unto God as Isaiah prophesied, *"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."*

The Apostle Paul, before he was converted, also persecuted the saints of God. He, too, was puffed up with vanity, pride, self-importance and thought he was doing God's service. Lucifer means "brightness" or "light." Nebuchadnezzar thought of himself as the brightness equal with God. He saw himself as the light of the world. Isaiah refers to him as Lucifer, not in a favorable way, but because Nebuchadnezzar thought of himself that way.

Now after twelve months (twelve sets forth completeness), the king walked in his palace in Babylon saying that by his mighty power and for his own honor, he had built such a great kingdom. In that moment, a voice spoke and declared, *"the kingdom is departed from thee."* The king was taken out of his palace and into the field to dwell with the beasts. Daniel 4:33, *"The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven*

from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."

The tree was cut down, but the stump of his roots was left. He was not destroyed, but he was stripped of all self-works and self-righteousness and shown that he had no power of himself. He could witness with Isaiah 64:6, *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."* As Isaiah had prophesied, the King of Babylon was brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. Surely, Isaiah 14:16-17 describes the condition of Nebuchadnezzar, *"They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?"* He could cry with the Apostle Paul, *"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"*

Nebuchadnezzar was in that condition until the fulfillment of God's appointed time (*"till seven times passed over him"*) and then, he was given to look up. My dear people, have you not experienced being brought so low and in such a

horrible state that it was hell to you. There, you had your self-works and self-righteousness stripped from you and you were completely helpless and lost and felt surely hell was your home and justly so. Who drove Nebuchadnezzar from men where he could not look to the arm of flesh for support? This is the place where each of you is taken. A place in your experience where no fleshly man could reach your case. The scripture says, "*They shall drive thee from men.*" It was not the army of Babylon nor of any other nation, but I believe the "They" was God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God worked in Nebuchadnezzar the "to do" of His good pleasure. God brought Nebuchadnezzar down from his heaven to the depth of hell in his experience, a place of great tribulation, a place where no flesh could help him. Nebuchadnezzar was taught that "*tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*" You, too, were given to look up and cry for mercy. You had been given to see yourself as a sinner in all its blackness. What a horrible sight. But, then Christ appears in love and mercy and gives unto you hope and peace that surpasses all understanding. The gift of faith is given so that you believe in one that you can't see nor touch.

Nebuchadnezzar says his understanding was returned unto him and he praised and honored Him that liveth forever. He came forth confessing that God's dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation; that all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; that God doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and that none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest thou.

Daniel 4:37 reads: "*Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase.*"

I believe that each child of grace can in some measure witness with the experience of this king of Babylon.

In hope,
Cleo D. Robertson

St. John 1:10-12.

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

ARTICLES

IS GOD LIMITED?

R.F.D. 3, Box 123,
Axton, Virginia

To the Signs of the Times:

Is God a limited God, or is he just limited in the minds of men? I believe it was David who said that they limited the Holy One of Israel; and I believe David also said that He does his will in the sea and all deep places.

We find in the Old Scriptures that there isn't anything too hard for God; and in the New Testament that all things are possible with God. Yet some say He wants to save everyone, but some won't let him.

The Scriptures say that Abraham believed that whatever God promised, he was able to perform; and, since the Scriptures also say that God cannot lie, and the impossibility of it, it would seem, that if God has promised to save every man that ever lived, it would be impossible for anyone to be lost.

I hope I believe in the sovereignty of God, - yet I doubt that everyone who says so, does. I have heard some say that they believed it, and then say that it is impossible for God to save a man unless the man "hears" the Gospel. And then some say that God can't hate, even though the Bible says that he did.

And some say that He can't be displeased, even though he was displeased with some of the things that David had done. I don't believe in a God that can't be displeased; but I hope I believe in one that can do, and does, as He pleases, and has a perfect right and the power to do so; one that is not limited in any direction by what I believe, or by what any other man or group of men might believe; though most men claim to have a lot of wisdom.

Paul said that our faith is not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Some say that God's people can't be disobedient, but, if that is the way it is, then I am not one; for it is how to perform that which is good I find not. No man, except Jesus, ever lived in perfect obedience, and pleased God at all times. This is the reason I would hate to think that anything was conditioned on man's obedience. I believe God predestinated all things, but I do not believe that limited him, or made a sinner out of a man; for I read where Paul said that by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; and that by the disobedience of one man sin entered the world. So disobedience is what made me a sinner, and I do not believe that anything can justify man in what he does or does not do, but God. Jesus is the only reason I have a hope; and I wouldn't trade my hope for what most people claim they know, even if I could.

I hear some say that it doesn't make any difference what we do, but

I do not get the idea. I do not believe that salvation is by man, but rather that salvation is of the Lord. And I fail to see how Adam, or any man, could sin, if he had a right, or was free to partake of any and everything. I also feel that anything we can't freely partake of, is just as much sin now as ever.

These are just a few thoughts I would like to send along. If there should be anything that is in error, I hope you could feel to forgive, as I am very limited in knowledge. I don't want to hurt anyone, unless with the truth.

Yours in hope of eternal life,
Howard T. Edwards

VOICES OF THE PAST

EXPERIENCE AND CALL TO PREACH

**This article written by
Rufus Hutchens and
printed June, 1914 - Died 1897**

Dear Brethren,

I will attempt to write my experience and call to the ministry for publication. My education is so limited, I am almost ashamed to appear in print. To attempt to tell when I first felt that I was a sinner carries me back to eight years of age. About that age I had a dream that made me feel very sinful and from then on I

began to try to pray. At the age of twelve, I had read the New Testament through and formed many great resolutions that I would live free from sin and often thought I was not near so bad as some in my knowledge. Notwithstanding my father being poor and my advantages quite limited, it was my intention to educate myself when I became a man, and make a great mark in this world. After I passed the age of twelve I learned to swear and dance, and would often do so with my conscience condemning me, and yet thought I was not such a great sinner. Sometimes I would pray until feeling much better, but soon it would all leave me. Soon after passing my twentieth year, one day while in the field, suddenly my heart was opened unto me, and I saw myself not only a sinner, but a condemned sinner in the sight of God. It seemed to me that God was looking into my heart with power, and all I had ever done was sin. It seemed that if I died in that condition hell was my doom. But I began to try to shake off the condemned feeling. I had serious thoughts before me, but now I was condemned, and I tried to keep it hid from father and mother. So dreadful was the feeling of condemnation that I began to forsake my former associates, and go to some secret place to ask the Lord for mercy. Swearing had left me, even the desire was gone and I cannot tell today when it left me. I continued to feel worse until my prayers seem to avail nothing

and I felt that my doom was certain destruction. My father was a member of the primitive Baptist Church, my mother claimed a hope in Christ, and I looked on them as christians, and I was not worthy to be their son. I thought if I could only ask them to pray for me, that surely the Lord would hear them, but that would be asking too much of them.

My doom was already sealed. It seemed when I was in the ballroom or engaged in swearing, they had often bowed their knees at a throne of grace in my behalf. I verily thought that their prayers would stand as a witness against me in judgement. About this time I first felt the call to the ministry. Right here I leave some of my dear brethren in the ministry, but I must date my call there, if I have one at all. While feeling that I was sinking into everlasting woe, my prayers had all failed me, and I saw that without mercy, sovereign mercy, I was forever gone, all that I could say was Lord be merciful to me a sinner. While in that condition one day in the field at work with my brother, a great power seemed to come down from above and surround me. There was no possible way for my escape and with that came a voice that said, *"You have to preach."*

The suddenness and power of the voice made me tremble, I stood dumfounded for a moment, then the dreadful thought rushed into my mind that my doom was fixed, for the Lord surely would not call such a miserable wretch to preach as I felt

to be. Language is inadequate to describe my feelings. For three weeks I labored under a double burden, I could not tell which was the greater. I saw no hope for me. I had sinned away the day of grace, and now it was forever too late. I could say, "It is just, it is just," I felt sure that in a few more days I would meet my doom and I saw so clearly, the justice of almighty God in my condemnation, that I tried to pray with all the earnestness of my heart that even in the flames of torment I might be reconciled to His will. One morning I went to the field to work with my brother, but such was the condition of my mind that I could not work. I told them I was sick, though I was not conscious of a bodily pain. The disease was of the mind and heart, for the very groanings of my soul were *"God be merciful to me a sinner."* I went to the house and lay down across a bed and while there, whether I went to sleep or not I am not able to tell, but I know I became unconscious. I saw myself traveling up a hill toward the west. The noonday sun was shedding a flood of light around me, my clothing was beautiful, and I was leaning upon a staff that I held in my right hand. Just at the brow of the hill was a dark grave, and as I entered there the burden rolled backward from me, and a glorious light filled my heart, and immediately I was praising God. I rose up from the bed, but before I even stepped away something said, *"you are deceived, this is not for you"*

and I began to feel that I was mistaken and it was all imagination. From that time on my prayer was "*Lord, if I am deceived, undeceive me*", but the burden of the ministry was not gone. The words, "*you have to preach*" were continually with me and at times a subject of scripture would offer to my mind, and for hours I would be absorbed in the beauty of it until I would forget everything that was going on around me. Again, I would set a resolution never to think of such a thing again, I thought it was a sin for me to think of such a thing as my preaching. I felt sure I was mistaken in the matter for I was so young and my education so limited.

In a vision of the church, God in His mercy, established my little hope, and at the same time I was forcibly impressed to join the church, but I felt so unworthy I did not feel fit to be with the church, and I thought if I never joined the church I would never have to try to preach. For three years I was thus exercised. Then my health failed me and friends and family at home, and the doctor thought I had consumption. About this time I concluded to leave home. The impression to preach and the great burden seemed almost more than I could bear. I wanted to run away from the impression. My father and mother begged me not to leave, but all their kind and tender persuasion did no good. I was determined to go, though I believe the Lord had shown me the consequence of leav-

ing. Oh I had been so stubborn and rebellious, often I had trampled God's tender mercies under my feet, and passed His warnings by unheeded. At Mt. Airy, N.C., I found employment with a respectable farmer, and there worked nearly two months at good wages, though I was hardly able to work at all. But I was soon taken down on the bed of affliction. I employed one of the best physclans in the town, but the first visit he said my case was doubtful. I gradually grew worse, yet all the while my mind was active and my appetite good. One night after I had been sick about three weeks, I was taken with a pain in my head, and in early morning it was easy, but so severe was the pain in that short time, it took my eyesight, so that I could not tell one person from another. On the following Sunday I was stricken with paralysis in my right side, yet so stubborn was I that I did not yield to the impression, though I was resigned to death.

My nature was soon to be subdued. On Monday at twelve o'clock I was taken with convulsions. the agony I endured then I have never been able to tell. I saw I was suffering for my disobedience. The judgement of the Lord was upon me and I could only say it is just. My friends gave me out at the first convulsion which they said lasted two hours. When I regained consciousness I was speechless, though my mind was active, and I knew as well what I wanted to say as I do my name. My

right arm was helpless, my tongue was dumb so that I could only make known to those around me by motioning with my left hand. But while in this condition when all had given me up to die, even the doctor saying I was out of the reach of medical skill, I saw the road of my life laid out in my view. I saw that my time must be devoted to the work of the ministry, and all the doctors in the world could not have made me believe I would die then. Amidst the tortures I then endured I was made to vow I would join the church, and if received I would try to preach. My whole desire was for some of those old despised Baptists to pray for me. I endured five of those convulsions from twelve o'clock Monday until two o'clock Tuesday night. It seems to me that death is not more dreadful than what I suffered this time. Now a cloud of condemnation intervened between me and my God, in so much that I could not pray for myself, I begged my father to pray for me after I had regained the power of speech, and on Tuesday evening he knelt down beside my bed and prayed a most wonderful prayer. That night at two o'clock there was a change for the better and in three weeks I was able to be carried home on a wagon. During my illness, though, after I was much better, Elder J.M. Wyatt visited me, and has since told me he never expected to see me again when he left, for he thought I was in the last stages of consumption. But God in his mercy

raised me up, I was carried home. How wonderful it appears to me that God almighty should be mindful of such a vile sinner as I am. Soon after I got home I began to be persuaded that I was deceived, but the judgements of the Lord urged me on to duty so that I was carried to the church, still paralyzed and blind and after I was there resisted the impression to offer until they had sung the last lines of the hymn for dismissal. Then I felt death come over me, and I saw that I would be carried away a corpse if I did not offer. Right here my little experience was taken away from me. I was compelled to go and nothing to go with but went and told very little reason of a hope and was received for Baptism. It seemed to me I could not wait until the next morning to be baptized, though some of my friends said it would kill me, I had no fears of its hurting me. Soon, on Sunday morning I was carried to the water and baptized, and while in the water, my paralyzed arm was restored, and I come out praising God. From Saturday until Monday I had no doubts and thought the burden of the ministry was gone. The secret peace of my mind, the joy of those hours, I can't describe, but could shed tears of joy. On Monday the same power settled around me that I had felt at first, the same voice said, "*you have to preach,*" and from then on I saw no more peace. The vow I had made at Mt. Airy during my illness come into my mind, and something kept saying,

go pay thy vows unto the Lord. All this rendered me miserable. The days and nights I spent in heart rending trouble, I will not attempt to describe; but I am making this article longer than I expected.

For five months I persisted in gross rebellion before I would try to preach. I felt so ignorant and incomplete that I was sure for me to make the attempt to preach, would only reproach the cause.

I often tried to ask the Lord to relieve me of this impression or take me from time. The burden became so great and such a cloud envailed my mind that I thought I could not endure it much longer and keep my mind. One day after I had made many promises to go my overburdened feelings gave way, and I began to shed tears, and to cry aloud when it seemed to me that reason had left me, and I lost control of myself. Oh, the horror of mind I endured then, all the unfilled promises, all the broken resolutions came upon me, and my miserable condition by reason of my disobedience almost drove me frantic, but then, with all the earnestness of my soul I promised to go. I thought I would never let another opportunity pass, but when the opportunity was offered I was just as stubborn as ever.

I refused to go, and thought I had better wait longer, I was so afraid I was mistaken. After I refused this time I hourly expected some dreadful judgement from the Lord. There was no soundness in me, I had lied

to the creator after solemnly promising to go, I had not gone. With great dread I watched the sun set night after night and as the gloomy shadow of night began to gather, the fear of coming judgement would increase and the dark hours would be spent in tossing to and fro on the bed, or walking the floor. One night I retired very early, but not to rest, for a miserable feeling of death and judgement come over me. I could not lie on the bed, but, soon got up and sat by the fire, or walked the floor, I was sure the family would find me a lifeless corpse in the morning. I tried to pray with all my heart, but my doom was unalterably fixed. I thought I did not dread death so much, but a yearning hell was just beneath me, and I felt as soon as I died I was damned. Before this time I had prayed to die, but now I prayed to live. I went out and knelt down that night in the rain, and tried to promise the Lord, with all the powers of my poor Soul that I will go. About midnight while sitting by the fire, I felt the floor and the chair I was sitting in and myself sink down, I thought into the arms of everlasting destruction. When the sinking sensation left me I got up and walked the floor, every avenue of my soul seemed to be drawn out in prayer to God, and if I ever prayed in my life it was that night. From then until our church meeting I felt like a condemned criminal and the day of execution fixed. I went to meeting, which I felt that if I did not make the

attempt I could not live longer. Our pastor invited me into the pulpit, and when he did, all my strength gave way, and a new power took possession of me and carried me through the day, the sweetness of which I will never forget. A great cloud of trouble rolled away and I felt that the Lord was smiling upon me. This is a part of my experience and call to the ministry. I cannot tell it as I feel, sometimes it seems so great to me and so wonderful indeed that the Lord would condescend to bless such a poor vile wretch as I am, that my imperfect language fails to express it. But sometimes it seems so small I am almost ashamed to tell it. Trusting that the God of all grace will continue to bless and unite the household of faith and love,

I remain your unworthy Brother
in Hope,

Rufus Hutchens

Inserted by Sceney D. Boyd.

The best I can find out is that Rufus Hutchens was married to a Sallie Allen and had one child by the name of Ervin Hutchens. Mr. Hutchens joined the church at North View and that is the place of his burial. He was the first person to be buried at that church, according to family, in 1897. He still has relatives living in Patrick County, Va. One of his nieces is Hattie Roark that lives near Moorefield's Fire department. Don't think he ever pastored a

church, but he preached at a lot of the area churches.



Elder Francis P. Stone

Dear Brother Branson: By request of my aged mother, I will try to write my experience and call to the ministry. If I have one I have both; and, if I am deceived in the one I am also deceived in the other. They are so closely connected that I cannot well define one without the other.

I will go back to my boyhood days, when I was about ten years of age. I dreamed that I was lying by my grave, while two men were digging it, and was conscious of what was going on; but was as helpless as a dead man. And it appeared to me, if buried, hell would be my doom; and, Oh! what a horrid condition I was in. I often think of this dream and dread death, and try, to pray. But, at the same time, the thought would often come into my mind, "*Someday you will have to preach.*" From this until I was about fourteen or fifteen years of age, I was often asking God for mercy. Then I began to love to hear preaching. I was at the Cedar Hill (the old Ararat church) and heard Elder Isaac Jones preach. After preaching they went to the water for baptism, and while they were singing I could not hide my tears: for I so much desired to be with the

people that my father and mother were with. After baptism, Brother J.A. Ashburn asked me to go with him to Union church the next day to preaching. I can't tell how much I desired to go, for I loved to hear the Old Baptist preach; but my father refused to let me go. It was about six miles and we were afoot, and so I went home, carrying a double burden. I was so burdened because I could not go to preaching the next day, and because Brother Ashburn, I feared, had took me for a good boy. O my life was so black before me! When I reached home, I went into a room to myself, lay down on a bed, and wished so much to go to preaching the next day, and thinking how much I loved to hear preaching. I was cast down but not destroyed: for unexpectedly it were as a cloud hanging over my bed, and I heard preaching in the cloud, I did not understand any words, but it was as a soothing balm to a hungry soul, and I felt easy and contented.

Now I will pass on a few years to a time when I found myself enjoying the things of this world, as much so as a young man could. I was a musician and loved dancing, but thought there was no harm in it then, and tried to think I was as good as most anyone else. But still I would find myself trying to pray and making promises to be a better boy. Often have I sat down by the roadside and read my testament, which was almost a constant companion with me, and begged the Lord to be mer-

ciful to me a sinner. I often went to protracted meetings and asked them to pray for me. I was willing to do most anything to get rid of that awful fear of torment. Often would my mind go back to the time when I heard the preaching in the cloud, and I truly believed that if I had lived as I should have lived from that time there would have been a chance for me.

But now it seems too late; I have trampled God's mercies under my feet, and sinned against the Holy Ghost. If there is any chance for me it must be through the prayers of my father and mother that keeps the Lord from cutting me off. In the year 1891, in August, I think, I was thrown from a horse, fracturing my skull, and which disabled me from doing much work for two or three years. Tongue can never tell what I suffered, for I felt that everybody had turned against me because I would not stay on the farm with my father, who was old and not able to work much. But my head hurt me so much when working in the sunshine that I truly believed if I continued there it would send me to the asylum for the insane or to the grave. So in the winter of 1892, while on my knees grubbing (it hurt my head to stoop), I decided to enter school; and, my father consenting, entered the school at Westfield, N.C., determined to work my way through, and get a good education. But my hopes were blasted. My head hurt me so that, at the end of ten weeks, I left school.

But in the fall of 1893, I entered school at Pilot Mountain, N. C. and begin a preparatory course for medicine, for it was my highest ambition to be a doctor. But something would often tell me that there would be a different work for me to do. I remained there about eight weeks; and, being disappointed again, I left school, hoping my head would get so I could study: for I was still determined to get an education.

March 21, 1895, I left my home town, Pilot Mountain, for the state of Indiana, and stopped part of the summer with my uncle. Then went to Illinois, where I remained till November, and returned to my uncle's home in Indiana. But while I was in Illinois I learned, one Sabbath morning, that an Old Baptist was to preach about one mile from my town (Arcola), and I got a man who knew the way to go with me to the meeting. The preacher was an old man but I have forgotten his name. The preaching was so sweet to me that I was sorry when he quit. But he gave out that he would preach that night at a certain man's house in that community. I inquired for the way to the place; and, being so anxious to hear what I then believed and still believe to be the gospel, I was willing to risk myself in the dark in that strange land. I found the place and feasted on the sermon that night. The people were so kind to me that I felt that there were no people so good and kind as the Primitive Baptists.

Coming back to Indiana, I re-

mained with my uncle till the fall of 1896. Sometimes I would go with him and wife (both of them being members) to hear the Baptists preach, and enjoyed their preaching, but did not want any one to know that I was interested in religion. But still I often drank sin as an ox doth water, and rolled sin under my tongue as a sweet morsel. But it would be followed by an awful feeling of condemnation, causing me to beg God for mercy. I would promise the Lord to do better; but all my promises were broken, I would set times in which to get religion, but the times never ripened up to suit me. I tried to draw some comfort from the impression, "*I will have to preach some day.*" I looked upon preachers as being good men, and that if I ever preached I would have to be a changed man. Then my life would rise before me, that I was so vile a sinner that I would almost sink into despair. I believe my uncle and aunt were true worshipers of God, and I dearly loved them; but did not feel worthy to be in their home and receive the kindness which they bestowed upon me. But since I've left them I've desired to tell them what I feel the Lord has done for me. They were as a father and mother to me, while I stayed with them.

Leaving my uncle and aunt, I went to Indianapolis, expecting to stay there a few days, and, if I failed to get a position to suit me, go back to Illinois and work till cold weather, and, then, perhaps, enter school. I

had given up the idea of trying to be a physician, but intended to get a business education, so I could rise above a farm laborer and a house carpenter, for that had been my work while out there. But, behold, the castle I was building fell: for, while in that city, I awoke from my slumbers to find my throat and mouth dry and burning with fever.

I felt that I was sure in the hands of a dreaded disease, and tried to wear it away, but could not. My mind turned homeward, but would not consent to come till I had grown so weak that I could hardly go. My appetite failed me, and I felt that I was without friends, either on earth or in heaven. Then I decided to go home. And Monday, 10 o'clock, I boarded the train, and arrived at Greensboro, N.C., at 9:30 Tuesday night, without eating or sleeping. I got off the train and went to a boarding house (that I had stopped at before) run by Miss Monroe.

I was soon shown to a room, where my brother found me the next day, in response to a telegram. My temperature was 106. He secured a stretcher, in which I was borne to my home in Pilot Mountain. I do not remember what passed for several days, as I was unconscious most of the time. Under the care of a good physician, loving friends and the tender mercies of an all wise God I was spared to live. I cannot see how anyone, as weak as I was, could have undergone what I underwent without the strong and merciful hand of

God to hold him up. I was bound to acknowledge the goodness of and mercy which had been with me and had helped me to get among loving friends. Yet I felt to be too sinful to claim God as my friend. I ever have believed that that sickness was sent on me to bring me back home.

While confined to my bed, I made many promises, feeling, if the Lord would only let me get well, I would live a better life than I ever had lived before. Once I felt to be as moral as anyone, but then the worst of the vilest of sinners. I was spared to get well, But, did I keep my promises? No; but broke them all. Like that chief butler, whose dream Joseph interpreted, when it went well with me, I forgot the one who delivered me, and partook of the things of this world as before: but often felt the need of a Savior; and the impression would come over me that I would have to preach; and while laying plans for the future, something would be saying, "*There is a different work for you to do,*" I had often vowed that, when I should get married, I would live a better life and get religion: for I would then be cut off from my old associates to some extent. I soon had a chance to see what I could and would do: for, March 21, 1897, I took unto myself my first love, a good and noble wife, who helps me to bear the burdens of this life in a kind and loving way. I tried to treat her as a man should treat his companion, but the first four years of our married life was, surely,

the darkest part of my life. I grew more wicked all the time, it seemed to me I often begged the Lord for mercy and to help me to be a better man, feeling that I was not fit to live and was afraid to die. I prayed, O that I could leave off my old life and put on a new one, that home could be more happy. I sometimes spoke harshly to my wife, and would grieve over it; but she was always ready and willing to forgive me.

While in this state I attended a Presbyterian protracted meeting to hear one of their noted preachers, a Mr. Black. He put up a nice talk and made the way seem so plain, that I thought if I would follow his advice the Lord would hear my prayers and save me. I came home, ate my dinner, and took my testament and went off to a secluded place and, if a poor mortal ever tried to give himself up into the hands of the Lord, I surely did. I did all I knew to do, all that I could do; and there I was taught to know the weakness of man. I have not believed in protracted meetings, for the purpose of making Christians, since that time.

