

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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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 attonement 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.

NOTICE

With this issue of "The Signs of the Times", begins the 173rd year of continuous publication.

The board of trustees met on Friday, the day after Thanksgiving 2004. This was an appropriate time of year because we have so much to be thankful for. God has so blessed the Signs to be of so much comfort to so many. He has given us able Editors and most of all our Associate Editors who have been so inspired to furnish us with comforting editorials each month.

Elder Wilbanks was so faithful until his death last year. At our board meeting Elder Cleo Robertson was chosen and agreed to serve as an Associate Editor to follow Elder Wilbanks.

Elder Richard Campbell has been so faithful and blessed for many years. We want to acknowledge our appreciation for his untiring efforts and a prayer that he may continue for many more years. Elder Farmer has also been so faithful and we want to thank him and wish him good health that he may continue to write.

Brother Burnell Williams, after serving ably the Clerk of the board for 25 years, asked that he might be relieved, that someone younger might serve. Brother Tony Horton was elected to follow him.

Time brings on many changes but we have learned that God makes

ways for his people where it seems there is no way.

We want to thank all of our subscribers for your interest and ask for your continued support.

As you enjoy the Signs please tell others about it and invite them to subscribe.

The board has agreed to publish personal notices of your anniversaries, weddings, etc. If you wish to publish notices of your regular meetings either monthly or yearly. You may list all meetings scheduled throughout the year, send in early in the year and we will publish at the appropriate month.

We would like to hear from you the readers of the Signs. Share your experiences of grace that it may also comfort others. And we can be mutually comforted together.

May God bless all of us to run with patience the race that he has set before us, ever looking unto him the author and finisher of our faith.

Editors

ISAIAH 43: 18-19.

Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL3
 Elder J.B. Farmer

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH7

ARTICLES9
 Elder D. R. Cabbage

VOICES OF THE PAST 12
 Elder E. J. Lambert
 Martin D. Fisher
 J. B. Bowden

CONTRIBUTIONS 23

OBITUARIES 24
 Sister Gracie E. McClure

EDITORIAL

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” Luke 9:23.

Why is it that we love the Holy Scriptures so? Not because they present a set of rules to live by, or not because they are a description of how to be saved, but rather because they are the words of God. They are the words of power and wisdom and nourishment given by God Himself, to the elect for their

very spiritual food and edification and comfort. The children of God find themselves on a journey through a hostile land, which requires natural food for the strength of the outward man, but much more it requires spiritual food for the inward man. We know that the outward man is perishing, but the inward man is renewed day by day. God said in power, *“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Matthew 4:4.*

Jesus, the Son of God is the Lord God Almighty. In Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily. His words are the words of God. *“No man ever spake as this man spake.” “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an 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 before him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” Psalm 33:6-9.*

Jesus spoke to all in His hearing, but only those who had been prepared to hear His words received them in truth. Jesus separated his hearers by His words. Some had followed Him for the natural benefits, such as the loaves and fishes, and the natural healing of their bodies. They were like fair weather

friends. However, when the words seemed hard to the flesh, the many always shrunk away to accommodate their fleshly desires of comfort and pleasure. The few others could not turn away. When many of the disciples of Jesus turned away from Him because of His words, He said to 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."* John 6:67-68. The children of God cannot go back. Why? Because they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time. They have nowhere else to go.

The children of God are given a great desire to follow Jesus, all the while knowing that they, of themselves are not able to stay the course. This is where the power of God is manifested. Here is where faith is revealed. They are made to strike out on a journey through an unfamiliar and unfriendly territory toward the land of promise - a land that flows with milk and honey. They are made to travel against the strong nature of the outward man, but are made willing to go in the stronger spirit of the inward man. They are instructed of God that the way will not be easy. Nevertheless, onward they go, being made content with the promise that the Lord God will go with them and never leave them nor forsake them, even to the end of the world.

Jesus said that if any man wills to come after Him, he must deny himself. To *"deny oneself"* means literally to *"utter off against oneself."* This means, to me, that one is made to recognize that in the flesh there dwells no good thing; that one is made to have no confidence in the flesh of man - neither his own, nor that of others. This means, to me, that one is made to acknowledge that if he is to be delivered from this evil world and brought to glory, it is altogether the work of the grace of God, not of the works of man. *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."* Titus 2:11-12.