In the summer of 1900, I became so dissatisfied, I determined to leave the farm and live a different life. So our little farm was rented out; and, my wife consenting to settle in the West, we broke up housekeeping. So, leaving my wife and little girl at my wife's parents, to spend the winter and go to me in the spring, I departed. But the nearer the time came for me to go the worse I felt over it:

for I preferred the company of the loved ones I was so soon to leave behind me, before that of silver and gold. But I had given up my home to go, and go I did, leaving my wife in tears. On the morning of Nov, 14, I boarded the train at Pilot Mountain, N.C., for the state of Indiana. No tongue can describe my feelings on that morning, as the train sped on its way, bearing me, as I felt, to my doom. I realized that it would have been better for me never to have been born: for I was giving my wife so much trouble, and for which I had no excuse, except I just wanted to settle in the West, thinking to make an easier living there. I don't think I could have felt worse had I been bound in chains and going to the hangman's gallows for murder. Surely the Lord was punishing me for leaving my home, I felt that I could never see my wife again, and that if she ever should see me again it would be my corpse. But on I went, and that awful feeling left me to some extent. Reaching my destination, I secured work and board at a Mr. Wall's a native of N.C. . He and his wife were as kind to me as I could ask, and I remained with them till the first of January, 1901, when I took sick, and Dr. Thompson said I had Typhoid fever; and, O how I did dread it, for I had left that state once before with the same fever, I felt sure I could not have a spell of fever that far from home and live to see my wife again, But I could not bear the thought of coming back and settling

down here, but I wanted to be with my wife. The doctor told Mr. Wall if I could be contented I would stand a chance to get well but I knew I could not be contented. I lay all night with a burning fever, my bones aching, begging for mercy, and trying to decide what to do, tossing to and fro. That was the most awful night I ever witnessed. Just before day I decided to go home to my wife and baby, if the Lord would spare me to get there. Then, for the first time that night, I was allowed to rest in ease. The next day I took the train for home, and arrived safe. I did not have the fever but was confined for several days with Lagrippe. I was in bad health all the winter and the next summer; but still I was not satisfied, I continued to study and plan the future, while something would say, "*There is a different work for you to do,*" I often thought of my early boyhood days, and of the impressions I had then, thinking if I had obeyed my father and mother's instructions I might have someday been fit to be a preacher. I went often with my wife to protracted meetings, but left her at the door and went to the lonesome grove to beg for mercy, feeling that there was a place for me. The summer after my return from the west, God saw fit to take our infant son from us. I felt it was for my disobedience and was made to be the most miserable wretch on earth. I continued this way till I found myself wanting to join some church, but could not decide what kind. The Old

Baptist church was not popular enough; and when I thought of others, the thought would come, If you have to preach, can you preach the doctrine that they preach. My answer was, No; and I soon found myself loving to hear the Old Baptist preach again, and desired, O, so much to be worthy to be with them. One day while hoeing tobacco, I sat down to rest, and was studying about how much I loved the Baptists, and how much I desired to be with them. When I arose to work I looked for the sun, and it was so cloudy I could just see the outlines of it. As I began work: a bright light shown around me. My first thought was, It has cleared off quick. I looked for the sun again, but could not see it. I wished to know what it meant. Surely it could not be a light from heaven, as I was too sinful for that. The next spring the interpretation came to me in this way: The light that shown around you is the Christian influence thrown around you to keep you from the snares of this world.

One night, I dreamed of being on a large rock wall, and that about twenty feet from it was another wall just like the one I was on, and the two walls were connected at the top by a long brass rod, and between the walls was a great gulf, which I thought to be torment. I knelt down on the wall, put my right hand on the brass rod and looked down. As far as I could see was dark and smokey, but I was not afraid of falling into the

gulf. This gave me some relief, but still I could not claim a hope in Christ. I had never felt happy as I imagined others do when changed. But my desire to be in the church grew stronger. Sometimes when my church door was opened, it would be as a flame of love in my heart.

But I still had a great desire for an education, and wrote to a corresponding school at Scranton, Pa. One night while looking over their circulars I decided to borrow enough money to pay the first cost, and I could manage to pay for the course and so get an education at home. Then these words came as forcible as if they had been spoken to me, "*There is a greater work for you to do.*" So I threw the papers down, and said, "*I will never try again, to get an education.*" But my way was dark before me. I would fear that my impressions to preach were only imaginations. My prayer by day and by night was, "*God be merciful to me a sinner; God save or I will perish.*" Often have I walked the road at night and begged the Lord for mercy.

The Spring of 1903, my burdens grew so heavy that it seemed I could not live. I would sometimes leave my work, go to the house and lie down on the bed. My wife would ask what ailed me and I would tell her nothing. But there was something awful the matter with me, but I did not want her to know it. During the week before the first Sunday in April, Brother D.S. Webb preached at

Tom's Creek Church. I studied a great deal about joining the church on that day: for it seemed I could not carry my burden and do my work till their next conference meeting: but I did not feel like I was a changed man, and was sure that I was not fit to be with the people of God. On that day they published an open door, but I did not feel fit to go, and there were other things in the way, although I had a great impression to go; and after I left, my burden became so heavy, I felt if not relieved in some way, I would have to give up work entirely. On Saturday before the second Sunday in April I intended going to Albion to preaching, but went to my new ground to do some work before starting; but became so restless, I quit work and went to my plant bed thinking I would weed it till time to go to church. Remaining there about ten minutes, I went to the house. I could not be contented till I had started to the meeting. I went and Elders Ashburn and Collins preached. Each, at the close of his discourse, had spoken of the light and liberty enjoyed by the saints, and I said to myself, "*If that is the way they feel, I will go home just as I came.*" But when Elder Ashburn proclaimed an open door, there was an awful fear, with a sinking sensation, came over me. I feared I would die if I did not go, but had, it seemed, nothing to go with. But when they began singing for dismissal, I could not stand it, but did not want to deceive anyone. But,

dear brethern and sisters, I do believe I was in the spirit on the Lord's day; the feast was spread and the guests were invited, and I was compelled to go: for I could say with a feeling heart,

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

I related to them a part of what I have written, and was received amidst weeping and rejoicing. I could then realize what the poet meant, when he said,

*"O how happy are they
Who their Savior obey,
And whose treasures are
laid up above!
Tongue cannot express
The sweet comfort of peace
Of a soul in its earliest love."*

On the 4th Sunday following—two brethren, one sister and myself were baptized. That was a day of rejoicing to me. But soon I found myself in the wilderness and Satan telling me that I was a hypocrite, and at times I believed it: for I had heard so many people say that when they were baptized all their burden left them. But it was not the case with me; and the preaching of the brethren soon failed to comfort me. What, now, is the matter? Surely I am deceived and have deceived the brethren and sisters. I still had hope, but where is the evidence? I had one time thought, if I never join the church I will never have to preach. But what must I do now? The impres-

sion stayed with me, and I tried to dodge it; but excuses did no good. Never have I dreaded our court houses, jails or penitentiaries as I did the pulpit. I was so incompetent for the place. Thought if anything could be impossible with God, it was to make a preacher out of me. I continued my excuses till our conference meeting in September 1903. On the way to the church that day I fell in company with our beloved moderator, Elder Ashburn. He asked me how long it would be before I should tell them something. I do not know, was my reply; but I was bound to admit that my impressions had been stronger, since the past evening, than ever before. He asked me to go on the stand with him and open the services, but I refused. And when we arrived at the church he invited me again, and still I refused; and what I suffered during the services tongue cannot tell; and, as I went home, two scriptures were on my mind. One was, *"Resist the devil and he will flee from you;"* and the other was; "Hear ye now what the Lord saith; contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice." I had become willing to do the will of my Master. So my prayers that evening and on my bed that night were, O, Lord, if thou hast given me a talent, show it to me in some way that I may know, and I will use it. And while I slept that night, I viewed myself in a large room where it was made my duty to light up the house that a young lady present might join the

church. I had nothing to light the room by, but felt it my duty to try. So I walked toward the fire place; and, when in six or eight feet of it, I saw in my left hand a bundle of pine splinters about a foot long, all the same length, nice and smooth; and in the fire place was a bed of live coals of fire. I stuck the splinters among the coals and they blazed up, illuminating the house. When I awoke the next morning, my first thought was, "*Go, God will furnish the material.*" Then, for a few moments, and for a few moments only, I was satisfied that there was a work for me to do. But soon doubts before me rolled. Did I doubt God? No; but myself. I said to myself, I have promised to go, can not. I am too weak and sinful to put myself before the people as a servant of the most high God. I walked the road and begged the Lord to excuse me, and decided not to go to church that day, went into the house and laid down on the bed. But everything seemed dark and gloomy before me; and, all at once, my bed seemed to be sinking with me, and I felt to be going down through the floor. I cried in my heart, "*Lord, deliver me and I will go.*" And at once I stood on my feet and went to church. And, when Brother Ashburn invited me, I went on the stand and spoke a few words; but each word, it seemed to me was out of place. Yet I found great relief in the effort, and am still, through hopes and fears, trying to do what I sometimes feel that God

has commanded me to do. And if I am deceived and lost in the end it will be just, for I have merited nothing; and if saved it will be through the mercies of a just and all wise God. Surely there is no one who feels less competent to perform, or more unworthy to receive the blessings of God than I do. But, O what is there this side of the grave that is worth living for? if there is nothing beyond worth living for.

Through the many years which I have passed, God has given me evidence enough to claim a hope; and to sometimes believe I am called of God to feed the people of God. And may it be the will of God, when this mortal shall have put on immortality, and this corruptible incorruption all the oldness and corruption of this body being left in the grave-to bid me come in and inherit the kingdom, where, we will forget the troubles of this world, and will no more have to leave home with bowed heads and aching hearts, wishing, had it been the will of God, that the work had been laid on some other one, that we might have remained at home with our families; and where all will be peace and happiness, and where we shall not see as now, through a glass darkly, but shall see our Redeemer face to face. But I must close. Dear brethren and sisters, pray for me and mine.

Your brother in hope of eternal life,
Elder Francis P. Stone.

Served as Moderator 1929-1957

Luke 12: 26-28.

If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

The following poem was written by the author at an early age. They are included here to show some of the ideas and high ambitions entertained by the author before experiencing the trial in the "furnace of afflictions."

by Elder E.J. Lambert

WHAT IS LIFE WITHOUT LOVE?

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

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

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

For they lack the great love for their work
That should prompt anyone in the choice,
Who intends to work and not shirk,
And in every act choose to rejoice.

It is, also, important that we
Learn to love all our friends whom we meet;
And to try to admire and agree
To make life very pleasant and sweet.

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

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

-- February 16, 1928

MEETINGS

**MINUTES OF
THE PRESBYTERY**

Pursuant to the request of Salem Primitive Baptist Church, a Presbytery met June 10th, 2006 at 10:00 A.M. for the examination of Brother Banks Conner, 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 Carl Terry. All Elders of our faith and order present constituted the presbytery. Those present were as follows:

Elders Wm. Hale Terry, Carl Terry, Alan Terry, Mark Terry, Larry Hollandsworth, Junior Conner, W.T. Conner, Thomas Solomon, Raymond Goad, Marvin Brumfield, Jimmy Gray.

Deacons present were as follows:

Wilton Sutphin, Robert Smith, Gray Holley, Frederick Murphy, Donald Agee, Julian Rutrough, Richard Lawless, Vance Duncan, Andrew Agee, Calvin Plybon, Alfred Ratliff, Vaughn Ferris, Tony Horton.

The presbytery was organized by electing Elder Hale Terry as moderator and Tony Horton as clerk. Elders Junior Conner and Marvin

Brumfield were chosen to lead in the examination of the candidate. Brother Alfred Ratliff having been duly appointed by Salem Church in conference June 10th, 2006 as spokesman for the Church, delivered Brother Banks Conner to the presbytery. Examination was made by Elders present in the presbytery using scriptural reference in First Timothy, Chapter 3. The presbytery being satisfied with examination and answers given by the candidate, administered the laying on of hands with ordination prayer being delivered by Elder Larry Hollandsworth. The charge was delivered by Elder Raymond Goad, using scriptural reference in First Timothy.

The moderator asked the 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 Banks Conner and the right hand of fellowship. The ordained brother was delivered back to the Church as an ordained Deacon of the Old School Primitive Baptist Church at Salem Primitive Baptist Church.

The minutes consisting of the work of the presbytery were read and approved. The presbytery was dismissed with prayer by Elder Thomas Solomon.

Elder Hale Terry, Moderator
Tony Horton, Clerk

SMITH RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the One Hundred fiftieth session Of the Smith River Association will convene with Paynes Creek Church, located in Floyd county, VA, on the Blue Ridge Parkway between milepost 150 and 151 on Sept. 1,2,3, 2006.

We invite all those who love the truth.

Tony R. Horton
Association Clerk
276-728-5651

OBITUARIES

July 6, 2006

Elder Kenneth R. Key
721 Willard Street
Greensboro, NC 27405
For publication in the
Signs of the Times

Dear Elder Key,

It has come to my attention that two items may not have been reported to you for publication in the *Signs of the Times*, that may be of interest to many of your readers.

My dear Mother, Mrs. Gertie C. Holley, left the earthly bonds of life on Sunday, November 27, 2005, to wait in paradise for the coming of our Lord and Savior. Born July 22, 1908, she was blessed to live a long and happy 97 years. She was a member of Strawberry Primitive Baptist

Church near Chatham, Virginia, where she had served as clerk since June 1976. She was preceded in death by her husband Posey L. Holley who passed away in 1979 and was the last Deacon of Strawberry Church.

Her funeral was conducted November 30, 2005 by Elder Thomas Solomon and Elder Wallis Smith, with interment in Highland Burial Park in Danville, Virginia.

Following 226 years of service to our faith and order, Strawberry Church in Pittsylvania County, Va. has been closed. A special called meeting of Strawberry Primitive Baptist Church was held in the meeting house on Strawberry Road, Chatham, Virginia on April 1, 2006 for the formal dissolution of this old and storied church. Strawberry Church was originally constituted in the year 1779 and was a charter member of the Staunton River Primitive Baptist Association formed in 1841. The last regular meeting of Strawberry Church was conducted Sunday, November 6, 2005 by Pastor Thomas Solomon and Elder Marvin Brumfield. The church building and grounds may be preserved as a Pittsylvania County historical landmark.

Thank you.

Don Holley

9267 Rex Turner Road

Kenly, NC 27542

919-284-5866

VICTOR CALVERT PHILLIPS

Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church bows in humble submission to our Lord in the calling of our brother and friend.

Victor C. Phillips was born March 23, 1917 and was called to his heavenly home April 24, 2006; making his stay here on earth 89 years. He was preceded in death by his parents Andrew "Curtis" and Lena Phillips, a beloved son Joe Phillips and grandchildren, Belcher and Andrew Phillips and great grandchildren, Misty Jo Cox and Alex Love. Survivors include his wife of 66 years, Sister Nannie T. Phillips, three sons; Wayne, Nelson and Tobias Phillips and one brother, Carllyse Phillips, six grandchildren, eighteen great grandchildren and six great, great grandchildren.

Bro. Victor joined Indian Creek Church on May 25, 1957 and was baptized on June 23, 1957, by his Pastor, Elder G. P. Harris. Bro. Victor was ordained to serve as deacon of Indian Creek Church on April 26, 1986 and was blessed to serve in this until his death. He had also served as Clerk and Assistant Clerk.

Bro. Victor was founder of Phillips Brothers Builders and constructed numerous homes throughout Floyd and Montgomery Counties. In 1978 the Phillips Brothers built the present Indian Creek Church. Before Bro. Victor lost his eye sight, he made many, many

clocks for family, church members and friends. Bro. Victor was blessed to travel many, many miles to corresponding churches and associations and believed firmly in Salvation by Grace and showed the love for his church, family and friends.

Funeral service was held at Indian Creek Primitive Church at 11:00 A.M. on April 27, 2006 by his Pastor, Elder Kenneth D. Hopkins and Elder Thomas C. Pegram and was laid to rest in the church cemetery beneath a beautiful mound of flowers to await the Second Coming of the Lord. Arrangements was handled by Maybery Funeral Home of Floyd, Va.

Done by order of Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church in conference on May 22, 2006. One copy to be sent to the family, one to the Signs of Times, one to Zions Landmark and one for church records.

Bro. J.B. Mitchell, Jr.

Sis. Jean Mitchell,

Committee

Elder Kenneth D. Hopkins,

Moderator

Romans 8:24-25.

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.

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 174

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

202 Carousel Lane, Meadows of Dan, Va. 24120-4403

Lord, in humble, sweet submission,

*Here we meet to follow thee,
Trusting in thy great salvation,
Which alone can make us free.*

*Nought have we to claim as merit;
All the duties we can do
Can no crown of life inherit;
All the praise to thee is due.*

*Yet we come in Christian duty,
Down beneath the wave to go;
O bliss, the heavenly beauty!
Christ the Lord was buried so.*

*Come, ye children of the kingdom,
Follow him beneath the wave,
Rise, and show his resurrection,
And proclaim his power to save.*

*Is there here a weeping Mary,
Waiting near the Saviour's tomb,
Heavy laden, sick and weary,
Crying, 'O that I could come!'*

*Welcome, all ye friends of Jesus,
Welcome in his church below;
Venture wholly on the Saviour,
Come, and with his people go.*

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	194
Elder J. B. Farmer	
CORRESPONDENCE	202
ARTICLES	204
VOICES OF THE PAST	205
Elder Loyd Wall	
MEETINGS	213
CONTRIBUTIONS	216
OBITUARIES	216
Sis. Beatrice Carter Miller	

 EDITORIAL

“And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matthew 24:3



Elder J.B. Farmer

Have you ever wondered about the second coming of Christ and about the end of the world, or the end of this age? The disciples of His day wondered, and they asked Jesus to tell them how to recognize the events leading up to that day. If we are of that same heaven-born gen-

eration as His disciples, we are also concerned with the same thoughts. We desire to be given wisdom in these matters so that we will neither be deceived by false teachers and their false doctrines, nor caught off guard as that day approaches.

Jesus was very specific in His answers to His disciples as were the prophets and apostles when they were inspired to testify about the same things. Jesus said to take heed that no man deceive you for many would come in his name, and would even claim to be Christ, and deceive many. He said that some awful things must come to pass which would precede the very end things. He called these the beginning of sorrows. Jesus said that there must be wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes in divers places. He also said that His disciples would be delivered up to be afflicted and killed and that they would be hated of all nations for His name's sake. He said that many would be offended and that some would betray and hate one another. He said that iniquity would abound and that the love of many would wax cold. We have records of these kinds of things all through history even to this present time. But the end is not yet.

Concerning the very end things, Jesus said that this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. He also said that *the abomination of*

desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet would stand in the holy place. The apostle Paul, when writing about the coming of Christ said that the day was not at hand or eminent but that two things must generate first. One was the *falling away* and the other was that *the man of sin must be revealed, the son of perdition*. John wrote of a beast that came up out of the earth, which had two horns like a lamb but spoke as the dragon. I am made to believe that the abomination of desolation, the man of sin and the beast with two horns are all the same person. Please read Daniel 11:34-45, Matt. 24:15-22, II Thes. 2:3, and Rev. 13:11. When that wicked one comes before the world proclaiming that he is God in the flesh and that he is setting up the kingdom of God upon the earth, the children of God will flee from him knowing not his voice. The multitudes will be deceived, but the elect of God will not be deceived. I am made to believe that they are taught that Christ has already set up His kingdom in the hearts of His people, and that there will be no future kingdom set up here on earth.

Is it not apparent that we are in the period of the falling away? Some of the true churches have died out. Many have only a few members, and most of them are aged. Has there not been a great change in your lifetime? If these things are so, and it seems apparent that they are, the thing remaining before the Lord comes is the revelation of *the man*

of sin. This *man of sin* will claim to be the Christ who has come to set up his kingdom upon earth, and he will deceive the multitudes. But Jesus said, "*Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.*" Jesus also said, "*For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part of heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.*" The children of God are not looking for Christ to come again upon the earth, but the deceived are. The apostle John said by revelation, "*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.*" We do not know the day or the hour of His coming, but when these things begin to generate, we are commanded to look up for redemption draweth nigh.

We know that most of the so-called Christian churches, protestant and catholic alike, are teaching that Jesus is coming back upon the earth to set up a kingdom which will last for a thousand years. Dearly beloved brethren, I am made to believe that this is an impossibility. For Christ shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation. We are taught that when He comes, it will be in great power and glory. And He will come with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon them who know not God and who obey not the gospel. We are taught

that when He comes, every eye shall see Him. We are taught that at His coming the dead in Christ will be raised first, and that those who are alive and remain will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and that they shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall they ever be with the Lord. When the Lord comes, no flesh will be able to stand in His presence. The elements will melt with a fervent heat and the earth will be dissolved according to the scriptures. The wicked will be destroyed from His presence with an everlasting destruction. Since there will be no world left standing at the powerful, glorious coming of Jesus in that day, it appears that there will be no possibility of a kingdom being set up on the earth. I am made to believe that those who are promoting a thousand year reign of Christ to come upon the earth may be unwittingly preparing the way for the great deception and for the reception of the one who has been called the man of sin, the son of perdition, the abomination of desolation, the false prophet, and the beast who had two horns like a lamb and spake as a dragon.

The apostle John wrote of the thousand years reign of Christ along with his people in Revelation chapter twenty. John said, by the Holy Spirit, *"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old*

serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath not power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breath of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved

city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

If God is willing, let us look carefully into this scripture and let us beg God to show unto us the truth of it. For we are fully assured that no one may know anything about the kingdom of God except by revelation from above. Speculation will do us no good here. The reasoning of a natural mind will always come to the wrong conclusion. The positions taken by the great minds of others are of no help. We must cast ourselves upon the mercy of God and ask for wisdom and understanding. It is certain that as God's little ones have a need to know the things of the kingdom, they will cry out to Him. And as a good father in nature that pities his children that cry unto Him and that gives them the things they need naturally, how much more will our Father in heaven supply His little ones with the things they cry for and have need of spiritually.

First of all, John saw an angel come down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. The angel took hold of the dragon, bound him with the chain, cast him into the prison of the bottomless pit, shut him up and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more

for a period of a thousand years. Several questions immediately arise. May God be merciful and gracious to give us the answers we need for our comfort and edification and learning.

What does the angel that came down from heaven represent? This appears to be none other than the great power of God, Who has all power in heaven and earth. He is in control of all things – events, men, the angels of heaven, and even the Devil himself. God formed the old serpent, the devil, with His own hand for His own purpose. Without a doubt, God has control of all of His creation, to do with it whatever He pleases. What was the purpose of the key and the chain and the bottomless pit and the seal? It seems abundantly evident that the purpose of God was to subdue Satan and to bind him and to lock him away in a place for a space of time where he cannot harm the children of God.

What is the thousand years period that the old serpent should be locked away? We are taught that with God a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day. In other words, His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts. His ways and thoughts are as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth. Where God abides is eternal day. There is no night there. God abides in His people. The day of God's rule in the hearts of His people is as a thousand years. God has always been upon

His throne. He has always ruled in the hearts of His people, from righteous Abel ahead to every heir of promise that has or ever will love His appearing. While God is ruling in the hearts of His little ones, Satan cannot come near. He has been subdued, bound, and locked away by the perfect sacrifice and resurrection from the dead of the Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. He destroyed the power of Satan, and He rules victorious over sin, Satan, death, hell and the grave.

Who are the nations that Satan should deceive no more until the thousand years are fulfilled? Who makes up the world of God's elect? The nations, or the world that is not deceived for the duration of the reign of Christ is not the whole world. But the remnant according to the election of grace makes up the number of those who cannot be deceived while God is upon His throne ruling in their hearts in His kingdom. One might think to say, *"How can Satan be bound and shut away, since we see his work on every hand in the world?"* Satan is bound as much as it pleased God even in this present world, for there is a measure of peace and order evident here. But we know that even though the whole world lies in wickedness, there is a much worse time coming. When Satan is loosed out of his prison, the measure of peace and order in the present world shall be replaced with hatred and violence as has never been experienced. But

Satan is bound where the children of God are concerned, because the Spirit of God abides within them and keeps them from the devil's deception.

What is the meaning of the scripture, that after the thousand years are fulfilled, Satan shall be loosed a little season? I am made to believe that in the very end of time, in the last hour of the sixth day, that Satan will be loosed in the world. This appears to be the time that Jesus spoke of when He said, *"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."* It appears that in that day the whole world shall erupt in violence. Not only shall every nation turn on the other, but also individuals will do the same. But the elect shall not be forsaken. Jesus has promised that He would be with His people unto the end of the world, that He would never leave them nor forsake them. It is impossible for Him to lie or to fail in a promise. So, no matter what comes in the very end of time, we may be assured that His presence will be enough to sustain us through every trial and suffering. But Satan shall not have the victory. The Devil and all his angels will be destroyed from the presence of Christ with everlasting destruction when Jesus

comes and brings all things into perfect completion.

What were the thrones that John saw? And who were they that sat upon them? They were, doubtless to me, the thrones of the kingdom, and the children of God through the ages that have ruled and reigned with Christ in His spiritual kingdom. They were those that were persecuted for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their hands. The people of God are the ones that suffer for the truth's sake in this world. They are the ones that cannot worship the beast, the devil, to gain his favor, or to escape his wrath. They are the ones that will not fall down before his image, which image stands for the supposed good works of the flesh. They are the ones who have not received the mark of the beast in their hands, which is the spirit of wickedness, that rules and reigns in the works of the flesh of all the children of wrath. The children of God, rather, have been given the seal of the Holy Spirit, which keeps them safe in this evil world. They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The children of God all lived and reigned and shall continue to reign with Christ in His kingdom from Old Testament times until the time when Christ came in the flesh, and even until He comes in glory. Many have already fallen asleep in Christ and many more shall do the same before

He comes in great power and glory. And many shall be alive and remain until His glorious appearing.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Who are the rest of the dead? They, doubtless to my mind, are the ones that have fallen asleep in Christ. They are those that the beloved, inspired apostle called the dead in Christ that should be raised first. They are the ones that shall instantly be joined together with those that are alive and remain, who shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye at the coming of the Lord. Together, all the elect family of God from all ages shall be caught up together to the Lord in the air and shall ever be with Him. What does it mean that the thousand years were finished? To me, it points to the very end of time, when the world shall be destroyed. It indicates that day when Jesus shall appear in glory, and when all things shall be brought into completion. It means that great resurrection day. John said by revelation, *"This is the first resurrection."* To my understanding, this is the first and only resurrection to eternal life of the saints. There is also a resurrection of damnation for the wicked, which seems to me to be simultaneous with the first resurrection. This seems evident because of the words of Jesus. He said, *"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne*

of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." It appears that all men, just and unjust shall stand before Jesus and be separated into two groups. Then shall it be truly manifested who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil.

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Those that shall have a part in the future glorious first resurrection of the bodies of the saints are surely a blessed people that were given grace in Christ Jesus before the world was made. They are holy in that they were set apart by God and sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ, and made to be vessels of honor unto God. There is a first death, which is a natural death, to which all men are appointed. But there is a second death, which is that eternal lake of fire, where shall be cast the devil, the beast, the false prophet, death, hell, and all whose names were not found written in the Lamb's book of life. This second death has no power on God's redeemed people. By one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified. Before the first resurrection, God's people shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign

with him a thousand years. After the first resurrection they shall be with Him in eternity. Peter said, by the Spirit, *"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."* They have reigned, are reigning, and shall reign with Him in His kingdom, which is set up in their hearts, which kingdom the world does not and can never perceive.

John said, *"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up of the breath of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."* At the very end of the world, or the very end of this age, when the thousand years are brought to completion, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. His release is for the purpose of deceiving the nations, which are in the four quarters of the

earth, which in this case, I am made to believe, stands for the wicked or the world at large. Then Gog, who is Satan, and Magog, which stands for the innumerable group of followers of Satan, shall go out together with the purpose of totally destroying the saints of God. When they surround the beloved city, and all seems to be lost, fire shall come down from God out of heaven and shall devour them. Now, what is the fire that shall come down from God out of heaven, other than the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Himself? For the inspired apostle wrote, *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.”*

Since this writing is getting lengthy, it must be brought to a close. So, what else John saw, the Lord willing, I will endeavor to mention only briefly, and this without further comments on the scripture. John said, *“And I saw a great white throne and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place*

for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” May each of His children be given an eye to see, an ear to hear, and a heart of understanding to the praise of the glory of His grace. May we be kept in the true faith once delivered unto the saints. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

This was written in love and in hope of eternal life,

Elder J. B. Farmer
8-12-2005

PSALM 62 : 1-2.

Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.

He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

CORRESPONDENCE

July 11, 2006

Dear Elder Terry,

Thank you for all those years that I have received the Signs. It has been in my home since childhood. My mother had it for over 50 years until she died in 1974. I have received it since. I am 91 years old look forward to it every month.

May God bless all those that make it available.

In bonds of love,
Frances Jarvis

June 13, 2006

Dear Elder Key,

I don't know if you would use this in the Signs of the Times, but I thought you might like to read this and wanted to send a copy to you. My brother, Kenneth (Knight), had this scripture on his mind for several months and spent a lot of time studying this chapter in Ezekiel. He got out of bed during the night to write this down and I believe he had finally come to an understanding of the chapter, perhaps through a dream, and had to get up to write this down. This was about two or three weeks before he passed away.

Kenneth felt he had been called by God to preach His word. He re-

ceived this calling to spread the gospel through a dream, or vision, one night several years ago. He knew he could not preach at Hillsdale, as he was divorced some three or four years before he became a member of Hillsdale Primitive Baptist Church. In spite of this, I know he shared his beliefs with most all of whom he was in contact and I believe this was his preaching and spreading of God's word on this earth. Kenneth was very perceptive in reading and understanding God's word and had one of the best recalls of scripture that I've ever experienced in anyone. He awoke one morning, not long before he died, and told his wife that he was tired. She asked why he was tired, since he had just awakened.

He told her that he preached for three hours last night at Hillsdale. I'm not sure if he elaborated on what he preached. If he did, she did not share this with me. When his wife told me this, I told her that I wish I could have heard him preach because I know it would have been a most wonderful sermon.

While Kenneth's "before death" experience was not like the conversation that my father (Hugh Knight) and I had in the early morning of his death, he did leave us with two experiences that let us know he was seeing heaven. Once he said "It's so beautiful, you just never want to come back." On the Wednesday before he passed away on Friday night he said "Oh what a beautiful place."

I believe that Kenneth, my father, and my mother are all reunited in heaven and I envy their peace and joy at being finally home in the glorious presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father.

I thank you again for your participation in the burial services for Kenneth and my father, for the kind words for our loved ones gone on, and for the kind and comforting words for our family left here on this earth, for now. May the God of our fathers bless us all and have mercy on us.

Sincere regards,
 Vicki Knight Al-Shawa
 336-643-3623 Home Phone
 14741 U.S. Hwy. 158 West
 Summerfield, NC 27358

The valley of dead bones have been given to me to see all of the hopeless and helpless souls that were dead in sin and, of themselves, could not help themselves. Ezekiel was commanded to preach to the bones. Before he was commanded by God, God called him Son of Man. Then God asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" Ezekiel answered, "Thou knowest." Then Ezekiel prophesied unto the bones saying, "Hear the word of the Lord." I feel this was the drawing of God, by His word, to the child of God and the child of God is drawn by the power of God, at God's time. With this word comes the knowledge of the Lord

and He calls His children with His holy calling, into His eternal life, and His hand is upon them.

As Ezekiel prophesied, a great shaking came upon the bones and they were joined, bone to his bone, which is the child of God, a part of the body of Jesus, and who is placed there by grace and not of any other means. Ezekiel found that as these bones were joined and covered with flesh and skin, they still did not live. Flesh and skin are of this world and not of the spiritual life of Jesus Christ. No life came into anyone until God commanded Ezekiel to prophesy to the wind and the breath came into them. Until it is God's time, the spirit is dead in man. Until the moment God commands life into a child of God, he is truly dead in sin and transgression and cannot be alive in the spirit until the true breath of eternal life is placed into his nostrils by the hand of God. These bones were cut off, all their hope lost, and their spirit was dry and needed the nourishment of the word of God.

God commanded the prophet again and Ezekiel said to them, "*Thus saith the Lord. I will open your graves and cause you to come out of your graves.*" I feel this is the grave of death and sin. Ezekiel said further to them that He will place His spirit in them that were brought up out of their graves. God brings you out of the grave in resurrection by the Son of Man, Jesus, who was resurrected at the cross of

Calvary on the third day. As the land of Judah was split in parts, so was Joseph of Ephraim's land. Both were brought together never to be separated again from each other, becoming one in God's hand as children of Israel.

With Jesus Christ, idols and sacrificed things are no more and His children shall be forgiven all transgressions and shall be cleansed by His blood. God said my servant David shall be their king, and they shall have one shepherd, and walk in my judgments and statutes and do them. These children of God shall dwell in His promised land and David, a man after God's heart, shall be their prince forever. And they shall be called into the kingdom of heaven in the last day.

As the prophet Ezekiel spoke of the covenant, God told him of the covenant of peace. This everlasting covenant, I feel, is Jesus laying down His life for His people. And as it was revealed to Ezekiel by God, I will set my tabernacle and my sanctuary in their midst forevermore, and this is the body of Christ, slain for our sin and to release us from the hands of death, that we may have eternal life of joy and peace in His promise to be to them their God, and they shall be my people. And He will rule and reign supreme in heaven and earth forever and ever. Eternal salvation, given freely of our Savior, Jesus. No cost. All things have been seen from the beginning and also seen from the end. My hope stands

in Glory and that hope is Jesus, who is perfect in His work and all things are as His will commands. So thanks be to God that, of myself, I have nothing to say in this matter, except may God have mercy and pity on my soul.

ARTICLES

THE APPLE TREE

For some time it has been on my mind to write an article on things in nature compared to spiritual things. We all fully realize that God's sovereign power controls them both. Things in nature come forth in their season and fulfill their purpose. The believing who are led and directed by his holy spirit are made to feast in his righteousness at the appropriate time in his season. We find them both controlled by his mighty power.

I will use an apple tree to describe the ways of nature, I will stress its functions in its season. First, it lays dormant in the winter and comes forth in the springtime. It then takes on leaves, followed by buds, then its beautiful flowers. As the flower sheds its petals the fruit appears. The apple ripens in its season and when fully ripened it falls to the ground. This completes the mission of the apple tree until it sheds the leaves in the fall, again to lie dormant in the winter. All of these before mentioned things depend on the roots for survival.

Now I will try to compare this tree in nature with spiritual things. When the tree rests in a dormant stage this represents one who is dead to the knowledge of truth with no hope. The leaves represent the springtime of the believer's joys. The buds represent the works of the flesh that fall by the wayside and wither and decay. The fruit that comes forth represents rightness in the believer's heart through the channels of his grace. When the fruit ripens it represents the beauty of God's goodness when one is lifted from the pits of darkness. When the apple falls this represents those who hunger and thirst after his righteousness. When the leaves fall this is a time of darkness in the believer's heart.

So, we see the beauty of his sovereignty demonstrated in nature and in all spiritual things.

Riley J. Justice
War, W.Va. 27892
304-875-2960

PROVERBS 21:1-3.

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts.

To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

VOICES OF THE PAST

SERMON ON AMOS 7:8

BY

ELDER LOYD WALL

A few weeks ago I read a verse of scripture and have had some meditations on it. This morning it is back again. There is no way to get it out of my mind because I stayed awake this morning until 20 minutes until 2 o'clock. I got up and turned the light on to see what time it was. I took a nap after that. I don't believe there is any way in the world to get away from the Lord. And I am going to tell you also that the devil can't get away from the Lord, either. And I will tell you the reason why I can't get away from Him. Because if I am not altogether deceived. He gave me a thorn in the flesh. Since I was 11 years old, old Satan has really been a thorn to me. He goes everywhere I go. He gets ugly. And I have done more than Paul did, if I am not over-judging. Paul prayed twice for God to remove his thorn. And the answer was every time "*My grace is sufficient for thee.*"

Brother John Bain, who we laid back to the dust a few days ago, said he didn't know if he had ever prayed in his life, but he had done a lot of begging: That is what I am saying. I've done a lot of begging God to remove this thorn out of my flesh this messenger of Satan that buffets me. But I never have gotten God to

trade with me. Never have. He never would. And right now I want to say that I am thankful that He doesn't trade any. Because if I could get Him to trade one time, I know by experience, I would lose every bit of confidence that I have in Him.

God's confidence is all we need. And the reason why that God the Lord didn't save the Apostle Paul from this thorn is because He is an unchanging God. The Bible says that. *"I am the Lord and I change not therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."*

I don't desire to hurt the feelings of any human being. But more especially here of late I hear so much about accepting the Lord, and wanting people to be saved. I don't want to hurt those people's feelings that advocate that. They believe that because they can't help it. But I am going to tell you that according to the teachings of the scriptures that is not the way it is. God's people accept the Lord because they can't help it. One might ask the question, *"Well, do they accept Him contrary to their will?"* No, that is not so. They are always willing to accept Him and yet it is not of them voluntarily to do so. They are made accepted in the Beloved.

Now I want to give you something else. It is not left up to you to acquaint yourself with the Lord. And according to the text that is on my mind you don't have to get out and look Him up. We are going to prove that by the scriptures. I would like to

call your attention to the last verse of the 46th chapter of Isaiah, and I want you to pay close attention to my reading if it be God's will. I am a very poor reader. Isaiah speaking out here, he said, *"I bring near my righteousness."* Now the book plainly teaches that "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the pharisees you have no part with God." And we know what the scribes and the pharisees were. They fasted twice a week and paid tithes of all that they possessed and they were not like other people. Now I didn't write that, and you didn't either, but that is the truth. Do you find anybody doing that? Do you? I want to ask you a question. Do you find people out paying a tenth of all that they earn, regardless of how much it is needed at home? My book says charity should begin at home. Do you find people that fast? Do you find people that say that they are not like other people? That they are better than so and so? Do you find them? I want to ask you. I am just asking you a simple question. I think you do. Now he says, *"I bring near my righteousness."* Not yours, but his. And He didn't leave us to guess how near He brought it. *"It shall not be far off and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory."* Now what is He saying? Zion is the church of the Living God. So I want to ask you a question, dear hearers. What did it leave for you to

do when He places salvation in Zion? I want to ask you. What in the world has the poor creature of the dust to do? What in the world did it leave Him to do when He said that He placed salvation in Zion, and then I want to tell you that you don't need to guess where salvation is, because the Apostle Paul says, "In Him." In who? In Christ is salvation. Neither is there salvation in any other. Now I want to ask you one more question, and that is, doesn't that cut out all hardshell preaching, too? I mean preaching about bringing salvation to anybody. What is the reason why a hardshell preacher, can't bring salvation to anybody? It is because they can't bring it to themselves. They don't need to bring it. They don't have to, because God places it there in Zion.

I would like to call your attention to a scripture that I read a few days ago, because it is in harmony with that one that I just read; it is found in the 7th chapter of Amos, verse 8. I believe again that it says what it means and it means just exactly what it says. The Lord here asked Amos something. We read, "*And the Lord said unto me. Amos, what seest thou?*" Now we don't have to guess who asked Amos that, do we? The Lord asked Amos that. Not a preacher, not a deacon, not a lay member, not an organization, but the Lord asked Amos, "*What are you seeing?*" Amos saw something, or the Lord wouldn't have asked him.

He would have told him what He

wanted him to see. "*What seest, thou Amos?*" "*And I said, A plumbline*". Amos told the Lord just what he saw, "*A plumbline*". "*Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more.*" My dear hearers, we know that a plumbline is what carpenters use in building a building. And we know that a natural plumbline does not make a crooked wall. But I tell you what you can do. You can take a building after it has settled and after it has been built for some time and you can stretch that plumbline to the plummet and it will show you every crook and every flat place that is in the building, and I want to tell you that a natural plumbline will do that. And I want to tell you dear children of the Heavenly King, until Israel has a plumbline placed in the midst of them, they won't know anything about their crooked ways. And I want to tell you, dear children, that the Lord has just one plumbline and that plumbline is His Darling Son, for in Him is salvation, neither is there salvation in any other. When He places that plumbline within your very being, that plumbline, which is Christ Jesus, shows you every crook and every turn that is in your very being. And it makes the individual to confess that sin is mixed with all that he does. why does it make him confess that sin is mixed with all that he does? It is because there is no sin about this plumbline,

as sure as you live.

And now too, I want to tell you one more thing. I am going to have to preach what I believe this morning, if I preach at all. Now children of God, if you stretch a plumbline down the side of this building and I want to tell you, it shows you where it is crooked, and where the crooked places are in this building. That plumbline will not make the building straight, by no means. And I want to tell you something, dear children of the Heavenly King. When Christ is born in you, the hope of glory, that doesn't make you to quit sinning. It just shows you what a sinner you are and it makes you to hate sin. It makes you to wish that you could never sin again, as sure as you live. Now as the plumbline does not straighten up the building, but only tells you there is a little crook here, and a crook there; there is no perfection in them. I'm talking about that place, now. I want to prove that. Even though after Christ is born in them the Hope of Glory, because the Apostle Paul said, "*In me is no good thing, that is in my flesh.*" And you know, he said, "I thank God that with my mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin." I want to ask you, my dear hearers, would you have known anything about your crooked ways until the plumbline was placed by you? You didn't reach up and get it and you didn't go to where it was. It came to you, as sure as you live, and you know the reason why it came to

you? It came because in the beginning your mother, Eve, transgressed. She transgressed in that home back yonder in the garden, so she was separated from her head. There wasn't a way in the world that poor Eve could go to Adam. Why? Because she had fallen in sin. And what caused her to commit that sin? She transgressed the holy law God had given, and you know, where there is no law, there is no sin. So did Sister Eve. She violated the law. She fell under sin, and when she fell under sin her whole being ultimately became crooked. And I am going to have to preach this hard doctrine, as sure as you live.

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes, "*Consider the work of God; who can make that straight which God has made crooked.*" I want to tell you there is not enough preachers in the United States or in the whole world, to make one perfect in this time world, as sure as you live. So Eve was separated from her husband and there wasn't a way in the world that poor old Mother Eve could go back to Adam. You know that Adam had to go to Eve, as sure as you live, and because of the love he had for that woman, he was willing to go down in sin, knowing what; the results would be. And he took of that fruit, as sure as you live, because of the love he had for her. He was willing to die for her and that is exactly what he did. And when he did, that put everyone of his posterity into sin; every last one of them.

Now, if you know any human beings who came from anyone except Adam, then you might get them out of the condition that they are in. But everyone that is his offspring, that is, everyone that came from Adam and Eve was born in this horrible condition. They were born in sin, and a destitute condition, and there is nothing they can do about it. They could not, and we cannot go to Christ, just as Eve could not go back to Adam after she fell. We are just as helpless to go to Christ as Eve was to go to Adam. I am going to prove that by the Bible, and don't make me out a horrible person if I fail to do that. Now, they both have transgressed the law, and God put a curse on the earth, and I want to tell you that He used different language when He cursed the earth, because curse means death with God. You know, we might use the same language and call that cursing, but that is not. A curse means death, as sure as you live. And so God cursed the earth for man's sake and it brought forth thorns and thistles. And then God drove man out of the garden, and his wife with him.

And you know, the tree of life represented Christ Jesus, and it was also in the midst of that garden. The Godhead then said, "*Man has become as one of us to know good and evil.*" And lest they reach forth and take of the tree of life and live forever, they were forbidden to stay. I want to prove that to you by the Bible. "*And he placed a Cherubim*

and a flaming sword which turned every way", not to keep them away from the tree of life, no, because that tree of life didn't need such. But that which I want to get to is to keep the way of the tree of life; lest man reach forth and partake and live forever. And I want you to tell me where in the word of God it says that sword has ever been taken down from around that tree that keeps the way of the tree of life. As sure as you live, it never has been taken down. I want to prove that to you, because Jesus said in the 6th Chapter of John that "*No man can come to me except my father who sent me draw him.*" You know the reason they can't come? Because there is a flaming sword turning every way which keeps the way of the tree of life. The tree doesn't need keeping, itself, because it *is* the way of life, as sure as you live. And as long as eternity remains it will keep the way of the tree of life.

I want to tell you something, brethren, when I started on this subject, I said he would place salvation in Zion Forever more. He said,; "*I will place a plumbline among Israel, and I will place it there*" And in the: land of Eden He put His only begotten Son in the person of Jesus Christ, here upon this low ground of sin and sorrow. And the Bible says He was born on this wise. "*And when Joseph was espoused to Mary before he knew her he found her with child,*" and

you know, he being a just man, he thought to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep and said to him, *"Fear not Joseph, to take unto thee Mary, thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. For she shall bring forth a Son and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."* Isn't that what Isaiah has said, when he said, "I place salvation in Israel," and isn't that what Amos saw when he saw that plumbline and God told him, *"I will place a plumbline in the midst of Israel. I will not pass them by any more."* And then when that plumbline came, it was Jesus, and he gives proof. And I want to tell you one thing. There is no crook in the person of Jesus. He is the plumbline, as sure as you live. And I want to tell you something else, He is not only straight, but He is strait. And He said for all His people, "Strait is the way, and few there be that go that way." *"Strait is the gate, that leads to life everlasting, and few there be that find it."* I will tell you just how many are going to find it; yes, everyone that had that way placed in them, as sure as you live. In everyone that believes has that plumbline been placed there. He says, *"I go before my sheep. I put them forth and they do follow me. And a stranger they will not follow because they know not the voice*

of a stranger."

You know, children, I want to preach now what I believe. You never would have given your heart and life to Christ. No. No. But Christ was given to you in eternity. As sure as you live. I want to prove that by the Bible. *"No man is able to pluck them out of my hand, for my Father who gaveth them me is greater than all."* Oh, yes: No man is able to pluck them out of My hand. The Lord told Amos, *"I will put a plumbline in the midst of Israel. And I will not again pass by them any more."* And you know, Paul said, *"I am persuaded that thing's 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."* Oh, that is a sweet promise to me, that He won't pass us by any more. And now Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem of Judah and was born of a virgin, and with all those miracles He did, it didn't cause people to move toward Him. Oh, no! But let me tell you, the only ones who did believe were His sheep, as sure you live.

You can't find in all the pages of the Bible that everything doesn't happen just like He planned it. No where is there any goats made into sheep. It didn't even make them want to be a sheep. They didn't have the want to. And I will tell you the reason why they didn't have the want to, because He said" *"For this*

cause I will send them a strong delusion that they should believe a lie and be damned, who, receive not the love of the truth, but have faith in their own righteousness." The next verse says, *"We are bound to give thanks always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, for God hath from the beginning chosen you into salvation through sanctification and belief of the truth."* Are you not for all eternity, to give thanks for it? I will tell you also, dear brethren, if there was something we could do, we would do it, but Paul said, *"Brethren we are bound to give thanks always to the preacher? Oh, no, no. Give thanks unto the church? Oh, no, no, but we are bound to give thanks always unto God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, for God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."* Now then, do you know Him, who for something like 33 years went about preaching, and then was crucified? Before they crucified Him, He said, *"But it is needful that I go away. For if I go not away, the comforter shall not come."* And brethren, I want to tell you something else. He didn't send it to the non-elect. But He said, *"I will place a plumbline among Israel; and Israel is His people."* And He said, *"I will place salvation in Zion"*, and not in the world, but in Zion. As sure as you live.

Now I want to prove to you that when God sent out His twelve, He didn't say, *"Go among the goats"*. Oh, no, no. But they were sent to one people. And you know, when He sent the twelve, He told them not to go to the general public, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. I want to tell you dear hearers, they never were sent among the non-elect. And they never will be sent unto the non-elect. God sends them, as sure as you live, not to do their own will, but the will of Him that sends them. And He told the twelve, *"Go not in the way of the Gentiles, but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

And while Christ was preaching to those lost sheep of the house of Israel to whom He was sent, He said, *"other sheep have I which are not of this fold. But them must I also bring."* I want to tell you one thing, if He hadn't brought the Gentiles to that fold, the plumbline would never have been among them. As sure as you live. Why? Because the Gentiles couldn't go to Him. That is why: They know that no one can go to Him except the Father which sent Him draw them. And He said, *"Other sheep have I which are not of this fold. Them I must also bring. And there shall be one shepherd and one fold."* Oh, dear children, have you ever felt the plumbline? It doesn't vary. It doesn't turn, either to the right or to the left. It is straightway, as sure as you live. It doesn't wait for me and you to decide to

have everlasting life.

But there is a way opened. And that is the way that Isaiah spoke of in the 35th chapter when he said, *“And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness: The unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools shall not err therein.”* You know the reason why those that err are not there? You would have to turn aside to get in this way should you err, and that is why there is no erring in that way, because there are no errors in that way. That is a straight way. That is a plumbline. There is no error in the plumbline; which is Christ Jesus, as sure as you live.

Now He said, *“I will place a plumbline among Israel, and my people, and I won’t pass them by any more.”* And also He said, *“I will bring near my righteousness and it shall not tarry. I will place salvation in Zion, among my people for my glory, saith the Lord.”* Now then for the Jews I will preach, *“Other sheep have I which are not of this fold, them also will I bring, and there shall be one shepherd and one fold; And you know, He said then, “It need be that I go away, for if I go not away, the comforter will not come. But if I go away, I will pray the Father and he will send you the Spirit, which the world cannot see.”*

It has been there a long time,

and that is another sermon, as sure as you live. He said, *“I will send to you another spirit, which the world cannot receive, and it shall take the things of mine and try to show them unto you? No, no. And it shall take the things of mine and show them unto you.”* I want to tell you, my little children, that He will save you from sin unto Himself. That is the plumbline, because God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, these three are One, as sure as you live. And you know, He told them to go to Jerusalem, and there came unto them a message from on high. And the number was about 120, and out of every nation, kindred, tongue, they were assembled at that place when the Holy Ghost came. I heard a man this morning over the radio, I won’t call a name, but I heard the man say as he was preaching on Holy Ghost baptism that you can go to the altar and say *“Lord, Lord”* until the Holy Ghost comes. And that, I want to tell you, is making fun of the Holy Ghost. I believe that is blaspheming the Holy Ghost. I want to preach what I believe, now, if God will allow me to do so. They were told of God to go to Jerusalem and there tarry until visited from on high, and it came upon the group, like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the whole house. What was it He said for them to do? He said to go there and tarry. And the Bible says in another place, *“Be still and know that I am God.”* Stand still and see the salva-

tion of the Lord. I want to tell you one thing. You don't have to go anywhere, or to any altar. Why? Because He said, *"I will place a plumbline among Israel, my people. And I will place salvation in Zion."* I will tell you, brethren, you don't have to go anywhere. And He told them at Jerusalem, *"And there tarry."* Stand still. Stop your works.

And there tarry until you are endowed from on high. And it came a rushing and mighty wind, and it filled the whole house. Everyone there spoke in his own tongue and everyone understood the words of God. You can take a man, I don't care how able he is and you can send him to preach all over the United States over the radio and over the TV and every church house, and I guarantee you, it won't profit anything unless that plumbline had already got there before the preacher gets there, a sure as you live - Why? Because they won't understand it, and I am going to prove that by the Scriptures. Paul didn't know who the children of God were: I know he didn't. Only the Lord knew who they were. Paul and Barnabas preached, and they didn't know who was and who wasn't. And they said, *"Seeing that you put it from you, and count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, so we turn to the Gentiles. When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the name of the Lord."*

Did everyone of them do that? No. The book tells us just how many were glorifying the Lord, and how many weren't. *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the name of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."* I want to tell you that ordained means set apart. Everyone that the plumbline had been placed in, that one is the one that salvation had been placed in. And I want to tell you, they can't help glorifying the name of the Lord.