Jesus said that that same one must take up his cross daily. This journey of the child of God is not just for a little while, but for all the days of his life. Jesus said, *"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."* Revelation 2:10. The elect are in the race all the way to the finish line. The beloved apostle was blessed to say, *"Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* Philippians 3:13-14. And, *"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to*

keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” 2 Timothy 1:12 And, *“I die daily.”*

Now, we know that the cross is the instrument of death. Jesus took up His cross, on which He was nailed, and on which he gave His life a ransom for many. He did this once, and for all of the elect. He bore their sins upon the cross, where they were fastened and pardoned, never again to be remembered against His people. He offered up Himself unto God, a lamb without spot. And by this one offering, He perfected forever them that are sanctified. He took up His cross and laid down His life for His friends. He did for His friends, what they were not able to do for themselves. He brought to them eternal salvation by the loving grace and infinite mercy of God.

We could never take up a cross as He did, to bring salvation for ourselves or for any other person, because it took a perfect sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God – none of us would qualify, for we are all sinners. Only God could and did provide that sinless Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world. So our cross is not a literal physical cross, made of a tree, but rather is our suffering for the truth’s sake as we seek to follow Him. It is not only given for us to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake. If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. Taking up our cross daily,

to me, means to be made willing, by the grace of God, to suffer the reproaches of the world directed at Him and His people. It is written, *“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”* Hebrews 11:24-25. So also are all of God’s little ones made willing to suffer here in this world for the truth’s sake, rather than to walk in the broad way which leads to destruction.

To follow Jesus, to me, means to walk in the way He walked. Every thing that Jesus did was for the good of the ones that he loved with an everlasting love. He never considered Himself, but always sought their welfare. We know that it is impossible, of our weak sinful selves, to walk this way. But we are taught that, *“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”* John 15:13. And this, *“Hereby we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”* 1 John 3:16. We know that He did lay down His life for His friends. Being so weak in the flesh, how then are we to lay down our lives for one another? By the grace of God, His little ones are given to do this very thing.

We see each one at the feet of

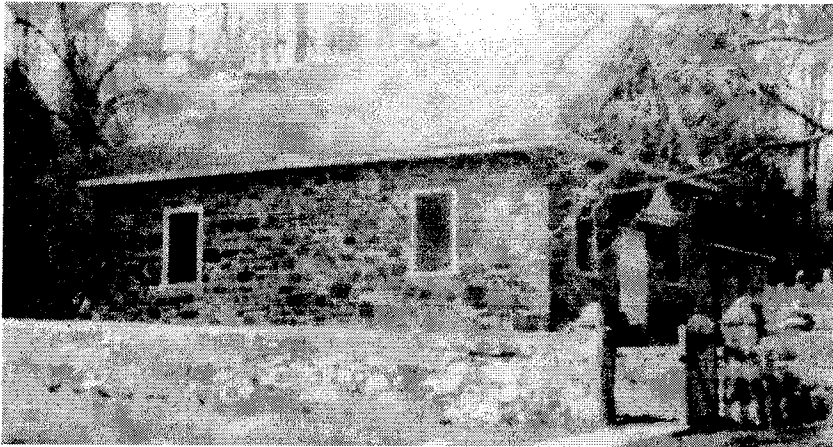
the other as they seek to please one another for their good and edification. We see the little ones strike out great distances, leaving their homes and families and friends in order to be with those of like mind, whom they are made to love with a love greater than anything in this world. We see the dear brothers and sisters turn over their homes to their brethren when they come to visit. We see them labor to prepare food and make a comfortable place for their friends. We see great mercies extended to the elderly and infirm and bereaved. We see the humble children of God evil spoken against falsely for righteousness sake. We

see the dear ministers go against nature – in great weakness, fear and trembling – as they enter the stand to speak the glorious gospel of the Son of God in the power of God. We see the love that flows down the cheeks in tears of joy as they greet one another. Surely these are the children of God who have been given a desire to follow Jesus, to deny themselves, and to take up their cross of suffering and service daily along with their brethren, and by doing so, are found following Him in truth.