Transcribed from a recorded sermon by Elder Loyd Wall, Bivens, Texas

MEETINGS

CONTENTNEA ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the One Hundred Seventy Sixth session of the Contentnea Association will convene with Stump Sound Church on Saturday before the second Sunday in October. The date is October 7-8, 2006. The Church is located at the end of Airport Road in Holly Ridge, Onslow County, NC.

We invite all who love the truth to come and worship with us.

Elder Gene Lupton
Association Clerk
252-745-7441

LOWER MAYO ASSOCIATION

The Seventy Fourth Annual Session of the Lower Mayo Association is to be held, the Lord willing, on Friday before the first Sunday in October and continue through Sunday the dates being

September 29th , 30th and October 1st, 2006. Spoon Creek Church will host the meeting and it will be held in Russell Creek Meetinghouse. The Meeting House is located approximately 9 miles south of Stuart, Virginia near the Virginia, North Carolina border. Those coming North or South on Route #8, turn East on Ayers Orchard Road # 653 for about 1 mile. Turn right on Moorefield Store Road #631. Go 1/4 mile to Church location on right. Those coming East or West on Route #58, Turn South on Southfork Loop # 827, turn on Ayers Orchard Road #653. Go 3 miles to Moorefield Store Road #631. Turn left, go 1/4 mile to church location on right. Those coming West on NC #704, Turn right on Va-Line Road, #1730. Go 1 mile and turn left on Moorefield Store Road, #631. Go 2 1/2 miles to church on left.

We invite the ministers, brothers, sisters and all believers in salvation by grace to come and be with us during this 2006 Association.

In bonds of Love,
Lowell Hopkins, Clerk
(276-952-2098)

LOWER MAYO FIFTH SUNDAY MEETING

The Lower Mayo Association Fifth Sunday meeting is to be held, the Lord willing, on Sunday only , October 29th, 2006. We hope to start singing at 10:00 A.M. and preaching at 10:30 A. M. Russell Creek Church will host the meeting and it will be held in Russell Creek Meeting House. The Meeting House is located approximately 9 Miles south of Stuart, Virginia near the Virginia, North Carolina border. Those coming north or south on route # 8, Turn east on Ayers Orchard Road # 653 for about 1 mile. Turn right on Moorefield Store Road # 631. Go 1/4 mile to church location on right. Those coming East or West on route #58, turn south on Southfork Loop #827 , Turn on Ayers Orchard Road #653. Go 3 miles to Moorefield Store Road #631. Turn Left, go 1/4 mile to church location on right.

We invite the ministers, brothers, sisters and all believers in salvation by grace to come and be with us during this meeting.

In bonds of Love,
Lowell Hopkins, Clerk
(276 -952 -2098)

ISAIAH 26:12.

*Lord, thou wilt ordain peace
for us: for thou also hast
wrought all our works in us.*

NEW RIVER ASSOCIATION

The two hundred and twelfth annual session, of the New River Association, will convene the Lord willing at Indian Creek Primitive Baptist Church in Floyd County, Va. entertained by Little Vine Primitive Baptist Church in Carroll County, Virginia. Beginning on Friday before the 4th Sunday in September and to continue thru Sunday. Dates being Sept. 22, 23, 24 in 2006.

Indian Creek Church is located on Va. Hwy 787 in Indian Valley those coming by route 221, 52 or route 8 take 221 to Willis, Va. then turn on route 787 go approx. 7 miles to church. Located on your left those coming by way of 81 interstate turn on exit 114 right go to Childress Road on right to 600 go on to 693 then turn left on 787 go approx. 15 miles to P.B. Church on right, if you come by route 8 come to drive in restaurant turn on 693 go left until you come to 787 turn left go approx. 15 miles to church on right.

We invite our ministering brothers, also our brethren, sisters, and friends, to be with in the setting of our association, Lord willing.

Elder Kenneth D. Hopkins,
Moderator

J.B. Mitchell, Jr.,
Clerk

Harold Hollandsworth,
Asso. Clerk

SOUTH OUACHITA ASSOCIATION

The South Ouachita Association will be held, the Lord willing, on Saturday and Sunday, September 23 and 24, 2006.

Rehobeth Church, located at Eldorado, Arkansas, 5 miles North on Hwy. 7 and 1/2 mile West on Hwy. 335, will host the Association. All lovers of the truth are invited to come and be with us.

Ned Barron
Association Clerk
(318) 778-4217

SULPHUR FORK ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Sixty-first session of the Sulphur Fork Association will be held, the Lord willing, with Pleasant Hope Church on Saturday September 30, and Sunday October 1, 2006.

Pleasant Hope Church is located on the East side of Highway 251, south of Atlanta, TX. on CO 4556. (Look for Sign).

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

Miles Bird
Association Clerk

MATTHEW 13:47.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JULY 2006

Richard Lawless - WVA.....	5.00
Lula Holley - VA.....	5.00
<i>In memory of Hartzel Nelson</i>	
Ronald Nelson - WVA.....	50.00
Winfred Young - NC.....	5.00
G. T. Newman - TN.....	10.00
Alan McDaniel - VA.....	5.00
Melvin Cruise - VA.....	10.00

OBITUARIES

BEATRICE CARTER MILLER

Beatrice Carter Miller died March 28, 2006 at Morehead Nursing Center in Eden, NC, after a long illness. She had lived a good life for 90 years plus fifteen days.

Born March 13, 1916 to Brular and Mary Carter in Pittsylvania County, Virginia.

She asked for a home with Dan River Primitive Baptist Church on May 23, 1982 along with her husband, Frank Miller. They were both baptized by the late Elder David Spangler. Sister Bea loved her church, the brethren and the pastor. She looked forward to meeting with them as often as possible. A faithful member and a true believer in the

doctrine of Salvation by Grace.

Bea did volunteer work at Morehead Memorial Hospital in Eden until her health no longer permitted her to.

She is survived by: daughter Sister Mary Margaret Cannady of Martinsville, Virginia and sons Frank W. and Don Lee Miller of California, eight grandchildren, three sisters: Maxine Ely of Alexander, Virginia, Mary Sue Little of Florida and Meredia C. Kovath of Delaware. She was preceded in death by her husband, three brothers and one sister.

Funeral service was held at Dan River Church on Saturday, April 1, 2006 by Elder Kenneth R. Key. Interment was in the church cemetery.

Written by request of Dan River
Primitive Baptist Church.
By Amanda Saunders

THESSALONIANS 3:8-11.

For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God:

Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 174

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*How sweet how heavenly is the sight,
When those who love the Lord
In one another's peace delight,
And thus fulfil his word:*

*When each can feel his brother's sigh,
And with him bear a part;
When sorrow flows from eye to eye,
And joy from heart to heart:*

*When free from envy, scorn and pride,
Our wishes all above,
Each can his brother's failings hide,
And show a brother's love.*

*When love in one delightful stream
Through every bosom flows,
And union sweet, and dear esteem,
In every action glows!*

*Love is the golden chain that binds
The happy souls above;
And he's an heir of heaven that finds
His bosom glow with love.*

SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

202 Carousel Lane, Meadows of Dan, Va. 24120-4403

C.M.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	218
Elder R.H. Campbell	
CORRESPONDENCE	224
ARTICLES	226
Riley J. Justice	
VOICES OF THE PAST	228
T. A. Stanfield	
"A Poor Wanderer"	
Octavia J. Goad	
J. C. Chester	
MEETINGS	237
CONTRIBUTIONS	238
OBITUARIES	238
Samuel G. Blankenship	
Elder Harold Rudolph Toney	

EDITORIAL

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again with a lively hope by the resurrection of the dead,

To an inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time. (1 Pet 1:3-5)



Elder R. H. Campbell

The apostle Peter, in these three verses of scripture, sets forth the absolute certainty of the salvation of the saints of God, and the source from which it comes. The source is first, last and always God, even as Jesus told a group that was following him and asked what they must do to work the works of God. Jesus' response to them was, (John 6:29) *"This is the work of God that ye believe on him who he hath sent."* Jesus did not tell them of anything that they must, or could do, to work the works of God, and this was because all of the works, regarding the salvation of the saints had already been done. They were finished, from the foundation of the world, as is confirmed by many scriptures, and were as certain and sure as though they were already manifested in time. The scriptures state that God rested from all of the work that he had created and made, (Gen 2:2) *"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work which he had made."* And there are no references that he ever went back to work, to do anything that would assure their eternal salvation, or to finish something that he had not completed from the beginning.

The Apostle Paul referred to this fact, regarding God's resting after his work was completed, when on

one occasion he, speaking of man, (Heb 4:19) *"For he that is entered into his rest also hath ceased from his works as God did from his."* Man enters into his rest, when he is brought to the realization that all of the work that was required to accomplish his salvation had already been done, and that there is not anything that he can do, to add to that which has been done for him. When man is born again, or quickened by the Spirit, he is made to know that he has been blessed with a very special and precious gift, called faith, and this faith includes all that is needful for his salvation. He also has been made to know that it is not in the hands of man to do anything that would have any bearing in spiritual matters, because it is beyond the realm of nature in which he dwells. (Rom 8:7) *"For the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."*

Even though the will were present with him, in nature, the ability is not, for it is the work of God that man can even believe on him who he hath sent. Jesus stated very clearly and concisely how, and why, this is accomplished, (John 6:37-39) *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me that of all which he hath given me I should*

lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." As we said above, the source of the salvation of the saints is of God, first, last and always.

Peter said, when speaking of the faith of the saints, (1 Pet. 6-9) *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: who having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now for a season ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soul."* The, trial of their faith, is that highway that leads man unto salvation; it is traveled by man, in nature, but it is determined by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, from before the highest hills were formed, and the world was caused to exist.

(Isa 35:8-10) *"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall*

walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." This is a positive declaration of things that shall be, and the way and manner that they shall be made manifest in the lives of the saints of God, in days to come. This knowledge is available to man, only by the revelation of God, and is to make manifest that they are of the chosen generation. (1 Pet: 1:10-11) *"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that was to come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."* The holy men of old themselves did not understand whereof they spoke, when they prophesied of the glory that would come, so how could man with the wisdom of this world, understand except that it be revealed unto him, by the same power that ordained it to be.

These are very positive and comforting statements to the soul of those who have been so exercised by them, as in the above subject scriptures, for they speak of an inheritance that has been reserved in heaven for them; an inheritance which is undefiled, and that fadeth

not away, reserved for them according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. There are no contingencies involved in these declarations, that would even remotely indicate any work contributed by the wisdom or power of the natural mind of man. All of this is to be accomplished by the works of God, before the foundation of the world, and man is not involved, in any way, regarding the success of this venture: it is solely the work of God, who is sovereign in all of his ways and just in all of his judgments. He speaks, and it is done, commands, and it stands fast, regardless of the attitude of man regarding this work or the awareness of it until it is done.

The apostle Paul told Timothy, speaking of how God works his will in the salvation of the elect. (II Tim. 1:9-12) *"Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I am appointed, an apostle and a teacher unto the Gentiles."* Notice, all of this is given in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the

world, but, is manifested in time by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ who had finished the work that his Father gave him to do, and ascended back unto the heavens where he is even now seated, on the right hand of the Father, victor over death, hell and the grave, for the elect, making intercession unto God for their sins.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, Paul related the trial of faith of those under the law, who subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, received their dead raised up and others who were tortured, not accepting deliverances from these physical distresses; that they might obtain a better resurrection. He then said, (Heb 11:39-40) *“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”* Those under the law were given faith, that they might endure the tribulations, but looking beyond them to the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, which is the inheritance that is reserved in heaven for them.

(Heb 12:1) *“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of wit-*

nesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” This great cloud of witnesses, is the testimonies of those who have gone this way before, and left a record the way in which the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and by faith, come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. It is a blessed journey that they experience, although it may include many things that are distressing to the man in nature, but they have been blessed to believe that all of the afflictions and trials are more to be desired than all of the treasures that this world has to offer. These things shall fade away in time, but this city is eternal, and the beauty and glory are everlasting. This faith enables them to keep pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, which the times and tribulations of the world cannot take away. This better thing that Paul referred to above, to my understanding, is the Spirit that the children of God have, that was not available unto those under the law, as in the gospel day. (John 7:37-39) *“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood up and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the*

scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" This prophecy was fulfilled when the day of Pentecost was fully come, and the apostles were all with one accord in one place and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. This is the time when the gospel, the power of God unto salvation, made manifest unto man, and the Spirit first indwelled the creature as Jesus stated above. This is the better thing that the gospel has that the law did not have: the better covenant, which was based upon better promises, as Paul said, (Rom 8:2) "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The children of God, from that day forward, were no longer under the dominion of the law of sin and death, as they had been in former days, but rather, were indwelled by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and (Rom 8:16) "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are children of God: and if chil-*

dren, then heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

The promise unto all of the saints, that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time, is a blessing beyond the imagination of the natural mind. This grand and glorious promise is made by God, who cannot lie, to a people who were dead in trespasses and sin, aliens from God, and the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; and then suddenly they find themselves joint heirs with the only begotten of the Father, of an inheritance that is reserved for them, in his Son. This is the ultimate expression of a love, a love that man is incapable of even understanding in the flesh, an everlasting love that assures all of the recipients, that the giver is the Lord, who left on record the following promise for their assurance and comfort in the fact that, as the prophet said, (Mal 3:6) "*For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*" impossible that, after receiving the promise, some could fall away and be separated from that love that has been bestowed upon them.

(Heb 6:13-20) "*For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,*

saying, surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end to all strife. Wherein God, will more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is entered for us, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." This is possibly the most profound and all encompassing statement, to be found in the whole of scripture. This statement was made by, God the Father, the creator of the heavens and the earth and all the host of them; the God who cannot lie, who also promised these things from the beginning, unto Abraham and to all of his seed through Isaac, in all generations to follow, and then he confirms it by his own personal oath, that by two immutable pledges, the things included in the original promise will most certainly be fulfilled. There is no more possible assurance that

could be given unto the heirs of promise, than is given in this one statement. God promised it from the beginning, and confirmed it by his oath, and so it shall be.

The apostle Paul confirms this same fundamental truth in, (Rom 8:35-39) *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

If we had only the two verses of scripture in the proceeding paragraph, all God called ministers would have the same themes for any of their sermons, regarding the absolute surety of the elect's receiving of the inheritance that is laid up for them. The love of Christ is what assures them of the inheritance, and this scripture says that nothing can separate them from that love, and Peter said that all of this is according to the abundant mercy of God, by which he hath begotten them

again with a lively hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The faith of the apostles was strong as long as Jesus was in their midst, but, in spite of his having told them that he must die, and be raised again, they could not actually believe it, so that when it happened, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus said, (Luke 24:21) *"But we trusted that it had been him which should have redeemed Israel."* The same day that Jesus rose from the tomb, they were questioning the fact that he was actually the Christ, and in the above text, Peter is saying that, *"he hath begotten them again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."* living proof of the claims of Jesus, that he must so suffer.

All of this work is, by God, for man, and is a gift unto the creature. The apostle Paul makes this very plain, and positive, when he said, (Eph 2:8-9) *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is a gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."* Don't you just love this scripture? it is the most comforting of the scriptures to be found in the bible, to those who have been, brought to the knowledge of the truth, by being exercised in this same way and manner, and being made to believe it by their own experience. They were all, as the apostle Paul, in a state of ignorance and unbelief, until the light of truth shined around about them and into their heart, and they were born

again, or quickened by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the seal of approval of their faith. This is, as the circumcision was the seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised, even so, the indwelling of the Spirit within their heart is their seal of righteousness.

May this seal be upon your heart, for it is the gift of God unto all of the saints, and it can never fail because God is perfect in all of his works. He does not give this gift to any who are not of the chosen generation which he hath purchased with his own precious blood, the only sacrifice that is acceptable unto God for the sins of his children.

In bonds of love:
Richard H. Campbell

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Elder Terry,

It is time for renewal of the Signs of the Times. Have been reading the Signs for a good many years I enjoy reading everyone's experience and trust I have been given to see the wonderful workings of the holy Spirit from the Eternal God Head.

In Christian Love I hope,
Charles Hatchett

8-7-06

My Dear Brethren,

This magazine is very dear to me to read. God has blessed me with good eye sight but my hearing has gotten very poorly in the last year or so.

But I think God as the years travel by at the age of 87 I'm still able to stay by myself and take care of my home. What a great blessing it is to me to think of a God who has been so good and so kind and merciful to me. He is my all and all. I think so much of the time how can He be so good to such a sinner as I feel to be the chief among all. Please don't think I have forgotten to send my donation for another year, just been so busy in my Garden canning and freezing. Sending \$25.00 for one year subscription.

Very unable poor sister,
Lovie A. Thompson

Shreveport, La.
August 11, 2006

Dear Editors of the times - I have enjoyed this little yellow book from many years and always enjoy reading the entire book and especially I enjoyed the article on "Lucifer" that Elder Roberson wrote this time - He explained it so well.

I know I have at times felt high and mighty but more often I feel low-

liness over the sins I have done but when I read about Lucifer I wondered about him and have looked up the meaning in my self pronouncing dictionary and it said Lucifer is the Light bearer, so at times I wondered about him being thrown out of Heaven, but now I believe I understand much better after reading this article, and I am so glad we have such wonderful ministers which helps to Comfort us and to understand the wonders of our God and His Son Jesus.

I did not mean to write so much but did want you to know how much I enjoyed this article. I am sending a check for \$25.00 for 2 years.

Thanks and please pray for me when you're at the your throne of grace.

A sister I hope,
Katherine Mathews

July 18, 2006

Elder Wm. Hale Terry,

Dear Brother Terry I trust this finds you well and blessed of God.

I'm still weak, as I've had strained muscle the Dr said. I have suffered so much with a cracked bone a few months ago, but I am strong enough to get around. I thank the Lord for all his goodness and love, grace and mercy to me this year, an old afflicted one of his I

hope. My address is changing to Ellen M. Sellars, 22221 Bloomfield #1, Cypress, CA 90630.

Please send Signs of the Times here. I enjoy reading but can't read though at times, eyes so weak, but if one of God's chosen ones I am promised- As thy days thy strength shall be.

I trust you can read this. One in Hope of Life Eternal.

Ellen Sellars

ARTICLES

MY EXPERIENCES

An experience of a believer is a hard subject for an individual to explain or to come up with an answer. First of all this comes through his believing power of God's Grace which is an unmerited favor from the courts of glory at his discretion according to his holy and divine will.

We find this grace is an unmerited favor. We have to say that the flesh is helpless to be a partaker of holy events in any way. All works that the believing family performs is the workmanship that comes though his loving kindness that leads his little ones in this low ground of sin and sorrow.

We have a group that believes in the free will of the flesh. I think they are sincere in their belief but have

not been made to see the definition of God's salvation through grace; which is the deliverance of God's goodness in the hearts of his little ones that by his grace which is pleasing unto him at his appointed time. This group says that they know heaven will be their home. If they know this, (which they don't) this completely disallows the precious hope whereby mankind is saved through his grace. They also say just let him come into your heart and he will. He works in the armies of heaven, amongst the inhabitants of the earth and none can say do thou this great Jehovah. If this workmanship was created in Christ Jesus, how can puny man be given the power to let the Lord do or not do the things that are according to his precious will.

A few times I feel that I have been lifted from the pits of darkness and made to rejoice in his goodness if not deceived in my belief.

A few times I have been made to rejoice in his mercies that are extended when it pleases him to do so. The Bible says that he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled. If one hasn't hungered then they can't feast from the rations of God's table. This being a table that feeds the flock. Fear not little flock for it is your father's good pleasure to give unto you the kingdom.

God's little ones have been elevated from the pits of darkness, given a hope and made to walk in his heavenly light. They are kept by

his great power and guided in the low grounds of sin and sorrow. They have been made dependent on him when given the hope that he will lead and direct them in all things. All this before they will reap heaven and immortal glory in that land with no end.

The word carnal has a deep rooted meaning. If the carnal mind is not subject to the laws of God, how or in what way can the dead to the knowledge of truth, have the power to let God take his abode in this darkened fleshly mind. When one is lifted from the pits of darkness and given a hope and made to see though an eye of faith the channels of his precious love, then they look to him as the giver of all good to lead and direct them on life's journey.

The Bible says that an eye has not seen nor an ear has heard, neither has it entered into the heart what God has prepared for those that love him. This sweet hope that the believing family possesses is what anchors the soul and sustains them in the walks of life as they journey here. Paul said, "*If in this life only I had hope I would be of all men most miserable.*" Paul lets us know, that it isn't in the power of the flesh to know what God has prepared for them that love him.

We often hear different ones say that he preaches the Bible. The Bible has never been preached. It is a dead letter that was written by inspiration and it is interpreted likewise. When the apostles were sent out

they were instructed to preach the word, which is Christ the Hope of Glory. The Bible is instructions to the church, that every believer should be thoroughly furnished into every good work. Now we can see the workmanship of Christ Jesus manifested here.

As a young man on a March day and the snow was flying and I was made to meditate on some thing in the Bible. Anyway I found myself in a wilderness of confusion. The thought came to me that the Bible wasn't written to those who are dead to the knowledge of the truth. This is when I was made to see that the flesh is helpless to work out his great salvation. We have to say that if God isn't in the arrangement, there is no rejoicing. The believing family is lifted up from the pits of darkness and they give thanks to him for his many blessings that are bestowed on them at his appointed time. All spiritual things are rooted and grounded in our Lord and Saviour.

Riley J. Justice

Isaiah 60:1-2.

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

For, 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.

VOICES OF THE PAST

ELDER F. L. OAKLEY, VERY DEAR FRIEND: – You asked me, the 3rd Sunday in July to tell you my experience, but I felt so much like I had nothing to tell, and felt so cold every way, I thought I would not fool any more of God’s people, for I felt like I had deceived myself and others too, and would keep my little hope to myself. But it is bad enough for one to be deceived, much more so to deceive others who feel so dear to him.

With the help of God, I’ll try, in a brief way to tell you what I hope the Lord has done for me. At the age of ten or eleven years I began to have serious impressions about my soul’s future destiny. My father called us around the family altar, and told us we had a sister who had seen her lost and ruined condition, and she felt she was going to hell. I began to think of my soul’s welfare that night. I thought if I should die my soul would be lost. Oh! such thoughts as I had about going to hell to burn forever and ever. I said to myself, “I’ll try to live better, I’ll do all the good I can.” So I commenced to try to pray to God to make me a better boy, to live more up to my duty, and to keep me from sinning, etc. And many times when I was in the field at work I would try to ask God to have mercy on me. I went on in this way several years. But I couldn’t see, as I was

getting worse and worse every day. So I was too young any way, and I would wait till I got grown, then I would get religion. I thought I would go on and have as much pleasure as I wished, while I was young.

When I got grown it would be time enough to think on such things. I commenced to go to dances and play cards for fun, I didn’t bet till I commenced going to school at Gilliam’s Academy.

My conscience would whip me for it, but I was determined to conquer. So I kept on till the Lord, as I believe, commenced a work in me. I remember the time so well. I was in the parlor at Mrs. Gilliam’s, with a crowd of young folks, joking and making merriment, when in a moment, I was seized with the worst trouble I ever had. I immediately went down in Mr. Gilliam’s room and thought I would read the LAND MARK some to drown my troubles. That was my custom when I got lonesome and felt bad. But I soon found I couldn’t do that. I went to my room and that didn’t do any good. O! I had so much trouble I didn’t know what to do. I felt like I didn’t have a friend on earth. My best friends seemed to be enemies to me. They seemed to make light of my ways and actions. I wanted to be alone for I couldn’t enjoy anyone’s company. Right here I want to use a little scripture that suited my case, and I believe suits every one when they are under conviction, whether I was in that condition or not. *“She weepeth sore in*

the night, and her tears are on her cheeks. Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her. They are become her enemies." Lam. 1:2. That explains how I felt. Among, all my lovers I had none to comfort, and all my friends seemed treacherous, and seemed to be my enemies. A person cannot be comforted while in this condition. Though one may tell them it is conviction (which ought to comfort), they will not believe it. They feel they must die and hell will be their portion, and justly so. I am digressing.

I thought I was going to die and that very soon, and the worst of it all was I felt like I was going to hell but I knew it would be just. For I felt to be the worst, the vilest of sinners. I lost my appetite. I couldn't sleep but very little, and it was impossible for me to study. Many times have I stole out of the school-room to go off about one mile on a high hill, unmolested by anyone, and there I would weep and try to ask God to have mercy on me a sinner. Many times when I would get to my secret place – I couldn't pray to save my life. Some worldly thing would get on my mind in spite of me. O, such feelings as I had, no one knows anything about it but the ones that have passed over. This was in the winter and spring of 91. I remained in this condition two or three months. It gradually wore away and I don't know when my troubles left me. That is

one reason, Mr. Oakley I'm so slow to tell people the reason of my hope. For I hear others say they felt the happiest when their burden left, and if they had ten thousand tongues they couldn't praise God enough. I seem to be different from anyone else. I commenced making promises and as often as I made them I would break them. I tried to live better, but I finally concluded I was mistaken about it all, and I would go on in my old paths again. I thought if that had been conviction I would have known it.

And, Mr. Oakley, what you said yesterday in your sermon made me think how I felt. You said you had felt this year like you wanted to put an end to your existence. When I was in my deepest troubles I felt like I wanted to do the same. But back to my subject. I soon found myself going to parties again, and doing other things that I had done. But my conscience would whip me every time, still I thought I will have my way, and I kept on, and while I was on the floor dancing I was taken sick, oh, so sick I had to leave. I promised the Lord that night if He would spare me and let me get well I would not dance any more.

Next morning I was well, but I felt so mean. I am not certain, but I believe I went to one more party after that, but God has taken all such desires from me now. I have no desire whatever to participate in any more such sports.

Last 3rd Sunday in May a year ago I was made to feel the happiest I had ever been in my life. It was while Mr. Burch was preaching. It seemed he touched on all the points that I felt so justly accused. I felt like God had shown himself to me the second time.

I love the Primitive Baptists so much, and I want to be with them, but I know I am too vile and sinful to offer myself.

I have been groping my way about ever since. Sometimes I think I have a hope, and then I think I am mistaken about it all. If I wouldn't be so easy to get mad, and would be better every way than I might have some reason to hope. I think I have prayed, or tried so much if I was deceived to undeceive me. For if I am wrong in every thing else I want to be right on that. I could tell you many other things but guess I have told you more now than I ought; I feel like if I just could be good enough to live with the Baptists I would be the happiest man on earth. My will is to be right if I miss it. But when I would do good evil is always present. There is no good thing that dwells in the flesh, and where no good dwells, how can we expect to reap any good. When it goes well with you, think of me. But that is the time we don't think of anyone but self. If I had asked you to remember me when

you get in trouble, you would be more apt to do it.

Joseph told the Butler that, but he didn't do it. He didn't think of him till the king had a dream that no one could interpret, then the others said, I do this day remember my faults.

I have written you only a part of what I have passed through. Have you, please tell me, had any such trials as these. If so, it will be a comfort to me to know it for I believe you are a Christian. I have had impressions to join the church for sometime, but unworthiness keeps me back. I have felt it was a duty, but I have not performed it, and I believe sickness has been sent on me to make me willing.

I had a lot of sickness in the spring, and I thought to myself "*If I would join the church I would get well.*" I tried in my feeble way to ask God to give me back my health and if I felt impressed to join the church I would try to do so by next meeting. Immediately I felt better, and I felt so happy I praised the Lord, and I was willing, then to join, but when I got to the church on Saturday after, somehow I could not go up. I must desist. Sometime; if its the Lord's will, I'll tell you more about my impressions, Oh! I feel so bad today I wish I could tell you all.

T.A. Stanfield

EXPERIENCE OF
A POOR WANDERER.

Elder F. P. Branscome, Dear Friend: I have often thought of writing to you what I hope the Lord has done for me. From my earliest recollection I feared death and judgment, and was made to call upon the name of the Lord for his great mercy: for I could see no other way whereby I might be saved. But I went on, as I grew up, and partook of the evil ways of the world. But often thinking I would change my way, and made many promises that I would do better. But all of my promises I would break, until my mind was so troubled about my condition that I was made to beg and pray to the Lord for mercy. But it seemed that I grew worse. I could see myself to be such a great sinner and nothing that I could do was any benefit to me. I would try to pray, but my words seemed to fall to the ground. It appeared to me that I was such a great sinner that the Lord would not hear my prayers. I went on in this way so long. I thought I had surely committed the unpardonable sin and would be forever lost. O, such a condition I was in! No pen nor tongue will ever describe it. I could not rest day nor night. Often I could not sleep any, but would roll on my bed and beg for mercy. If I did sleep, my last thoughts would be, Lord, have mercy on me, a poor sinner; and I had the same prayer on awaking in the morning. I went on in this way till I thought it a

sin to take the name of the Lord between my sin-defiled lips, and that I never would try to pray again. But the very next words would be, "Lord, have mercy on me." And all the time the tempter was along trying to persuade me that there was no such a being as God, and that I was no more than the brute creation; that I had no soul to be saved or lost. I could get no satisfaction out of anything. O, how I did wish that I had never been born, or had died when I was young. Then I would have been saved; but now I had sinned away the day of grace. My prayers were: "O Lord, save, or I perish." "O Lord, if thou turnest away from me, where else can I look? For man can do nothing. I felt to be less than nothing, and beneath the notice of either God or man." And my prayer was: "O Lord, if I die, let me die in my right mind, that my last words may be, Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner." I wanted to die begging for mercy. It appeared to me that everybody had turned against me, and that the Lord had long since forsaken me: and I was without a friend in heaven or in earth.

While going on in this condition with, it seemed to me, almost more than I could bear, all my burden left me, and I felt like I had been carrying some great heavy burden on my shoulder. I felt so light and easy, and even walked off easily. And it seemed like love sprang up in my heart, for everybody. I felt to praise

God for his mercy. It was the brightest time of my life, and it seemed to me that all nature was praising God. The boughs of the trees, it seemed to me, towered toward heaven in praise to God. I went home and my family seemed the most lovely that I had ever seen them.

The next morning I walked out of the house, singing :

"I want to live a christian here, I want to die rejoicing:

I want to know a Savior near,

When soul and body's parting."

The thought struck me almost as forcibly as a voice, saying, "*Go and tell the church and world what great things the Lord has done for you,*" I thought, then, on the first opportunity I would tell the Church what I hoped the Lord had done for me. But doubts and fears arose and I did not go. And I am ever praying and hoping for a brighter evidence. I feel so little and unworthy. I don't feel worthy to ask those, whom I feel to be God's children, to fellowship such an unworthy creature as I feel myself to be.

Now, Mr. Branscome; if ever I send you this you may examine it; and, if you think it a gospel experience, you can answer through the "Messenger." But, if not a gospel experience, commit to the flames and all will be well.

A POOR WANDERER

REMARKS.

The foregoing experience of one who styles himself "a poor wanderer," was forwarded to me by Elder Isaac Webb, saying: "*The writer of the within experience wishes your reply, but does not wish you to use his name. It may be relied on; it is all right.*" We have no idea who this "poor wanderer" is, and know nothing about his life and character. But if his is not a gospel experience we have none. It is according to the doctrine of the Bible, and we feel sure that his expression of how the Lord has led him will beget fellowship and love in the hearts of all God's people who read it.

We would like to encourage this "poor wanderer" to go home to his friends, the church, and follow the Savior in baptism. If he is still waiting for a brighter evidence, the probability is, it may never come. The pathway of disobedience does not lead to the light. This "poor wanderer," no doubt, has the real scriptural evidence that, he is a child of God. What is that? It is this: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." John 3:14. There is no greater evidence than this. To feel unworthy is no excuse, for that is just how all whose hearts are right must feel. If we love the church, we should tell her so; and, if we love Christ, we should keep his commandments. Christ said, "*If ye love me keep my commandments.*"

Christ has never said to one of his little ones to stay away from him and learn of him. But he did say, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls."-Matt. 11:29, 30. This speaks to our "poor wanderer," to the living and the anxious inquirer, and not to those dead in trespasses and in sins. We feel that all who have hope should be encouraged to take their cross and follow Jesus in baptism; and not only in baptism, they should be taught to observe all things whatsoever that Jesus has commanded. See Matt. 28:19,20. It is not enough that they should be made to feel that this commandment of the Savior is right and ought to be observed ; but, feeling so, they should do all that is commanded in God's word. May this "poor wanderer" be drawn into the fold by the constraining love of Christ, and made to serve the Lord with gladness - *Editor*.

PSALM 119:10-12.

With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.

Elder F. P. Branscome, Dear Brother: I send you a copy of a letter I received sometime ago from Sister Goad ; and, also a view I had of Brother Gold and the Father and Son, which I think applies equally as well to you and also all of God's ministers.

This morning I viewed Brother Gold sitting between two, and I said, in my mind, "*That is the Father and Son.*" I believe they were for his guidance and protection in preaching and writing, hence the great power and ability given him to discharge his duties; and; while I was standing before him, the Father and Son, Brother Gold said, "Sister Octavia could see that it would not do for Brother Jones' reputation to go down." I believe this knowledge was given of the Lord. The letter I send you, written by Sister Octavia Goad, (who is a daughter of the beloved Elder Isaac Webb) is an answer to one I wrote her that was published in the "*Messenger of Truth.*" While reading her good letter, which filled my soul with love and gratitude to God, I heard a voice say, "Send this to the Landmark." So, by her consent, I have sent it, and I feel like, Brother Branscome, that I want you also to have a copy of it: for the comfort and instruction of your readers. While reading her good letter, I had to stop to give vent to my tears and thoughts. My thoughts were, "*Glory to God and the Lamb: glory to God in the highest strains.*" It fills my soul with joy

that God has seen fit to show them my spiritual condition, and bless them to help me: for we are to be fellow helpers, one of another; and no more aliens nor strangers, but fellow citizens of the household of faith. As ever,

Yours in love,
J. R. JONES.

SISTER GOAD'S LETTER.

Mr. J. R. Jones, Dear Brother: My heart was filled with joy and thanksgiving when I received your letter of congratulation to one who deserves nothing. I oftentimes fear that the good people of the Lord are deceived in me.

Surely they do not know me as I am. I have a special remembrance of you since you stayed at my father's on your way to an association, when I was but a child - by a deed of charity, in making my mother a present before leaving our home and, not only to her, gifts that my father has received at your hand, causes us to cast our best wishes for you. How precious still are the names of the ones that administered little deeds of kindness to us, in appreciation of father's labor in the ministry. I have said little about that, but it seems but few regard the feelings and comfort of a poor minister's family. Of course we had a common, but pleasant home. But the absence, near all the time, of father made it lonely and the great responsibility that was thrown upon mother and

the children was not a bouquet of roses. We missed his good and kind instruction. The good company, that visited our home, had to be entertained without him. While other fathers had the privilege of driving with their families to preaching, and of many other things of interest, that we could mention. The preacher's family enjoys but little of that. For the odds and ends must be done at home; and, sometimes, in some cases, without dressing to appear in intelligent company. Certainly they feel then to be forsaken, and like they have lost sympathy of the one that is nearest and dearest to them. How much we all need the charity that few practice and try to remember that the good minister is away from home and business most every Saturday and Sunday. Besides being called to the sick bed and to funerals in the week time. But I scarcely think that a true husband and rather ever leaves his dear family without feeling the heavy obligation that rests upon his dear ones. Oh! those poor burdened souls that feel they must go and labor in the name of Jesus, and feeling that he has married a lady and made a slave of her. Yet some say, "*You must not give a preacher anything; it will spoil him;*" and say, "*He that preaches the gospel shall live of it.*" They seem to think the pleasure of preaching is enough for them to enjoy, and many other mistaken views that make them look pitiful and deficient to the upright hearer and do-

ers of God's word. Read the 9th chapter of 1 Cor. and see how plain a truth it is that we should well consider this neglected subject. *"Blessed is the cheerful giver!"* And I feel sure that we can say, We have been multiplied with great joy in so giving. If it were in my power, I would remove every burden and discouragement from the path of our faithful ministers. But we can only lend a helping hand to each other, as we journey along this rugged way of life.

If it were not for the words of comfort that I sometimes get from a brother or sister, surely I would sink into despair. My life seems to have so many broken vows, and disappointments that my fondest dreams of natural life have proven to be but vanity to my soul; and my almost constant cry is, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And without the sweet hope in Jesus, and the blessed promise of the resurrection after death, I would be of all persons most miserable. But, with these evidences, I feel that it will be better farther on. Just a little while and the surging billows of time will cease and the peace of heaven will be ours. O, blessed home!

Please excuse this scribble of scattering thoughts, for I did not think of writing on this subject when I took up my pen. But I hope we can see eye to eye and speak the same thing, and wish the understanding of our brethren and sisters might be

opened up, that they might enjoy the sweets of doing their duties one toward another.

Trustingly yours,
OCTAVIA J. GOAD.
Fancy Gap, Va.

BREWERS, Ky., Dec. 21, 1923

DEAR EDITORS: I have just finished reading the December 15th number of the SIGNS, and am so stirred that I am made to take up my pen to express some appreciation of the spiritual food the great Shepherd has enabled his under-shepherd to give out to the bleating lambs of his fold. I realize I am weak, sinful and ignorant, but the Lord has dealt richly with me, whereby I am made to lay hold on some of his promises, of which I sometimes try in the light the God of mercy gives me to speak of the riches of his grace, and now in attempting to write it, as in speaking, unless guided by the Spirit of truth what I write will be as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. When the dear Lord is pleased to give the pen of a ready writer it is easy to write, or loosing our stammering tongue, it is easy to speak. God has said, My speech shall distil as the dew. When we begin to consider who spoke these words we find that God, who has all power both in heaven and in earth, needs not the help of puny man to arrange or take care of all his creatures, which were created for him and by him. Holy writ tells us that he (God)

formed a people for himself, and they shall show forth his praise. Now we understand that God not only created this people, but he formed them of the dust of the earth, and breathed into the nostrils of Adam, the head, or first man, the breath of life, and he (Adam) became a living soul. Adam did not know then, nor even after he had transgressed God's law, that any part of his seed should be so blessed as to be fitted for a paradise of bliss, yet it was so, and for no other purpose than His holy name's sake. The God of wisdom had well planned the structure of the new Jerusalem. He could view all of Adam's family, all steeped in sin; yes, and took into consideration all the cost of a well devised plan to bring a portion of this people from the thralldom of sin and place them around a great white throne, with their voices filled with sweetest strains of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made them accepted in the Beloved. Yes, *"Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table,"* and now, away down the steps of time, we, the pensioners upon that bounty, are given the eye of faith whereby we can with some boldness enter into the holy of holies and begin to take a view of this well devised plan of redemption to save rebellious man, who deserves nothing but the wrath of God. Dear reader, let us pause a

moment, and by the eye of faith take a view back through the streams of time, and join with the faithful shepherds who were abiding in the field and watching over their flocks by night, when the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were afraid. I will add just here that every true shepherd is afraid when, the glory of God shines about him. But the point in view was to join in sentiment with the expression the angel gave those true servants. *"Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."* Then we can join in one accord, and say, Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and we want to call his name Wonderful, for, he counsels with us in the dark hours of midnight, when the enemy would hurl fiery darts at us until we despair of life. This Prince of peace would even give us to see our acceptance with the Father by and through the death and suffering of this loved Wonder from heaven, who came not to do his own will, but the will of the Father, and he said, *"This is the Father's will that sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."* Here again, dear child of God, we see a choice of love manifest. When the darling Son of God's love bowed his head and cried, *"It is finished,"* the prisoners were sent forth from the pit of sin wherein is no water. In this act of obedience

to the Father's will the Son broke down the middle wall of partition between us poor Gentiles and the Jews, who had become overzealous and pharisaical, to the extent they (the Jews) would call the poor Gentiles "dogs." Christ came to his own people and but few of them would own him as their kinsman, only those who were born again by the will of God. He said on one occasion, Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them I also must bring. The striking point in all this "I must bring" is so suited to us poor Gentiles that we would want to say that our blessed Redeemer is still upon the throne of David ordering and establishing his kingdom with men. When the Comforter, which Christ promised his disciples the Father would send in his name, begins to take of the things of God and show them unto the heirs of promise they are often made to say, Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. These heirs of promise do not always reside upon the mountain; it is needful that they journey through the valley. The Lord appoints wearisome nights unto them. They, like one of old, are made to feel that they are left alone, but when the speech of the Comforter begins to distil into their benighted soul they are often made to say with the apostle, We are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God. When we would consider all of God's dear

children with whom the Lord in his mercy has cast our lot, saying nothing of the countless millions scattered here and there, we are made to think it is an innumerable company, which man cannot number, but God's power and wisdom is so great he knows them that are his, and he will one day bring them all into his banqueting-house, and the banner of love will float over all, until all the redeemed of the Lord join in one song: Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory and honor, both now and for evermore. Amen.

Dear brethren, I submit this poor rambling article to your judgment. Do not let it crowd out more worthy material.

Your brother in hope of blessed immortality,

J. C. CHESTER.

MEETINGS

STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The Staunton River Union meeting will be held, the Lord willing, at Canaan Primitive Baptist Church the 5th Sunday and Saturday before in October.

The church is located on 844 (Mt. Cross Road.)

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

Elder Mark Terry, Pastor
Fred Murphy, Clerk

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union will convene with Dan River Church the fifth Sunday in October 2006. We extend a welcome to all lovers of the truth and especially we would invite all ministers of our faith and order who would have a mind to come.

**Kenneth R. Key, Mod.
Bro. Allan Carroll, Clerk**

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR AUGUST 2006

Vivian Underwood-VA.....	5.00
Eld Ken Hopkins-VA.....	5.00
Eld Ralph Gaines-NC.....	5.00
Clara Jones-VA.....	5.00
Woodrow Abshire-VA.....	5.00
Oscar Pickral-VA.....	5.00
Ollie May-AL.....	5.00
Lovie Thompson-NC.....	10.00
Grover Rogers-KY.....	5.00
C. W. Wood-VA.....	10.00

PSALM 136 : 26.

O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.

OBITUARIES

SAMUEL G. BLANKENSHIP



S. G. Blankenship

Samuel Garlin Blankenship, 85, of 1025 Owens Road, Martinsville, died Thursday, July 14, 2005, at the Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing Center at Oak Summit, Winston-Salem, N.C.

He was born in Floyd County on May 12, 1920, to Giles Elery Blankenship and Trudy Conner Blankenship.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by three sisters, Fannie Conner, Theodora Conner and Rlee Houchins; a brother, Odell Blankenship and a granddaughter, Rebecca Lynn Blankenship.

He served in the Army during World War II in the European Theater. He received the Purple Heart with Cluster.

Blankenship retired after 40 years as an optician, having co-founded Martinsville Optical Co. Inc. in 1951. He was a member of Martinsville Primitive Baptist Church on Rives Road where he served as a deacon.

Surviving are his wife of 60 years, Claudine Agee Blankenship of the home; three sons, James E. Blankenship of Martinsville, Herbert R. Blankenship of Winston-Salem and Samuel L. Blankenship of Charlotte, N.C.; seven grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held at 11 a.m. Monday at Norris Funeral Services chapel with Elder Clarence Stone officiating. Burial was in Roselawn Burial Park.

**IN LOVING MEMORY
ELDER HAROLD RUDOLPH TONEY**

On January 6, 2006, it pleased the Eternal God of Heaven to call Harold Rudolph Toney from his labor here in this world. He was born September 10, 1925 in Smith County, Miss. Brother Toney served his country during World War II and the Korean War, and remained in the military until his retirement on June 30, 1961.

The highlight of his life was being among the brethren in the churches that he served. He served several churches in Alabama during his ministry. He joined the church in 1961 because he believed and preached the doctrine of salvation by grace and grace alone.

He was ordained into the ministry in 1991. His faithful companion

of 60 years. Sister Pauline, was always by his side.

Brother Toney leaves to cherish his memory 4 children, 2 sons and 2 daughters and his loving wife.

When I think of Brother Toney, I think of the text found in 2nd Timothy, Chapter 4, verses 7 and 8.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Written in love by Elder Theron Jones and a brother in hope in the Lord. We feel that our loss is his eternal gain.

Resolved 1 copy for church records, 1 copy for his family and 1 to be sent to the Signs of the Times.

Elder Theron Jones

Submitted in love
Your Bro. Theron Jones

PSALM 84:1-2.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.
202 Carousel Lane, Meadows of Dan, Va. 24120-4403

*SISTER, SISTER,
TAKE MY HAND
and we'll go back
as far as we can,
Back through the fields
of Memory
To the long-ago you and me.*

*childhood was home,
and home was light
and love and warmth
On a cold, dark night,
and there at the heart
of home were we,
The long-ago you and me.*

*We whispered secrets, laughed and
cried,
Ran wild outdoors
or stayed inside,
Held safe in the arms
of family,
The long-ago you and me.*

*We were little then.
Now we are grown,
But I love you still,
My sister, My own-
and still at home
in my heart are we,
The long-ago you and me.*

*My wife Nellie Mae received this
card from a sister on her birthday.*

Kenneth Key

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 242
 Elder J. B. Farmer

VOICES OF THE PAST 247
 Frederick W. Keene
 Elder George Ruston
 Thomas J. Prince
 Elder J. C. Philpot
 Mary Ellison

MEETINGS 262

CONTRIBUTIONS 264

EDITORIAL

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” James 1:27



Elder J.B. Farmer

There are many things in the world that are called religions. In some so-called pagan religions, the sun and moon and stars have been worshipped. Some have taken up the worship of the natural world in general. Some have looked to so-called “prophets” of the past for wisdom and for paths to right living. Some have made idols of wood or stone

or precious metals and precious stones and have fallen down before them and have called upon them for guidance and deliverance. Some have even taken to themselves the name of God the Father or of His Son Jesus the Christ, but go about denying the true faith in words and deeds. Out of the innumerable multitudes of people upon the earth, only a very small remnant composed exclusively of God’s elect has been given wisdom to serve the true and living God in that pure, undefiled religion in Spirit and in truth, by the grace and mercy and power of God.

There is a great difference between the false religions of the world and the pure religion of God. All the false religions have several things in common. They all have at their heart the teaching of the “free will of man.” They all say that it is up to the individual to make the proper choices and prosper, or to make the improper choices and suffer the consequences. They all teach that their god can only work in a person’s life to the extent that a person will allow it. They all teach that if the “good” deeds of an individual outweigh the “bad” ones, that individual will have a good outcome when his life is completed. They also teach the reverse – too many “bad” deeds will result in a bad outcome. They all subscribe to a certain code of behavior, which, if obeyed, they think will result in a kind of salvation. To sum it up, every false religion is a works religion that denies

the grace and power of God. They have no perceived need of the Savior. On the other hand, the pure and undefiled religion is grounded in the grace, love, wisdom and power of the God of heaven and earth.

The pure religion of God is altogether hidden from the person in a carnal mind. He, spiritually, has neither the eyes to see it, nor the ears to hear it, nor the heart for the understanding of it. It is written, "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*" It also seems plain from the scriptures that "*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" It matters not how diligently the things of the spiritual kingdom are inquired into, they are always hidden from the one in nature. It matters not how carefully a spiritual thing is explained - even in truth - the carnal mind cannot comprehend it. The simplest thing, of which a little babe in Christ is given an understanding, is a mystery, world without end, to the wise and prudent of this present evil world.

Since the pure religion of God is altogether hidden to the world, how then may anyone know anything about it? Since the things of God are in a mystery past finding out by the natural man, who may know any of

them? And who is it that even has an interest in these things? These seem to me to be key questions. Since we are helpless in ourselves to know the things of the kingdom of God, it seems beyond a doubt in my mind that the things of God may only be known by revelation. God said that He hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Now, the babes must be the children of God, who are born from above. They are the only ones given a perfect interest in the things of the spiritual kingdom. If we are His children, born into the kingdom of God, we are given to desire to know the things of the kingdom. But we cannot just reach out and take them - all we are enabled to do is to ask for wisdom and then to wait upon the mercies of God. It is written one place, "*If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*" Confessing our lack of wisdom, we beg that God would condescend to show us what is the pure religion and undefiled before God the Father, and what it is to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

The apostle James, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, describes the pure and undefiled religion. He says that it is "*to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*" But we know that this pure religion and this keeping cannot be what it seems to be, as

understood by the carnal mind, else revelation would not be required to know it. The world of false religion takes this literally and sets out to do a supposed good work by visiting and providing for natural orphans and natural widows. We also see them urging people to keep themselves by the works of the flesh. We see them as they go around the world, finding people in distress and begging for money to help relieve their misery. This might seem to be a worthy natural endeavor, but do we really know where the money goes? Do we really know what sort of people these are that put on a religious face? Do we really know what lifestyles they lead on the money they take in? Do we really know the depths of the false doctrine they teach to those they seem to be helping? Is providing naturally for indiscriminate people of the world really what James was indicating as pure religion and undefiled before God the Father? I am fully persuaded that the answer to each of the questions is, no.

Then what was James writing about? Who are the fatherless and who are the widows? And what does it mean to keep oneself unspotted from the world? I am made to believe that the fatherless and the widows refer to those who are destitute and helpless in this world according to the Spirit. They are those who are of a broken heart and a crushed spirit because of sin - those who are deeply in debt spiritually

with no way to pay what they owe. They are those who are pilgrims in a desert land - a strange land where no man has pity - a wilderness where there is no food or water to sustain their life. They are those who are totally dependent upon the grace of God for survival and deliverance. They are the children of God. And we are taught by experience that it is impossible to keep oneself unspotted from the world. Because, when we would do good, evil is present with us. How to perform that which is good we find not. So, those who keep themselves unspotted from the world, no doubt to me, are those who have committed their keeping to Him that is able to do all things. The apostle said, "*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.*"

May we take a brief look at what God did in Elijah's day? The scriptural account is found in the first book of Kings, chapters 17 and 18. God caused Elijah to pray that it rain not upon the earth. And a great drought came upon the land, which lasted for a period of three and a half years (a time and times and half a time). Near the beginning of the drought, Elijah was sent to a certain widow of Zarephath that was to sustain him during that time. When he came to the gate of the city, there was a widow woman gathering sticks. She and her fatherless son were destitute and were thinking to

die shortly because there was not enough food to sustain them. She was gathering sticks in order to dress a little cake for her son and herself, which she thought would be their last meal upon earth. Elijah asked her for a drink of water, which she gave him. Then he asked for a little bread to eat. She told him she only had a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse. And she said she meant to prepare that for her son and herself that they may eat it and die. Elijah then asked a hard thing. He asked her to make a cake for him first and to bring it to him, and after to make for herself and her son. All the substance of the widow and of her son was required. And she gave it in faith. But she and her son were not left to die. *“And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.”* Does this make you think of the widow that Jesus saw casting her two mites into the treasury? She had given all she had, even all her living. Jesus commended her and said that she had given more than the others, since the others gave out of their abundance and she gave out of her want. I cannot imagine that she was left to die, but rather I am made to believe that she was sustained all her days by the mercies of God, as have been all of God’s little ones in this barren land.

There, to me, is the picture of the fatherless ones and the widows that

James wrote about. They are the children of God, who by the gift of faith in God, are made to present their bodies a living sacrifice, which is their reasonable service, which is wholly acceptable unto God. These are the ones who are made to lay down their lives for their brethren. They are the ones who Jesus will set on His right hand when He comes in glory. He said that they had given Him meat and drink when He was hungry and thirsty. And they had clothed Him when He was naked, and had come unto Him when He was sick and in prison. They are the ones who didn’t even realize that they had done a good work. These are the children of God. They are made to commit all unto God and shall never be disappointed because He keeps His own. He promised that He would never leave you nor forsake you. And He cannot lie or fail in a promise.

This also makes me think of the woman spoken of in Revelation chapter 12. If not deceived, this woman represents the church of the living God. She was persecuted by the dragon, who is the devil. It is written, *“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”* The wilderness is where the church is found, even where Jacob was found. Of God and Jacob it was written, *“He*

found him in a desert land, and in a waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye." The church, or the assembly of God's children, is carried by God into a desert land where it is nourished for a time and times and half a time, even as the widow and her son were preserved long ago. I am made to believe that this period of time is the same as the length of the drought in the days of Elijah, and that it stands for the total time from the beginning of the church until the coming of Christ to receive her to Himself. This, to me, is the same as the thousand years reign of Christ in his people, the church. It is the total time of the drought in the desert land where the church is placed and nourished, or the time when Jesus is not bodily with His people. It is also the span of time when He is with them in the Spirit prior to His coming bodily in great power and glory. It is evident that the drought is in the land, not in the church, because the church is nourished and sustained there.

In conclusion I must say that the pure religion that is undefiled before God the Father is the only true religion. It is altogether of grace and none of works. All other religions are false and counterfeit and worthless before God, like the religion of Cain. Only the little children of God ever have a part in the pure religion that is undefiled before God the Father, as did Abel. They are the only

ones that are given to know the identity of the widows and the fatherless. Only they are enabled to understand the extent of the afflictions and persecutions of God's children as they travel in this world of wickedness. Only they are enabled to comfort and strengthen and encourage one another in the gospel of the grace of our Lord Jesus the Christ, as they travel together along the way. To them only is it revealed, from faith to faith, what the children of God must suffer. Only they are taught by experience of the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and what it is to be poor and miserable and naked and blind spiritually. Only they have been given knowledge of what it is to be sin sick and in prison and under the bondage of Satan. Only those who have been generated of God are enabled to see and to enter into the spiritual kingdom and to embrace one another in it. Only God's little ones have the experience of passing from death to life, and being made to truly love their brethren. Only they are blessed to lay down their lives for one another, and to cast themselves upon the mercy and grace of God for their keeping. They are the only ones that *"are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."*

May The God of heaven and earth give us a spiritual understanding of these things. May God be praised in all things, world without

end. This was written in love and in hope of eternal life.

J. B. Farmer
9-7-2005

VOICES OF THE PAST

“FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE.”
(1 JOHN III. 14.)

There is a class of professors who talk about loving the brethren, and thus proclaim themselves to be passed from death unto life. But, do they declare that Christ is precious to them? Do they tell how he became dear and precious to them? Have they seen and felt themselves to be base, things to be despised, vile transgressors? Is Christ Jesus the Lord that altogether lovely One, whom having not seen they love, in whom they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory? Do they always manifest they have ever felt themselves to be poor lost sinners, that with a broken and contrite heart they were brought to Jesus' feet, and there in the crucified Lamb of God they found forgiveness, justification and hope of eternal salvation God hath called his own unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and in due time Christ is revealed in them, he dwells in their hearts by faith. *“Christ liveth in me,”* saith the apostle. (Gal. ii. 20.) Do I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and

gave himself for me? Oh this is the all-important question, a vital matter with a poor sinner like me, I know the apostle John speaks of the love of the household of God, one toward another, and speaking of the family of God he says, *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren,”*- 1 John iii. 14. We have been taught of God, our heavenly Father, to love one another. But this love of the brethren is not apart from Christ and him crucified, but it is the fruit of, and flows from, our divine nearness to the Father, and to Christ, the Son of his love, our precious Savior. If we look into this epistle we find who they are that the apostle John is speaking of when he says, *“We know,”* &c. They are the very family of God, they are fellows, the household of God, who are such in vital knowledge and experience of the things of the Father and of Christ, and that thus in this fellowship, this kinship, this union and communion, they love one another and so they are passed from death unto life. Let us hear the apostle declaring this matter: *“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."- 1 John i. 1-3. What ministrations of the Holy Ghost have been our portion to bring unto us this divine fellowship. Christ saith, "*All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*"-Matt. xi. 27. Jesus saith, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*"John xiv. 6. In the times decreed in Jehovah's counsel the Holy Ghost quickeneth the elect, who by nature are children of wrath even as others, dead in trespasses and sins. He convinceth them of Sin, to know themselves to be under the curse of the law, he leads them to Jesus, to the crucified Savior, He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto them. And into the teachings and guidance of the Spirit of truth, into the truth of Christ's gospel we are led graciously yearningly into the blessed fact that we must be redeemed from under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Gal. iv. 5, 6.) So in this fellowship of the gospel we have fellowship one with another. In the beginning of the knowledge of Christ the called of God have repentance given, a

humble, contrite, supplicating heart, and that precious cry is put forth in their heart, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" And oh when in Jesus it is ours to taste we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, what union then we have with our Savior, what fellowship! And, joined to Christ we are one Spirit with him. We have the Spirit of Christ, we are his, and he is ours, our dear Savior, and by his gracious Spirit in us we cry, "*Abba, Father.*" Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Without this union with Christ no sinner can be in truth of the household of God, and consequently can have no knowledge of kinship to the family of God. We must be born of God to love God, and to love the brethren. (1 John iv. 7.) For he that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. (1 John v. 1.) Beloved of God, this love of the brethren is more than mere lip love, for there have ever been carnal men among the people of God, who, as the Holy Spirit describes them to Ezekiel, "*They sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.*"-Ezek. xxxiii.

31, 32. *“Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.”- 1 Peter iii. 8.* If we have passed from death unto life, and in this life love the brethren, our love will be more than words, there will be love’s deeds. *“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”- 1 John iii. 18.* The carnal religionist with his superficial profession of love of the truth and to the brethren knows nothing of the work of the Holy Ghost in his heart, he has never known the burden of his vile transgressions, has never been ready to perish in his condemnation under the curse of the law, he knows nothing of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; he has never mourned unto God over his iniquities, was never prostrated at the feet of the Lord with a humble and contrite heart. Neither has he tasted the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works. Oh blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (Rom. iv. 6-8.) If through grace I am a believer in Christ what a favored sinner am I.

*“Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
 My beauty are, my glorious dress,
 Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
 With joy shall I lift up my head.”*

If Christ and him crucified be not in the heart’s experience our consolation, our hope, our glory, then all this talk about loving the brethren, believing certain points of doctrine amounts to nothing and will be found of no account before the throne of God. These matters are of eternal importance, and that counsel of the apostle is not to be tossed aside as though we were beyond such counsel. *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.”- 2 Cor. xiii. 5.* If Christ be in us, and we are his, then, *“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”- Gal. v. 24.*

FREDERICK W. KEENE.
 Raleigh, North Carolina.

ST. JOHN, 15:174-19.

*These things I command you,
 that ye love one another.*

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

1 PETER V. 7.

“Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.”

The children of God often find themselves utterly at a loss to understand or comprehend the ways of divine providence and grace, and can only say as one of old, His ways are past finding out. It is he himself that teaches that he ruleth in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou. They confess this, and at times are thankful it is so, for is there not comfort and security in such a doctrine. In it we see that not a dog can move his tongue, or a devil either, unless it be subject to the will and purpose of him that worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Men are also subject to him, even the rulers of this world, for when Pilate said to Jesus, *“Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee, Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.”* He is before all things and by him all things consist. An understanding of such a doctrine, imparted to us by God himself, is of great comfort to the soul, but few are able to travel long in the path of life, reconciled, with a calm and thankful heart, from every murmur free. God has ordained a furnace of affliction, and if he gives faith that be-

lieves that he who has promised is able to perform, he will try that faith; and just so, when we, as we hope, by his Spirit, have been taught to trust in his name and to rejoice in the truth that not a single shaft can hit, until he, the God of love, sees fit, we find the question asked, Do you believe God had anything to do with the sinking of that vessel, or the burning of that family and home. How has God anything to do with the sickness of this man, or with the death of his wife at such time as this, when he needed her so much. Thus we ask ourselves many questions, and are asked many such questions by others, and often such questions, when asked in the face of terrible trials, and what men call accidents, are almost staggering, especially if we are ourselves affected by the trial. If a terrible bereavement comes upon us we find it not so easy to live the doctrine, yet Jobe sorely afflicted, did when he said, *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”- Job xiii. 15.* He has said, *“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father.”* *“Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.”* Again, he saith, *“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these. Wherefore, if God so*

so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith." It is the trial of faith that will show to us how little faith we have, and how little we truly believe the doctrine to which we have subscribed. There is not one of us but has his, or her, trials; some hard to be borne, and we do well to consider that

"Whatever crosses at thy door, It cometh from the Lord."

It is a crook of the Lord's making, and as long as he sees fit for it to be, none can straighten it. It may be to bring down our pride, to "*hide pride from man,*" or to show us wherein our strength lies, or to make us of comfort to the saints, or to prove to men and devils, as in the case of Job, that our religion is not a fair weather religion, but that it can stand fire and flood; and in all these trials, and many others, too numerous to mention, the presence of Christ is seen, as he was in the furnace of old, thereby proving that he careth for us. In all the ages the Lord has proven his care for his people in the furnace of affliction; such a way is needful or it would not be. He raised up a wicked Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, and he set over Israel task-masters, to afflict Israel with burden, but the more they were afflicted the more they multiplied and grew. The Egyptians made their lives bitter with hard bondage, yet the Lord still cared for them. Moses was

born, and was hidden three months by his mother, who feared not the wrath of the king, and when she could no longer hide him she took for him an ark of bulrushes and laid it in the flags by the river's brink, the very river where the wicked Pharaoh had commanded them to drown their sons, yet God cared for him there. He was taken by Pharaoh's daughter and nursed by his own mother in the house of Pharaoh, the very man who wished to destroy all the male children of Hebrew origin. From this we can take this lesson: that the church of God nurses her children in the furnace of affliction. They are strengthened in the doctrine; the more they are afflicted the more they are trained up in the nurture and admonitions of the Lord. In the word of God there are many instances that seem just happen so, mere chance, yet when we trace the chain of circumstances connected with the particular case we find a wonder-working Providence governing all things: as, for instance, the Syrians had gone out by companies and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid. Who can describe the terror and abject loneliness of that little maid? Think of the parents, her mother, if mother she had, wringing her hands, sighing and pining for her little daughter. Many would there be in Israel then who would say, Tell us, did the Lord have anything to do with that? Thank God there were some then, and doubly thankful we ought to be,

there are some now, who unhesitatingly would declare, It is the Lord. Some who by faith could see the companies of Syria going just so far and doing just whatsoever God's hand and God's counsel determined before to be done. The child must leave the arms of the parents, must go into a strange and foreign land, and must go into Naaman's house. God cared for that little captive maid; he had a purpose. In Naaman's house she witnesses to the truth, and her testimony was for one whom God cared for, though in God's purpose he was held by a more relentless foe than even the captive maid. He was none other than Naaman, the captain of the host, but he was a leper. Yes, he cared for Naaman.

He cared for Saul of Tarsus, even while he went about breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. Saul did not understand, he had no eye to see, the Lord using his persecution for the furtherance of the gospel. It is written, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and hailing men and women, committed them to prison." The following verse declares the result in the purpose of God. It says, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word." Thus a persecuting Saul of Tarsus, in the purpose of God, did more than than all the missionary boards can do today, although they claim to be on the Lord's side, for

there has never been a preacher of the word sent by man, anywhere. Why is it that Saul of Tarsus, Naaman and his companies, Pharaoh and his host, or the devil himself, can do nothing other than God's hand and his counsel determined before to be done? The simple reason is, "*He careth for you.*" For God's dear saints there is a Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and in this covenant

*"Jesus is engaged to save
The meanest of his sheep,
All that the heavenly Father
gave*

*His hands securely keep.
Nor death, nor hell can e'er
remove*

*His favorites from his
breast."*

They are loved with an everlasting love. God has 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. As this is his purpose he will care for us along the line that we must travel. I might predestinate my trunk to go from here to New York City by railroad. To bring that about, the track must be there, the sleepers in their place, the station, the signal boxes, the men, the engine, coal, steam, and all other requirements must be there or ever my trunk can safely be delivered to its destination. Thus we believe Pharaoh was in the purpose of God, fore-

ordained to that very condemnation, as was the devil himself, and as were the companies of Syria, and if the word be true, that God has created the waster to destroy, and these wasters of Israel were in Israel's life of old, in the life of the captive maid, yes, and in the life of our blessed Lord, who shall say they will not be in our lives, Peter tells the scattered saints of old of a fiery trial that was to try them, and it is true today. God's dear scattered saints are a poor and afflicted people, having fiery trials; yet Peter by inspiration says, casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." There comes before our mind one dear sister, over eighty years of age, whom we once saw lying on her couch under terrible distress. Trouble had come upon her in her advanced age and was crushing her to earth: we said, Why should these things be? Faith answered, "He careth for you."

*"Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan God's work in
vain."*

He is a very present help in time of trouble.

*"The flame shall not hurt
thee, I only design*

*Thy dross to consume, and
thy gold to refine."*

We have seen another, younger in years, afflicted in body so that she could hardly move a limb, given up by earthly physicians, having little to look forward to but death and that which is beyond, and to the honor of his name we have seen that he

careth for her. Is he not the helper of the helpless? We visited such a one and while there she said, "*Sing Rock of Ages.*" We sang that and "*Father, we'll rest in thy love,*" and as we got in our car we heard the afflicted one singing by herself in the house, and all we could think of was, "*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God.*" Later we asked why she sang when we left her a few nights before, and the reply was, "*Because I was happy.*" It is because, "*he careth for you*" that the theme of Jesus and his love makes the captive portion sweet. It is his care that made David say, "*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.*" His care for Israel of old was wonderful. He brought them from under Pharaoh's yoke with a high hand and an out stretched arm and led them through the sea, gave them bread from heaven, water from the rock, a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, their shoes did not wear out, nor their clothing decay, all because "He careth for you," for were they not a type of Israel today? They rebelled and we rebel, too. There is nothing that brings out the spirit of rebellion more than trouble. "The trial of your faith." It is easy to say, "Thy will be done," but his will is a cross, and under the trial he sends we kick like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. It is galling

and so humiliating, especially if it affects our personal reputation, we feel ashamed to be seen among the brethren, we ask the reason why. Pride must be abased. He made himself of no reputation; we would be his, yea, be like him, but it is unpleasant to die daily, to take buffetings. Oh the strugglings and strivings we have to be freed from the yoke!

Paul prayed very regularly to be delivered from a thorn in the flesh, but his request was not granted, and there is not a doubt in our mind the reason for it was that *“He careth for you.”* All these trials, crosses, losses, thorns and snares we must and shall endure in this life are for the lifting of Jesus on high. They are to show us, as we are exercised thereby, how base and vile, unworthy and helpless we are, and, like Paul, we are taught of him to know that when we are weak, then are we strong, and we glory in our infirmities (that are made plain to us in the furnace) that the power of God might rest upon us. Thus his care is such towards us that we shall at last confess, as did Israel of old, that the Lord delivered us and that *“there failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.”* - *Joshua xxi. 45.*

Elder George Ruston

ELDER THOMAS J. PRINCE (1857)
Martin, Tennessee

Dear Brethren;- For some time I have been impressed to write a sketch of my experience of my past life.

I was born in the year 1857, of Old Baptist parents, and in my childhood days at times I had some serious thoughts of death, but I grew to manhood loving the pleasures of this world of sin, yet I never got into the habit of cursing as other boys did, and of course I thought I was a very good boy. In the year 1876, when I was about nineteen years old, one day I was at a church meeting of Old Baptists with my father and mother, and after services I was walking home with my brother and two of my cousins when very suddenly I was deeply impressed with the thought that I was a lost and ruined sinner. I felt that I wanted to seek some place where I would be alone and ask the Lord to have mercy on me.

I did not want those who were with me to know how I felt. That day my mourning began. I mourned sore like the dove and did chatter as the crane, and my very breathing was, Lord, be merciful to me, A poor, lost, ruined sinner. It seemed there was no mercy for me, yet I continued to beg for mercy. At times I would feel the burden not so heavy, and think I was mistaken, and think to turn back to the pleasures of the world, but, oh my soul, my burden would return

with more force than ever and I would think that surely there never would be any relief for my pressed down and burdened soul. In the meanwhile, father was badly afflicted with dropsy. We were living in Tennessee at that time, but had been living in Illinois, and Father wanted to go back to Illinois, so we took him back, and he died there in the year 1882. I was at that time in the deepest of my troubles, had no hope, and was without God in the world. When Father was dying he bid me farewell, hoping to meet me in that rest that is prepared for them that love God. Oh, that was the darkest hour of my life! Father going to that home of rest and I feeling doomed to eternal punishment of the presence of God. I had come to the place where I felt I was too unworthy to even try to pray the Lord to have mercy on me. In fact, I felt there was no mercy for me. After Father died we moved back to Tennessee, but I could not be still, for I was in such deep trouble. This heart-felt trouble went on with me until the winter of 1883. But I came to a place in my life I will never be able to express. I seemed to fall into a sub-conscious condition. In fact, I had come to the end; I could do nothing more. I felt sure the day of grace was past for me, and I had to stand still. I could not turn back, for when I looked back over the way I had come it was nothing but eternal banishment from the Lord. So it was with me for about a month, as nearly as I can tell, that I was in a dormant state

of life, and I seemed that I could do nothing else but stand still. While in that sub-conscious state, one day I went to hear two traveling preachers speak at Old Gibson Church, and went again that night to hear an old brother preach in a schoolhouse, and the rest of the night after preaching I staid at the home of a brother Stallings. When I awoke the next mornrng the burden that had been pressing me down since the year 1876 was gone, and I felt like shouting praise to God. I felt like I wanted to take brother Stallings in my arms and tell him what a change I had met with, but something kept me from telling anyone how I felt. My heart was filled with praise to God. The next day I went back to my home, feeling I would tell my mother and brother what a glorious change I had met with, but something kept me from telling them, yet my heart was full of praise to God for four days and nights. On the fourth day my brother and I were in the field gathering corn, when these words were spoken in my heart; Go preach the gospel. When this heavenly call came I almost fell to the ground, and felt in my heart to answer, O Lord, I cannot preach the gospel. I surely did feel to be nothing; yes, less than nothing but I was given a strong impression to go. I tried to think I surely was mistaken, but the impression grew stronger instead of leaving me, but I said in my heart I would never try to preach. After that I even denied I had ever had any change,

when a preacher asked me to do my duty and join the church. They saw in me something I had tried to keep secret, and when I did join I went to meeting, saying in my heart I would not join. But I was made willing, and could not forbear any longer, so I offered myself, was received and was baptized the next day. After I was received as a candidate for baptism, as we were coming home my sister-in-law said to me, Tom, you have gotten rid of a burden you have carried a long time. I said, Yes Mary, but there is a greater burden behind it all. I had reference to my impressions to try to preach. The next time I went to meeting after I was baptized the preacher asked me to take part in the preaching. I declined, and told him he was sadly mistaken in me to think I would try to preach. Soon after I joined the church in Gibson County, Tennessee, we moved to Union City, Obrian County, Tennessee, and I said, They shall never know I have been impressed to try to preach. So I suffered under the impression for about four years. My mother would say to me, You will have to try to preach.

I would reply, No, I will die before I will try to preach. I just could not be obedient to the heavenly call. I was as the apostle Paul was, I went on suffering, until one night the Lord showed me he had power to kill, and I thought my time had come, that I must die. It seemed I felt the burning of hell for my disobedience, as I begged the Lord to spare my life and

I would try to speak in his great and dear name. So the next meeting day I went, and the pastor of the church asked me again, as he had been doing, to take part and try to preach, and I feared to not try at least to open services, by song and prayer, so I humbly went into the stand, gave out a hymn and kneeled down and offered a few words of prayer. I thought that was all I would try to do, but as I arose to my feet my mouth was opened and I spoke for about twenty minutes as fast as my tongue could speak, and I sat down in perfect peace. That was my first effort in the way of preaching. If I am not mistaken, that was in the latter part of the year 1888 or some time in 1889. The brethren seemed to think my gift was self-evident, so in the month of May, 1890, they called for my ordination, and the third Sunday of that month I was ordained and set apart to the full work of the gospel ministry, or duties of an Elder in the church of Christ, and from that time until now I have been trying with the ability God has given me to speak to God's beloved Zion of his wonderful love and mercy to the children of men.

I could tell many more things, but this letter is getting too lengthy. Now may the God of peace, who 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 for ever and ever. Amen.

Dear editors, if you deem this article worthy of a place in the Signs, please publish it, for I have for some time been impressed to write to the household of faith. I have passed my eighty-third birthday and have become feeble. I have heart trouble, and know not the time when I shall be called from this world of affliction, so farewell.

I remain your unworthy brother in hope of eternal life.

THOMAS J. PRINCE.

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." -- Revelation i. 18.

What a mercy that he who was dead lives at God's right hand! that he lives as a risen head; that he is not a dead Saviour; but a Saviour that lives for evermore; that can and does bless; that can and does comfort; that can and does bring the soul safely through all. He is not a Saviour that stands as it were upon the brink of a river, and pulls us out when we have swum half way out ourselves; he is not a Saviour that will take us half way to heaven,

and then, as Rutherford says, let us "*fend*" or shift for ourselves. He must take us to heaven throughout. We are nothing, we have nothing without him. He must be, as he is, our "*all in all*." We value him in his death, nothing but his death could reconcile us to God; we value him in his life, nothing but his life can save. We want salvation now; salvation in the heart; a Spiritual salvation revealed in and unto the soul; a salvation worthy of the name, wholly, fully, completely, finally, and everlastingly to the praise of super-abounding grace; a salvation indefeasible, never to be lost; worthy of God, worthy of the God-man; adapted to every want of the soul, coming into every trial of the heart, and able to save the vilest and the worst, "*without money and without price*."

Elder J. C. Philpot

ST. JOHN, 15:20-21.

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

DAYS OF A TREE

"They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Isaiah 65:22.

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

"When converts first begin to sing,

Their happy souls are on the wing:

Their theme is all redeeming love,

Fain would they be with Christ above."

Oh what lovely blossoms, and what a sweet savor of Christ they

send forth as they call and beckon to us to "come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."

"Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein."

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

days of my people.

*"It is not long before they feel
Their feeble souls begin to
reel;*

*They think their former
hopes are vain,*

*They're filled with sorrow,
grief and pain."*

Cannot every child of God go back in memory to the time they thought they would always go on their way rejoicing in the bloom of their earliest love, believing the enemies of their carnal nature were all slain, and would never vex or annoy them any more? But alas, the little clouds begin to arise, vexations come, and the lovely bloom is beaten off as the sorrows of the world worketh death to the sweet spiritual enjoyment, perhaps leading them as far as Peter, to even deny the Lord, saying in doubt and unbelief, that after all it is only a delusion, and they were deceived and had deceived others. Where now is the blessedness ye spake of? The beautiful promising bloom which looked so pleasant is gone from their view, swept away and buried in the storm of earthly cares and sorrows that has so unexpectedly fallen upon them. *"But the root of the righteous shall not be moved."* The storm passes, and they find themselves still standing in the faith of God's elect, cast down, but not destroyed. Oh then the fruit buds begin to appear, as in humbleness they

are brought to see that it is not in their own strength they stand. *"I am the root and the offspring of David"* This is the Root that extends downward in the earthen vessel of mercy. Each can say, O Lord, *"my goodness extendeth not to thee,"* but his goodness does reach down to every vessel of mercy. The strong downward Root holds firm, and will not let them be overwhelmed. They are made to realize that *"the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit",* which is borne upward in praise and thanksgiving to God for deliverance from the storm. The many storms of affliction and sorrow, trials and tribulations, perils and persecutions break and beat upon the *"trees of righteousness the planting of the Lord..."* until they bow and bend, so shaken in mind they fear they cannot stand; no, not another day.

*"I fear at last that I shall fall,
For if a saint, the least of
all."*

Yet when the storm passes, and the Son of righteousness once more beams forth, then in this light, and not their own feeble sight, they see it is not in their own strength they still stand, but the Strength of Israel has held them. Not by works of righteousness which they have done, not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. Much more of the cherished fruit is gone. But when blooming youth is gone, and old age comes on, we are made to realize that it is the bitter, gnarly fruit

of self-confidence and fleshly ambition that is being beaten off. It came from earth, and must fall back from whence it came, for *“Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up,”* but the *“tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord,”* its fruit shall remain. One by one we see every earthly hope and joy beaten off and swept away, but the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace and fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, oh nothing shall ever be able to separate us from that. How gladly we should have the gnarly, poisonous fruits of the flesh pruned away, so that we might shine forth as the morning, with not a cloud to intervene between us and our Rock, who shelters us in their weary land of storms and trouble. As the tree grows older, as the growth in grace and in the knowledge of truth increases, the poor tempest-tossed child of God seems to gain strength in the storms, often stands more firm, and is not so easily tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine; does not so lightly bow and bend to the 10 heres and 10 theres, but the sweet fruits of the Spirit are borne upward to him, the Strength of Israel, the Root of David, in the earthen vessel, has kept him from falling, and enables him to say, I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. If it is his will that I shall weather another storm he will give the old trunk, stripped of all the foliage of youthful hopes and am-

bitions, every branch of earthly aspirations and joys broken off, strength to endure. But oh the weakness of the flesh. How we do shrink and dread when we see the storm coming, though there is a *“needs be”* for it all, and we know that

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

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

“As the days of a tree.” How often have we seen the tall cedars, the sturdy oaks, beaten by the storms of many seasons almost to the ground, nothing left but their bare old trunks, and to all appearance have lived their time and served their purpose, yet they do not quite fall; not yet, their downward roots have not yet parted from the earth, they must wait the appointed time to fall. So shall the days of my people be. Old age is come, the bare old trunk is stripped of every alluring earthly joy, until there is nothing left to live for, and *“I long to lay my armor by, and dwell with Christ at home,”* for

*“Surely like a withered tree,
No fruit to me is found,
Why do I live, O Lord, I cry,*

A cucumber of the ground?"
"When a few more days I've
wasted,
When a few more scenes are
o'er,
When a few more griefs are
tasted,
I shall fall, to bloom no
more."

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

One night as I lay thinking of the trials and conflicts of the Lord's peculiar people these words came to my mind with force, "*I see men as trees walking,*" and I thought how like a tree is the walk of the Lord's people. None can see men, nor the people of God, walking as trees, untilled out of the town, or world, as was the blind man, by God's own hand, and how short the time until made to see that as the days of a tree, so are the days of the Lord's people. He sometimes lays his hand heavily upon us, showing us what great things we must suffer for his sake, until we cry, "*Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.*" Whom he loves he rebukes and chastens, and it is his chastening hand that makes us

look up, until we see clearly every man, every child of God, walking the same path, every one enduring the same storms and afflictions, for if ye be without chastisement, then are ye bastards and not sons. There is no place of rest for us in the town, or world; we cannot go back there, or tell to any in the town of the things we see clearly. They know nothing of the reproach of the cross, and have no sympathy for the mourning people of God. But to our own house, there we may freely go, sure to find there the sympathy and fellowship we crave. There all speak the same language, weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who do rejoice. Here we see men as trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, walking the same road, buffeted on every hand by storms without and within. The same storms that beat and bend one old tree beat upon all, and though one may feel that the storm has brought him a little lower than the richest ever get, yet all the rest feel the same way: less than the least of all saints. But in this is our fellowship and our love made perfect, and we often find the lowest tree bears the sweetest fruit, as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood. What a comparison. The low apple-tree is the one that bears the fruit. The ones that stand the highest are not always the most fruitful. But "*as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the*

sons.” *“Though the Lord be high, yet has he respect unto the lowly.”* His loved ones among the sons of earth are lowly. A proud look he hates and abominates. The proud he knoweth afar off. But the fruit of his love on the lowly trees is sweet to our taste; yes, sweet, because when we are made to look up we see that his banner over us is love, and know that, *“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”*

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

eth, so will I comfort you.” Then shall we see him as he is, and be like him. *“As the days of a tree [He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief] are the days of my people.”*

Mary Ellison

MEETINGS

BLESSED ASSOCIATION

The thirteenth annual session of the Little Vine Olde Predestinarian Primitive Baptist Association was held with the Newfound Church on Brier Creek in Wyoming Co., W. Va., 10:30 A.M. The fourth Sunday and the Saturday before in August, 2006.

I feel that a few vessels of God’s mercy assembled themselves in bonds of His great love, This love binds the believing family of God together in this lower ground of sin and sorrow.

Saturday morning, Aug. 26, greetings were given to the visiting brethren, members and friends by the moderator, Elder Jerry Farmer.

Service was opened by Elder Alan Terry using hymn 259 and prayer. The introductory discourse was then delivered by Elder Terry from John 7:37-39. He preached a very moving sermon about the great rivers of love that descends from the courts of glory for the receivers of

God's great love. After preaching we agreed to pause for lunch.

Saturday afternoon early we began our business session which opened with hymn 188 and prayer by Elder Hale Terry.

Letters from the churches were requested. The letter from the Newfound Church was received and read. Messenger Letha Sizemore was present. The letter was accepted and the messenger was seated. The letter from Lost Creek Church was received and read. Messengers Grover Rogers, J.B. Farmer, Sherry Farmer and alternate Kathy Lewis were present. The letter was accepted and the messengers were seated.

Recognized Churches and Associations of like precious faith and order who are in fellowship but not in direct correspondence with us.

Bordeaux Church: Elder James Howard, Sister Sylvia Howard, Brother Gene Howard, Sister Libby Howard, Brother George Hyslip and Brother Tracy Jacks.

Buttahachie-Hopewell Assoc.: Sister Shelby Stratton.

New Dan River Church: Brother James Shelor.

Pigg River Assoc.: Elder Junior Conner, Sister Sally Hodges.

Smith River Assoc.: Elder Alan Terry, Sister Lorraine Terry, Elder Hale Terry and Sister Glenna Terry.

Staunton River Assoc.: Elder Marvin and Sister Becky Brumfield, Brother Randolph and Sister Peggy Wells, Sister Libby Hedrick.

Valley View Church: Brothers Donald Agee and Kenneth Thompson.

Agreed to seat these brethren and the business session was dismissed with prayer by Elder Alan Terry.

After a brief pause a hymn was sung and Elder Junior Conner came to the stand. He preached from Galatians 5:22. He remarked that he could fly as easily as he could preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. Elder Conner was lifted from the darkness of nature and brought such a message of comfort from that good land, that all present feasted from it. After Elder Conner sat down, Elder Farmer read the following scripture relating to Elder Conner's first remarks: Isaiah 40:31. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with their wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

I believe sincerely that Elder Conner was visited from that good land on high to tell the good news that is stored for his chosen race.

Elder Hale Terry then came to the stand and preached from Matthew 25: 31-46, it was a very moving sermon that all seemed to feast from. Words cannot describe his ability.

The Saturday Meeting was then closed with hymn #175 and prayer by Elder James Howard. Saturday evening brethren and friends met for fellowship and singing.

Elder Jerry Farmer welcomed all,

visitors, brethern and friends on Sunday morning. He called Elder James Howard to the stand who opened the service with hymn 174 and a prayer. Elder Howard preached from Isaiah 40 1-2, who brought forth a very moving message to the household of faith. Elder Marvin Brumfield then preached from Ephesians, Chp. 1. He was lifted up in that good land. Elder Hale Terry then preached from Acts 20:28. Words again cannot express the love and fellowship that was presented by these Elders and received by all. Elder J.B. Farmer closed the preaching from Galatians 31: 28-29. It is beyond the comprehension of fleshly minds to know and understand the beauty of God's Goodness that existed. You see the tears of love and joy descending down the cheeks of those feasting from the Master's Table of Love.

We certainly missed several of the preaching brethern that couldn't make the services, either due to illness or other commitments: Elders Kenneth Key, Elder Waymen Chapel, Elders Cabbage and Cleo Robertson. Physically and spiritually, you always miss your brothers.

The meeting was closed by Brother George Hyslip with hymn 175 and prayer.

In closing, I will confess that I have never attended an association where God's great love was manifested any more beautiful than this one.

We want to thank Elder Farmer and Sherry for their generosity in presenting us with the minutes of the services.

In bonds of love,
Riley & Delores Justice

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR SEPTEMBER 2006

James Campbell, CO	5.00
Donald Agee, VA	5.00
Naomi Coker, NC	10.00
Eld. Raymond Goad, VA	15.00
Doris Giles, VA	5.00
Billy Poindexter, VA	5.00

REVELATION 7:15-17.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Signs of the Times

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

202 Carousel Lane, Meadows of Dan, Va. 24120-4403

REST.

*Resting in the Rock of Ages
We may fear no earthly foe;
In him all our joys are centred,
From him all our blessings flow.*

*Resting from the world's temptations,
Resting from the strife within,
Resting from ourselves and Satan,
Resting from the blight of sin.*

*Resting when the darkness hovers
O'er the ever moving deep,
Resting when our hearts are aching,
And our eyes they cannot sleep.*

*Resting if we cannot answer
All the questions that arise;
Though cast down we're not forsaken—*

Faith and hope still underlies.

*Kept by such a wonderful power,
Can our hearts refuse to sing,
Glory, praise and glad thanksgiving
Unto Christ, our living King?*

Lizzie Macallum.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	266
Elder Cleo D. Robertson	
CORRESPONDENCE.....	271
VOICES OF THE PAST.....	276
Elder P. D. Gold	
(Sent in by) Keith Hiatt	
Elder J. A. Ashburn	
Mrs. Fanny P. McNeely	
(Sent in by) Keith Hiatt	
Elder Asa D. Shortt	
Elder Silas H. Durand	
J. F. Beeman	
CONTRIBUTIONS.....	286
OBITUARIES.....	287
Sister Eva Edwards Gilley	
Sister Sadie Ratliff Joyce	

 EDITORIAL

ESTHER

Esther 4:14, "And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"



Elder Cleo D. Robertson

Though the name God is not mentioned in the book of Esther, I know of no book that sets forth the purposes of God, His power, and His love for His people any more clearly and beautifully than Esther. There is none like our God. *Isaiah 46:9-11: "Remember the former things of old: for I am*

God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it." God has a purpose in all things that come to pass both that which seems evil to us as well as that which seems good to us. *Proverbs 16:4: "The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."* *Romans 8:28. "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."* But, God says concerning His chosen people, *"This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise."* *Isaiah 43:21.*

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, invaded Jerusalem and carried many of the Jews back to the lands he ruled. Now, in the days of Esther, another king (Ahasuerus) reigned from India to Ethiopia which included Persia and Media. At the time of Esther, Persia was the current-day southern Iran and Media was the current-day northern Iran. Among the Jews living under the rule of this king were Mordecai and

Hadaseah (the Hebrew name of Esther). Esther was her Persian name. No one but Mordecia knew that Esther was a Jew. Even though Mordecai and Esther did not know the trials that lay before them, God had brought them to this place for such a time as this. He would manifest His love for His people and His power to watch over them and provide for them, all to His praise, honor and glory.

For 180 days the king showed off *“the riches of his glorious kingdom and honour of his excellent majesty”* to his princes, nobles and servants. Afterward, he made a feast for all the ones present and commanded the queen be brought to show off her beauty. She refused to come. Why would the queen refuse the commandment of the king to exhibit her physical beauty? The vanity of the flesh would have given most in her position great satisfaction. I believe God imputed into her a desire to refuse the commandment of the king because God had ordained that Esther be the queen for such a time as this. Neither king Ahasuerus, queen Vasti, Mordecai, nor Esther knew the purpose of God that was unfolding. The king and his advisors decided that the queen must be replaced. Though none of these people knew anything of the purposes of God, He was working all things after the counsel of His own will. God provides that which His people need before they ever experience the

need of it. Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world as set forth in Revelation 13:8. The cure was already provided before the disease made its entry into the world. Thus, God brought to pass His will that the queen be replaced. He had already prepared someone to take the queen's place, but no one knew that yet. All the beautiful young virgins of the kingdom were gathered together and brought to the king's palace. God gave Esther great beauty but I also believe that God gave her an inward beauty that she was shown great kindness and preference by those of authority in the palace. She *“obtained favor in the sight of all them that looked upon her.”* The king loved Esther more than all the other women. She was chosen as queen, but she did not reveal that she was a Jew for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal it.

As Esther sets forth a little child of grace, Mordecai is a type or figure of the Holy Spirit. He sat in the king's gate. The gate was the entrance into the city. It was where business was conducted. The gate sets forth the heart as the Holy Spirit is in the heart of the Lord's people. There, the Holy Spirit comforts you, teaches you, and brings all things to your remembrance. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and as Christ said, He will abide with you forever and dwelleth with you and shall be in you. The Spirit will guide you into all truth. Mordecai in-

structed and guided Esther in things that she should and should not do and revealed things to her. He revealed to Esther a plot by two of the king's chamberlains to kill the king. Esther made the matter known to the king and the two men were hanged on a tree. The incident was written in the book of the chronicles. This may seem such an inconsequential matter, but it was all a part of God's purpose to deliver His people.

Then, the king promoted a man named Haman above all others in the kingdom and everyone was commanded to bow and reverence this man. But, Mordecai refused to do so. Mordecai told the king's servants that he was a Jew so Haman knew also. Haman, filled with wrath, was determined to destroy Mordecai and all the Jews throughout all the provinces of this king. The king gave Haman approval to do with the Jews as he saw fit; therefore, it was decreed that on a certain day all Jews would be killed, both young and old, little children and women. Haman promised to pay money to those in charge of the killing. Mordecai knew what Haman had done and sent word to Esther that she must go before the king and make supplication for her people. She must let it be known that she also was a Jew. Esther knew there was a law that whosoever came unto the king in the inner court without being called would be put to death unless the king held out the golden scepter. She told Mordecai that she had not

been called to come in unto the king for thirty days. Mordecai responded, *"Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For it thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"*

God, in his infinite wisdom and sovereign grace, had purposed and prepared Esther for this moment. Esther did not know the purpose of God in her being made queen and neither did anyone else. But, can't you see that everything that had taken place was leading to this time and place? So with every child of grace. You do not understand why you must travel the road that you do and why you must experience the things that you do, even severe trials and afflictions. You have a great fear to go before the Lord's people and ask for a home with them. You feel that you are not worthy; that you do not have an experience to tell them. Dear ones, that is an experience. As the Lord put the question to Adam in the garden, *"Who told thee thou wast naked?"* Who told you that you were a sinner and unworthy? Only the Lord can show you that you are a sinner without any worthiness of your own. But at the

Lord's appointed time, He makes you willing in the day of His power. Esther was made willing to go before the king. She said "*...so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.*" By the law, she must die. The law is an administration of death. We all have transgressed the law which is sin. Therefore, we are judged guilty and the penalty is death. The Lord's people have one who is without sin who stood in their stead. He bore their sins in His own body; took the judgment for them; took the penalty for them and the wrath of God's divine justice and satisfied it by laying down His own life; and justified them by coming forth from the dead-conqueror of death, hell and the grave. So Esther transgressed the law. But, now she stood in the presence of the king and was clothed in royal apparel. She did not have on her own clothes of the works of the flesh, but rather royal apparel of the king. So the child of God is clothed with royal apparel of the King of kings—His righteousness.

You have been brought to the end of your works and now feel to be so helpless and so alone. There is no support or strength in the flesh. There is no one to lean upon or that can reach your case. As Esther was alone before the king, so you find yourself alone before the King of kings, feeling so condemned and lost because you have been made to see yourself as a transgres-

sor and not worthy to even lift your eyes toward heaven or call upon one who is holy and altogether lovely. And, it seems you find yourself before him not knowing whether you will live or die. You confess that you are a sinner and not worthy of His love and mercy; but, yet begging for it. You viewed yourself as black as the earth from which you were formed. Now, you are given to behold one who is the perfection of beauty. Without spot, blemish or any such thing, you gaze through the eye of faith upon the very beauty of holiness. There is a joy unspeakable as you feel in the very depths of your bosom a love for one you call your savior, your friend, your Lord and at the same time you feel a love for His people. You are given a desire to tell them what the Lord has done for you and you want to say to them "*Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.*" Esther was given life by the king holding out the golden scepter which was a manifestation of his love and mercy to her and the scepter sets forth his power and authority. The gold of the scepter sets forth righteousness. "*The scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.*"

Psalm 45:6. Christ had all power when He walked upon the earth as a man in the flesh yet without sin. For the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily. He was God in the flesh. He had the power to lay down His life and the power to take it up again. No man took it from Him. His love and mercy was manifested in bearing the sins of all His little ones in His own body and laying down His life. He said Himself, *“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”* John 15:13.

Esther requested that the king and Haman attend a banquet that she would prepare. Haman was exalted within himself as he felt to be the favorite of the king and queen. Yet, he was filled with wrath at Mordecai for not bowing to him and reverencing him. On the advice of his wife and friends, Haman built a gallows upon which he purposed to hang Mordecai. However, that night the king could not sleep and he commanded the book of the chronicles be brought and read to him. Then the record of Mordecai revealing the plot of the two chamberlains to kill the king was read. God caused this king not to sleep because it was God’s purpose that this incident be brought to the king’s remembrance. God controls all things no matter how insignificant they may seem because He has a purpose in all things that come to pass. Haman came to the king to request that Mordecai hang on the gallows that

he had built, but instead the king honored Mordecai by putting royal apparel and the royal crown on him and having Haman bring Mordecai on horseback through the city. Haman was even more angry. But, the events that took place with the two chamberlains plotting to kill the king, Mordecai revealing it, the incident being recorded, the king unable to sleep and reading about it were all in the purpose of God to deliver Mordecai from being hung upon the gallows. *“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.”*

At the banquet that Esther prepared, she told the king that she was a Jew and that this wicked Haman had sold she and her people to be destroyed. Haman was hung on the gallows that he had built to hang Mordecai. The king granted to Esther and Mordecai to write to all the Jews and the Persian leaders of all the provinces that the Jews could gather together and defend themselves by killing anyone who would assault them. The scripture says that many of the people of the land became Jews for the fear of the Jews fell upon them. Over 75,000 of their enemies were slain by the Jews in that one day.

Esther 10:3 reads: *“For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasueus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the*

wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed."

The festival of Purim was established to celebrate the deliverance of the Jews of Persia from a plot to destroy them. Purim comes from the Persian word pur which means lot. Haman had drawn lots to fix the certain day that the Jews would be killed. Aren't you thankful that you believe in a God who has all power, who controls all events and all things, and who loves and is merciful to His people? "*And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this.*"

Yours in hope,
Cleo Robertson

CORRESPONDENCE

September 29, 2006

Dear Brother Terry,

I am sorry the renewal of the Signs slipped my mind. So I have just gotten the October issue and sit right down to renew.

I am including a check in the amount of \$30.00 Twenty-five for Signs and rest to use as you see fit. Thanks and may the Lord continue to bless you in all your endeavors.

Sincerely yours,
A brother in Christ is My Hope,
Love, G.M. Lockey

Oct 10, 2006

Dear Elder Terry,

Enclosed please find money for a 2 year renewal for The Signs.

I do so enjoy reading all of the good editorials and articles from the past. Even though there is no longer an established church here in the Northwest, I I have been blessed with O.P.B. friends who also take The Signs and who believe in the doctrine of election and the absolute predestination of all things.

God has brought all this to pass for me since I was blessed to subscribe to The Signs ten years ago, after being without it for over ten years or more.

May He bless you all to rightly divide The Word of Truth and enable you to publish this paper which has been so precious to so many of the Lord's people for so many years.

My hope and prayer is that I am included in that number.

In the ties that bind and in that precious hope, I trust.

Caroline Martin
Seven Bays, Wash.

JOHN 6:67-68.

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

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

October 4, 2006

September 30, 2006

Dear Elder Terry,

I really enjoy all of the reading in the Signs of the Times. I am sending you \$30.00 and please renew my subscriptions for 2 more years?

Thanks so much
A little Sister in Hope,
Sallie R. Hodges

Sept. 25, 2006

Dear Elder Terry,

Here's my check for two years subscription to The Signs of the Times.

I enjoy reading each and every word in it.

Thank you and every one that works on this wonderful paper, but I thank "The Precious Lord" most of all for giving you all the knowledge, strength and inspiration for what you do. I know that it is all through Him anyway!

I enjoyed so much being with you and your wife and everyone at the Little Vine Association. (I'm the one running around with the camera.)

Do what you'd like with the extra money.

I love each of you for Christ's sake.

Libby Hedrick

Elder Terry,

Enclosed is my check for \$15.00 to renew The Signs of the Times for a year.

I look forward each month to getting the Signs of the Times and I enjoy it so much.

Shirley Breggs,
3201 S. Miami Blvd.
Durham, NC 27703

Dear Elder Terry,

Enclosed is a check for \$40.00 renewal for two years and rest to use as you see fit. I enjoy reading the Signs. My daughter came across some Signs of the Times dated back to 1889 and the doctrine of Salvation by Grace and grace alone was preached and wrote about then and still today because God changes not neither does his Word.

A brother in Hope
Elder Ronald K. Crouch, Sr.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

September 2, 2006

Dear Brother Randolph and
Sister Peggy,

It was good to see you both and the other faithful Brethren and Sisters yesterday at the Smith River Association. Sherry and I both enjoyed the singing, preaching and fellowship there. Once again, I believe that God was merciful and good to us in giving us a blessed and peaceful meeting. Thankfully, we safely returned home last night at about 10 pm. We have thought about the ongoing meeting today and hope all will be blessed to continue in love and decency and order throughout the remainder of the Association. We are looking forward to our meeting tomorrow with Lost Creek Church here and are thinking about you both as you prepare for your meeting with the Malmaison Church there.

I would like to sit down and write a short letter, according to your suggestion Brother Randolph, concerning the *“foolishness of preaching”*, which you mentioned Sister Peggy, if God would bless me to that end. And I hope we may be given to talk together about these things in the future if the Lord is willing. I am made to believe that these things are in a mystery, which is hidden to the carnal mind and is past finding out by anyone in nature. These

things are hidden from the wise and the prudent but are revealed unto babes.

The first thing that comes to mind is how foolish Spiritual things are to natural men. The apostle Paul said by the Holy Spirit, “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.” In order for anyone to see, hear or understand anything that God has done, that one must have been born from above into the Spiritual kingdom. If one has not that birth, it is impossible to even know or acknowledge that a Spiritual kingdom exists. He is totally dead to the Spiritual realm. Jesus said unto Nicodemus, *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* The person not born of God cannot help thinking that anyone is deluded who professes to believe in the sovereign God or who professes that God rules in the affairs of men. And he thinks the true believer is the worst kind of fool to believe in something that does not exist. And the preaching of the gospel of grace is surely foolishness to him.

Those in the religious world even many that call themselves Christians and profess to believe the things written in the Bible cannot fathom the Spiritual kingdom truth of the gospel of grace, for they are still in nature. The inspired apostle said, *“The natural man receiveth not the things*

of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." Even those religious men who have spent their lives studying the scriptures cannot imagine that God rules in the army of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth. They cannot look into that Spiritual kingdom and see that God chose His people in Christ before He made the world, even though it is so plainly written in the scriptures. That thought is foolishness to them because the carnal mind cannot see the kingdom of God. When God's people are given to tell the truth of the gospel of grace and the power and wisdom of God, they are to the unbeliever and false professor as one who is bearing false tales. So the preaching of the gospel is foolishness to the world. It is no wonder that God said through the apostle, *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."*

Along these same lines He was blessed to say, *"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."* This same foolish preaching, as perceived by natural men, is salvation to the family of God. It is not, as the world says, necessary for one man to preach to another in order to get him saved. Rather, the preaching of the gospel is to the household of faith for edification, comfort and de-

liverance from the false doctrines and traps of the devil. Salvation is deliverance from the evil things in the world. Paul instructed Timothy by inspiration, *"Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."*

God is so wise that He has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. The true preaching of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit is total confusion to the one who is wise in his own conceits. Those who have worked to search out the meaning of the scriptures or the meaning of life have always come to wrong conclusions, but they unknowingly and falsely hold on to them as truths. When the actual truth is presented to their hearing, it does not match their strong, falsely held positions, and therefore they must reject the Spiritual truth. The truth confounds them. God has chosen a people who are the weakest of the weak. They are the fewest of all people. They are the most uninstructed in the ways of the world. They are made to have no confidence in their own strength or in the strength of other men. either in worldly wealth, worldly knowledge or worldly position. Their confidence and strength is in the Lord alone. Isaiah was blessed to say, *"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They*

shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

The world is strong and wise and confident, but it shall be brought down. The children of God are weak and foolish and have been humbled, but they shall be lifted up. Jesus said, "*Whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*" Jesus also said, "*Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*" God has humbled His little ones and caused them to know that they are nothing, even less than nothing. He has converted them, or turned them around. He has made them to see themselves differently than they once did. He has made them to behave differently than they once did. He has given them a view of things they never saw before. He has taught them the language of grace and put a new song in their mouth of praise toward Him, Who alone is worthy. He has given them a desire to please Him and has given them a love for His people. He has become all things to them. Christ Jesus of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

Even though our little meetings, and our foolish preaching, and our lack of confidence in men is despised and counted for nothing by the world, we continue on by the

grace and power of God. Though the world may laugh us to scorn and ridicule us for our foolishness and weakness, we are made to take it and to understand that this is our lot in this world. Even though the world may hate us and speak evil of us falsely for the truth's sake, we must expect it. Jesus said if they hated Him, they would also hate us. The world is not our home. We are strangers and pilgrims here. We are only passing through.

I know that you both know these things and are established in them, but it seems good from time to time to speak of them. May God keep you in His love and care all your days, and may He cause you to be faithful unto death that you may receive the crown of life.

We look forward to seeing you both again, if and when the way is opened for us. Sherry joins me in sending our love. Jerry.

P. S. We have been invited to the New Dan River Church meetings on the fourth weekend this month and hope to attend.

PSALM 131.

Lord my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.

Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.

VOICES OF THE PAST

NOW AND THEN

Things continue as they were of old. There is nothing of this world that has been created since the creation of the world in the six days. Men have discovered things that they did not know. Such things are new to them, but they were of old.

However there have been many changes in my memory. The customs that prevailed when I was a lad in many respects have undergone great changes. Concerning morals, manners, standards of action, rules of life, and results there are manifest differences.

In the manners of children and the demeanor to their parents there have been many mortifying changes. Then parents took more oversight of their children, and required more of them in obeying, and that they should remain more at home. Parents felt that their children needed the watch-care of parents, and children had more affection and love for their parents then.

There was much less going to school then, and more labor performed by children. The discipline gave the children more physical and mental strength. The labor they performed gave hardihood and physical endurance. But little medicine was given. Food was plainer; simpler and less productive of indigestion.

When children went to school then fewer books were used, less lecture work, more was required of pupils to dig out, solve and explain the things of the text books, so that the mental discipline which the children received gave them more vigor of mind, and greater power of declaring what they knew. There was more regard for character then-greater carefulness in speaking the truth, and complying with their obligations. They were more careful to save their earnings. They labored far more, and spent much less. Now give a child money and his first thought is to spend it, whether for anything of value or not. Then the thought was to save money. It is not so now. The habit of saving now is a lost art. Then young men were afraid of debt, and sought to have a reserve fund beyond what their expenses were.

There were no banks then in my section, but young men were their own bankers, and loaned their money, or invested it in some way. But few debts were made by them.

They didn't use tobacco often. Cigarettes were unknown. Drinking was not much practiced. Seldom did a young man become intoxicated. If he drank much he was disgraced. No sane man wished to intrust important business to him. A man did not smoke in the presence of a lady. Manners were much more genteel then. A man's word was his bond. These remarks applied to first-class men. There were a few of

the baser sort that had no respect for themselves or anyone else.

There were but few divorces then. When a man married a woman then it was with the aim to make her a husband. Nor did the wife expect to spend her time in dressing and other extravagances. But she had her duties to help in keeping-house. There was not so much trouble then about cooks. For mothers taught their daughters while they were growing up to cook and do other house work so that a young man's wife knew how to prepare meals and did it: nor was it half prepared meals that caused indigestion.

Such a thing as suiciding was seldom heard of. People were happier, loved life better, were more healthy, and sought better things than to waste money, kill time &c.

There was much more staying at home then than now, because the restless spirit of going and spending money, and killing time was not known then as it is now.

At the present time there is much disregard for Sunday by many people. It was a day of cessation more from ordinary labor then, and man and beast rested more. People that labor six days in a week should rest from their labors one day in seven, and so should beasts of burden. But one cannot rest until he has first labored. It is not a good sign to see people engaged in plays, frolicking, drinking and such things on Sunday. Time spent more in the study of the Bible, and in attending

the worship of God is far better.

What we sow we also reap. They that aim for and seek nobler things than the vanities of earth, and remember their creator in the days of their youth, lay a better foundation that do such as waste the days of their youth in the formation of habits that bring on dissipation and end in woe and misery.

P.D. Gold, in Zions Landmark.
Thanks to Brother Keith Hiatt,
Reidsville, NC

LOVE

Volumes have been written, books published, language employed, images made, money, time, and even life itself have been sacrificed for the purpose of demonstrating the power of love; and, yet, we find ourselves as blind and as much at a loss to understand the vital meaning of the word as though it was entirely new and had just dawned upon us. We consult our dictionary and find it defined as warm affection, devotion, courtship and charity. We take each of these words, especially the word charity and undertake to exhaust it and we are carried back to the word "love," So we are left, at last, to wrestle with the word "love," or not so much with the word as with the living vital principle.

We cannot do better than to take the expression of John, who said,

“God is love.”-1 John 4:9. And, again, “Love is of God.” If we were to seek for the origin of love, we would be compelled to seek to find the origin of God, a task that we could never perform. So let us content ourselves, as much as in us is, to look for the manifestation of love. **“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”- 1 John 4:9.**

A thing may exist and we know nothing of it; and its mere existence gives us no comfort, because it is not manifested. Still there are things embraced by hope and manifested by faith so that we can well and truly say, We know. **“For, through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”- Heb. 11:3,** By faith we know we love the brethren, and we know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. And we know that we have been made alive (quicken) unto a love which we had not hitherto known. **“Love worketh no ill to his neighbor : therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” - Rom. 13:10. “Love covereth all sins,”** God has manifested his love to us by giving us eternal life, putting his spiritual life into us, and giving us spiritual exercises, such as prayer, hope, faith, love (charity), joy, long-suffering, repentance, and fellow-

ship in the spirit. But, while this is true, we cannot always see the good things that God has given to us, for he is a Spirit and his spiritual gifts are invisible to the carnal man. So we need some one to guide us. He also gave us the ordinance of baptism, in obedience of which we have the gift of the Holy Ghost, which also manifests the gifts of God; and, as these things are manifested to us we rejoice in them. Accordingly, he manifests his love to us in taking away our sins. Under the old covenant, **“The blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh.” Heb. 9:13.** But, under the new covenant, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” In baptism, we have the answer of this good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21). Now, as God has so loved us as to give us eternal life, and to purify our conscience by the blood of his own Son, is it great wonder if we love him? Surely he first loved us. If we love him, what a grand and a glorious privilege it is for us to manifest our love for him, and for each other by keeping his commandments, which are not grievous (1 John 5:3). Now the commandment which we had from the beginning is that we love one another. If we love God, we love his people, the church;

and, if we love his people, we love him. We manifest our love for God by attempting to draw near unto him; and our love for each other by attempting to draw near to each other. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews, puts it this way *“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”-Heb.10:22.* When we see people drawing near we say; O how they love! We may be prompted to give our goods to feed the poor, to speak with the tongue of angels, or even attempt to exercise faith in doing some wonderful thing, and yet, if we are not prompted by love or charity, it is no profit. Love (charity) is long-suffering, kind, affectionate, not easily puffed up, it behaves itself seemly or comely, is gentle, easily entreated, thinketh no evil, does not envy, endureth hardness, is not conceited or proud or boastful, does not seek her own, and, instead of blowing the faults of others, uses a mantle of charity or forgiveness to cover them. Love seeks the good of the brethren, instead of trying to injure them. Could I but possess the traits above mentioned, with their accompanying virtues, it would be of more import to me than much wealth.

Elder J.A. Ashburn

SOME TRIALS AND DELIVERANCES.

Elder F. P. Branscome, Dear Brother: I am sending you two dollars, and wish you to send the Messenger of Truth to Mrs. Mary E. Johnson, of Anson, Texas. The other dollar is for your charity list.

I have just read September number of Messenger, which I think is unusually good. The editorials are words of truth spoken in soberness, and seem to appeal to my feelings more than usual. The poetry was good and the letter to the dear old brother was so timely and good. How I do love to see the aged, poor, and afflicted ones remembered and cheered on their sorrowful journey. Jesus says he receives such conduct as being done to himself.

I feel a desire to tell you of some of my trials and deliverances during this year. Last spring I was walking along the path from the family cemetery, where repose the precious dust of my dear husband and children, weeping bitter tears over my sad and desolate life and, also, over a felt toss of the comfortable presence of the Lord to my soul, when, suddenly, my mind was caught away from present surroundings.

And, when I next realized where I was I was standing some distance from the place, singing that dear old song, *“Amazing grace! how sweet the sound !”* The verse that I was repeating was:

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

And though I cannot sing, because of throat trouble, and had not attempted to do so for nine years; yet I do think I sing with the spirit and made melody in my heart to the Lord. And though doubtless my singing would have been poor music to creatures, I believe the dear Lord received it as a song of praise and thanksgiving. Then how my mind reverted to a precious blessing that I received some years ago, from the words: *"Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee."* These words came at a time when my iniquities were gone over my head and were a burden too heavy for me, and I seemed to reason with the Lord and tell him I was a great sinner, and asked, How can the promise apply to me? And when I saw, as I never did before, how I stood in Christ all fair and spotless; and that the Father beheld me thus:

I could not describe the view I had, by faith, of my safe standing in that covenant ordered in all things and sure. Neither can I tell you of my great joy — O; it was unspeakable! And it did seem enough to forever dispel all doubts. But, as David Says, *"He restoreth my soul;"* and how often, since then, I have felt the

need of restoring mercies, that I may walk in paths of righteousness.

During the past summer I have been very ill and did not regain my strength as I usually do, after the warm weather is past, and feel much impressed that the end is near; and often do I long to depart and be with Christ which is far better. The hymn:

"What cheering words are these?

Their sweetness who can tell?

In time, and to eternity,

'Tis with the righteous well,"

is often mine, every word seems to be mine. During my illness the Lord seemed so precious, and I was often sweetly meditating on the scriptures, and on the sweet promises which I hoped the Lord had given to me at different times, so that, I could say, *"I called upon the Lord and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears,"* And I did so much dread returning, even for a short time, to the things which are seen, which are temporal. And, as I improved a little in strength, I had to take on worldly cares, my felt comfort seemed to decline. But I have the promise that I shall see Him again, and my heart shall rejoice with a spiritual joy that no one can take away.

The first epistle of Peter has been very good to me recently, and I do feel an abiding hope. I am desiring the sincere milk of the word, that I may grow in grace. How sweetly Peter speaks of the Lord's

dear people as being a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," etc., and further admonishes them how they should live, giving Christ as their example, who, when he was reviled; reviled not again. When he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Why, my dear brother, there are many admonitions that I need to pray hourly; and, surely, I need to pray hourly,

"And lead us not into temptations, but deliver us from evil;" Many times I feel an impression to tell or write of the Lord's goodness and mercy to me. But, when I attempt to do so, words fail to convey half of its sweetness, and I can adopt the poetry:

"Living tongues are dumb at best, And we must die to speak of Christ ;" etc.

If you see anything in this worthy of a place in your paper, and can decipher my penciling, you may use it. But I shall not object to its being consigned to the flames. I am too nervous to use a pen.

May the Lord bless you and make you useful, and a comforter of his people. And this means much tribulation and many sorrowful hours to you, Pray for me, a needy sinner.

Mrs. Fanny P. McNeely
Ridgeway, Virginia

Sent in by Brother
Keith Hiatt, Reidsville, NC

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ELDER ASA D. SHORTT.

Elder F. P. Brancome, Dear Brother:
By your request, I will give a sketch of my life for the benefit of your many readers.



Elder Asa D. Shortt

I was born in Floyd Co., Va., April 17, 1842 : and was a son of Joseph N. and Mary Shortt. My parents were both Old Baptists. I can remember something that occurred before I was four years old. I have a sister four years younger than myself, and can remember very distinctly when she was born.

My schooling was very limited: for; all put together, was about six months. My first two monthg at school were before I was eight years old, and the last months were before I was sixteen years old.

I had some very serious thoughts about my future condition, when about twelve years of age, and continued so from time to time till I was nearly twenty-six years of age, when I hope that my sins were manifestly pardoned: my raising was very moral, and was not given to the use of profane language. But I know I was tempted with it at times. In June, 1861, I volunteered as a soldier in the Confederate army; and, in the following September, was

mustered into service. I remained in the army, and prison together, until the 13th day of March, 1865. During the last fifteen months of my service, I was a prisoner of war, at Rock Island, Ill. I was taken prisoner in the battle at Missionary Ridge, November; 1863. I wish to relate an incident that occurred at the battle of Chicamauga. Our regiment had to double-quick for a distance of about four miles, in order to take its position in line of battle. We expected it to be a very hard battle. It seemed to be facing almost certain death, and that I would, if killed, go away into everlasting punishment. I could hardly endure the thought of going into the battle. But this scripture was presented to me. *"I have planted, Apollas watered; but, God gave the increase."* It was applied to me in this way. You may do all you can to save your life, but if you are spared God will do it. The fear of being killed was greatly removed. My right hand man was slightly wounded, and my left hand man was mortally wounded and died the next day. But I was spared and desire, even to this day, to be thankful to the Lord for his protecting hand that sheltered me during that trying time.

After returning home from prison, I was married, January 9, 1866, to Miss Sarah A. Graham. Ten children, seven daughters and three sons, were born unto us. Five daughters and one son are all that are now living. For nearly two years after I was married I lived the most

careless life that I had ever lived. When I came to myself, as I trust, I thought my condition was sealed. Then for nearly three months I never bowed my knees in prayer, for something seemed to say, *"It will do no good: for there was a time when you could have repented, but now it is too late."* It was Satan talking to me, and I did not know it at the time; but I think I know it now. I did not love sin, and it was very annoying to me: for I felt to be accountable to God for all of my sins. I had sinned knowingly, and had no cloak for my sins. On the night of the 8th of January, 1868, after retiring for the night: we were talking of a thing of a dishonest nature that had taken place in the neighborhood. I said to my wife, *"We may hide from men, but we cannot hide from God."* At that time, I felt to be as honest as I ever was in my life. I had felt, for quite awhile before this time, a desire to know something about the love of God. After we had ceased from talking, something seemed to say, to me, *"get up; go out of the house and pray;"* but something replied, saying, *"It will do no good."* I thought I would pray in secret, for I did not want my wife to know anything of the exercise of my mind. But my mind became very dark, and I could not think of one word to say. I then went a short distance from the house and knelt down, and all that I remember saying was, "Oh Lord, if it is thy will, shed abroad thy love in

my heart this night." (And in all of my prayers since then, I have been very sensible that I must pray for God's will to be done.) Then I returned to the house; and, in a few minutes, something effected my whole being, and with it the thought came, "*It is a change.*" I thought I would not tell my wife, but could not refrain from it: for my heart was full of love, not only to the Lord, but to all of my fellow creatures, especially to the household of faith. At that very time of rejoicing, I was forcibly impressed that I would have to preach; and, also, of some of the reproaches that would befall me. From then till the Saturday before the first Sunday in April, 1868, my mind was impressed in regard to joining the church and being baptized. When I talked to the church, I never thought of trying to preach. I was received and baptized the next day, the first Sunday in April, 1868, by Elder Thomas L. Robertson. From then till the next meeting I was impressed daily; more or less, to talk in public; and made my first effort to talk publicly the first Sunday in May, 1868. I tried to talk occasionally for nearly two years before I received much strength in trying to preach. Though, occasionally, while trying to preach, I received a renewal of that strength, and do occasionally, to the present time; and this is the strongest testimony that I have that I am called to preach. I was ordained to the ministry, Saturday before the first Sunday in Septem-

ber; 1873, by Elders Daniel Conner, G. L. Tuggle, and Wilson H. Dodd. It was quite awhile before I was called on to serve as pastor of churches. But for five or six years I have been serving as pastor, and am now serving four churches, Salem, Paynes Creek, Long Branch and Country Line. I but seldom let my domestic affairs prevent me from attending the churches. At times I am very desirous to meet with the churches; but, at other times, it is a cross. But I go all the same, for I feel to be accountable to God for my stewardship.

I have never traveled any great distance from home to preach, until the last two years. There are two notable reasons for it. One was: I had a wife and several children to help care for; and the other was: I was fearful that, if I should travel among brethren with whom I was unacquainted, they could not make any allowance for my failures. But, as I get older I feel more inclined to visit some of the churches at a distance.

Brother Branscome, I submit this for your inspection, hoping it may be, if printed, of some comfort to some of the readers of the MESSENGER OF TRUTH. I am,

Yours in hope of eternal life,

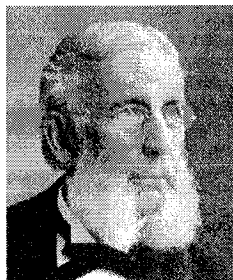
ASA D. SHORTT.

Floyd, Va., Nov. 21, 1908.

PSALM 136:26.

O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Southampton, Pa., Jan. 22, 1918.



Elder Silas H. Durand

Elder H.H. Lefferts —

Dear Brother: —
When left to myself and to my own thinking powers, the result is not valuable, but when

the Lord's most precious thoughts are given me, "the sum of them" and the value and beauty of them are infinite. He says, I know my thoughts concerning you: thoughts of peace, and not of evil; to bring to pass an expected end. Now, at any time when the Lord's thoughts come into my heart and take possession of my soul, then I can understand how a sacred principle of reconciliation is connected with the gospel of the dear Savior. I know that by the peculiar power of faith I am right sure of this; but I am so very seldom, if ever, in possession of that holy, heavenly principle. It is by this faith alone that the divine power of faith can be known, and by that alone can resignation, true resignation to the will of God, be known by mortal, sinful man. The power of this soul-searching principle cannot be obtained by anything that mortal man can do. It is, like all things belonging to the kingdom of Christ, the gift of God. We cannot purchase it, we cannot make or create it, we cannot obtain it by any device of men. In no way can it come into our possession except as the gift of God by the

power and will of Jesus Christ. The day after I was baptized, over fifty-six years ago, I found this question in my mind: What is faith? What is there in mind now that was not there before? At that time I was at peace. I was glad all the time for those few days, or, I might say, weeks. The Word was there and the church and the brethren, and I wanted no more. I thought then I could see and feel the power of faith. I was not curious, but had enough for my own poor soul. I do not think I have had much more of a view of faith since then than I had at that time. How many things are said about faith in different parts of the New Testament! The brethren, Paul and others, are so clear in their arguments and write so confidently that it seems I can see their statements as unanswerable and can follow them with assurance. Then I turn to my own heart to see if that holy principle is there, and with a drooping head and with a great deal of uncertainty I have to acknowledge much of the time that I am not sure I have faith. Sometimes I can see and hear from others the same things that are in my own heart. Then I can but recognize evidence for them, and see it forced back upon me as a reflection in a glass; as the apostle says: "*We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" I have to acknowledge that. So when evidence

of this kind is experienced, we have to acknowledge it is true, we cannot dispute it; and the apostle gives evidence thus by inspiration, which comes by divine power, showing what is true in us and true in Jesus. He says: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, evidence of things not seen." Concerning faith and the exercise of it and many things connected with it in such a wonderful manner, I would love to write a little or talk a little, but the time has gone by for that. I cannot feel that I shall write at length any more; but I do enjoy talking with the brethren and to hear from the publishers of the Signs and others of the brethren scattered far and wide. The unity of the brethren manifested in the writings is delightful to me. The great beauty of the doctrine and of the order of the church takes hold upon my soul most thoroughly. Zion is called in the Psalms "*the perfection of beauty.*" My mind has been led, when writing and preaching, to trace out the exercises of such as feel, like I always have, that they are the poorest of the poor, and that strongest doctrine (if there be any difference) would be the only doctrine that could answer the needs of such a weak person as I.

I can go no further just now. On January 5th I entered my eighty-sixth year.

Your brother in hope,
Silas H. Durand.

THE FREE GIFT.

"For the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification." - Romans v. 16.

How grand is the bountiful mercy and far-reaching power of God declared through the above Scripture! Sinners with a multitude of sins are rescued from the power of death and justified, notwithstanding their mountains of sin. To human minds this seems unreasonable and outlandish. Finite minds cannot comprehend the great condescension of our God to his chosen people, or the disparity shown in the text: that for one single offence, and that offence somewhat mitigated in favor of man because of Satan's interference with the affections of the woman, all the unborn nations should fall under the curse of death, without a single exception, and that the free gift should fall upon many whose offences were many and great, displaying the mighty power of grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. Briefly stated, just one transgression sunk a world of unborn human beings into the pit of death, but the free gift is given unto millions irrespective of their numerous transgressions. Though their "sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." - Isaiah 1. 18. Though death holds a firm grip over all the sons

of Adam, yet how much more shall the blood of Christ deliver the chosen vessels from the grasp of Satan unto the glorious liberty of the children of God. When mortals are led to behold the manifold beneficence of God to unborn, undeserving sinners, dead in sins, the cry of grace, grace, looms up in their hearts, and they are made to taste of the wonders of the free gift and the powers of the world to come. It is always supposed that a gift is free; that is, not in exchange for something valuable, but altogether one-sided. A gift bestowed upon a person often signifies that the donor has love for the receiver, which would indicate that the gift was free. The apostle uses the phrase, "free gift," clearing all doubt from our minds of any meritorious work on our part. No carnal reason can be given why God loved sinners when they were dead in sins. The fact is that God did love his people when they were dead in sins, and did quicken them together with Christ, and did raise them up together and made them to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, for the very purpose "that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Surely the "free gift" manifests the exceeding riches of his grace. No saint moved by the Spirit of Christ can crave anything better than redemption through the blood of Jesus, and no better way to receive the knowledge of the free gift

than through the channel of faith and grace. Having faith and grace we have hope, the free gift, an all things belonging to the household of faith. Love and mercy were stronger than death, the work of the devil, so that many offences, as it were, brought complete justification. Just so, according to Scripture, the wrath of man and the work of the devil shall all finally praise the Lord Jehovah.

All for the saints,

J. F. Beeman.

Tiawah, Okla., August 13,

1917.

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR OCTOBER 2006

Elizabeth Hedrick, VA	25.00
Glenna Link, VA	25.00
Susan Shelton, NC	5.00
Elder Ronald Crouch, WVA	15.00
G.M. Lockey, NC	5.00
Bluma Pryor, NC	5.00
Elder W.W. Hudson, LA	5.00
Hazel Garland, MD	2.00
Sallie Hodges, VA	5.00
Alfred Ratliff, VA	25.00
Michael Stiltner, VA	5.00
Bernice Haygood, TX	5.00
W. W. Stutts, TX	5.00

Vera Potter, MS	5.00
Jerry Mourer, AR	75.00
Ferne Harrell, TX	5.00
Caroline Martin, WA	5.00
Owen Dalton, VA	5.00
Chlonetia Thompson, VA	3.00

1 CORNITHIANS 15:26-27.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

OBITUARIES

**OBITUARY OF
SIS. EVA EDWARDS GILLEY.**

With a mixture of joy and sadness, I will endeavor to give an account of the life and death of a dearly beloved sister in Christ, Eva Mae Edwards Gilley. Sis. Gilley was born in Carroll County, Virginia on October 16, 1945 and died at Martinsville Memorial Hospital on July 7, 2006, at the age of 60. She was one of the 12 children of the late Arthur C. Edwards and his wife, Nannie Tolbert Edwards.

Sis. Eva attended Fieldale High School and was later employed for

many years by American Furniture Co. She was first married to a Mr. Nichols, by whom she had two daughters: Cheryl Marie Nichols, who preceded her in death; and Mrs Eddie (Teresa) Stewart. On January 18, 1980 she was united in marriage to Bro. Linwood A. Gilley with whom she lived happily until her passing.

On the 1st Saturday in September, 2005 Sis. Eva asked for a home with Liberty Church and was joyfully received. She requested immediate baptism and was baptized the next afternoon by Elders John Wingfield and John Lee. During the remaining ten months of her life, she manifested a great love for the church and for God's children everywhere. She abundantly demonstrated her faith by her works. She made a profound impact on the church in such a short period of time that her memory will be cherished by us all a long time.

Her funeral service was conducted at Pleasant Grove Primitive Baptist Church in Patrick County on July 9th by her pastor. Her mortal body was laid to rest in the church cemetery near Bro Gilley's parents and other members of his family. In addition to her husband and her daughter, she was survived by four brothers, two sisters and three grandchildren.

How appropriate and applicable to Sis. Eva is that scripture which declares "*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his*

Saints." We rest in hope that, one day, we shall meet her again where death and sorrow will be unknown."

In accordance with our custom we agreed to prepare three copies of this memorial: one for our church records, one to be given to her family and one sent to the Signs of the Times for publication.

Elder John T. Wingfield,
Moderator and Acting Clerk

OBITUARY OF
SIS. SADIE RATLIFF JOYCE

With sorrow for our loss but joy for her great gain, we record the death of our dear sister in the faith, Sadie Ratliff Joyce. She was born in Patrick County, Virginia on April 3, 1915 and died at the Blue Ridge Nursing Home in Stuart on May 11, 2006, at the age of 91. She was a daughter of the late Pierce L. and Sis. Rosa Graham Ratliff, both of whom attended Liberty Church most of their lives and Sis. Rosa was a long-time member.

On July 27, 1940 she was united in marriage to Rufus Elgin Joyce, with whom she lived happily for over 63 years, until his death in 2003. To their union were born two children: one daughter, Mrs. Billy (Jean J.) Stone; and one son, Troy Joyce. In addition to her children Sis. Sadie was survived by four grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and two step-great-grandchildren.

For fourteen years Sis. Sadie worked as a nurse's aide at the Blue Ridge Nursing Home, where she herself lived the last few years of her life. While employed there, she was blessed to assist in the care of her mother, among others.

Sis. Joyce united with Liberty Church by experience the 1st Sunday in December 1992, and was baptized two months later by her pastor. She was a faithful and well-loved member; her attendance was hindered when her husband became bedfast due to bodily infirmity. We did their mowing for some time until they both were confined to the nursing home and they were always kind and courteous to us. A severe disease of the mind was what eventually led to her death.

Funeral services for Sis. Joyce were conducted at Howell Funeral Home Chapel on May 13th by Pastor Rick Anderson and Elder John Wingfield. During those proceedings, our foremost thought was, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Her mortal body was laid to rest in the Liberty Church Cemetery beside that of her late husband.

As is our usual custom, we agreed to prepare three copies of this memorial record: one for our church minutes, one for her family and one to be submitted to the Signs of the Times for publication.


Elder John T. Wingfield,
Moderator and Acting Clerk