Written in love and
in hope of eternal life.

Elder J. B. Farmer 7-30-2004

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



LONDON TRACT LANDENBURG, PA

LONDON TRACT

LONDON TRACT is located in Southern Chester County, Pa., just East of Route 896 and North of Newark, Delaware, to the edge of

the Circle that defines the Northern boundry of Delaware, at the intersection of Bank, Yeatman Station and Indian town roads. London Tract is surrounded by a State Park known as the White Clay Creek Preserve.

The Dupont Company gave 1700 acres to the wilderness park.

The improvements include the stone meetinghouse within the walled cemetery, the nearby brick sexton's house and backyard small barn and stable, and in the middle of the intersection the raised platform where the ladies mounted horses to ride side-saddle. The meeting house was erected on or before 1729 and is thus the oldest surviving building to have been used by the Old Baptists. The improvements are rare examples of Colonial Architecture in a secluded and enchanting rural setting. The site has been recognized by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission and by the Chester County Historical Society as being the location of the MINGUANNAN INDIAN TOWN where William Penn purchased lands from the Indians between the Susquehanna and Delaware Rivers in 1683.

London Tract was and remains important to the history and heritage of Pennsylvania, Chester County, and in particular to the Old School Baptists in America. London Tract

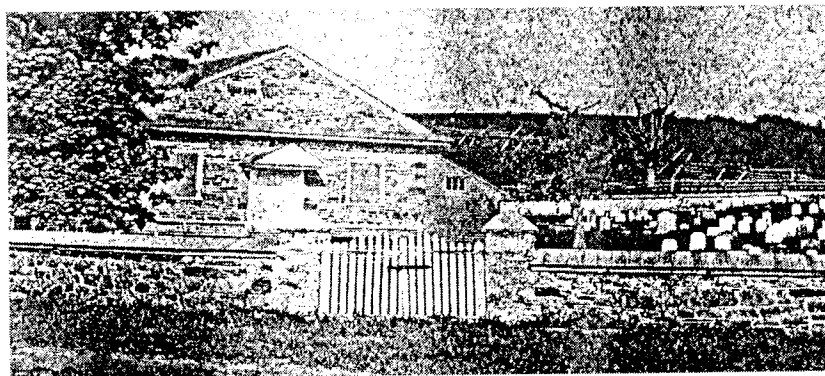
was a land grant to early Welsh settlers who came to the region in the first decade of the eighteenth century. The London Tract Church was finally set apart from the Welsh Tract Church (in Newark, Delaware) in 1780.

The Church became extinct in the mid-1930's with the death of the last member. London Tract was a member of the Delaware Association.

London Tract served active Baptist Congregations for over 200 years. The proposal to flood the site with a reservoir to supply water to Newark was effectively defeated by a very active community that recognized the significance of London Tract.

Today, London Tract is the centerpiece of the White Clay Creek Preserve. The meetinghouse is used by the park rangers for wildlife exhibits and lectures. It is believed that a local historical group is attempting to restore the old sexton's house. There is reason to believe London Tract will survive a useful purpose. May all the praise be given the Lord and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Mary Marshall Russell Little, a member, standing by the tree. (Presented by I. Lowell & Edith (Russell) Dutton, Dec. 25, 1939).



LONDON TRACT BAPTIST CHURCH

The early records of the "Welsh Tract" Church were written in the Welsh language and are said to be quite complete, but most of the early records of the London Tract outpost Church appear to have been lost. According to legend a domestic in one of the church's prominent, families used the pages of its record book to light the fire on cold mornings and the history of the church for a long period is now a complete blank. There appears to be no doubt, however, that services have been held continuously there for more than 230 years.

The records that have survived indicate the the London Tract Church became an independent congregation in 1780. One of its pastors, the Rev. Thomas Barton who died in 1870, served the congregation for 50 years. In 1863 the present church building was remodeled and the entrance changed, and in 1879 the graveyard was enlarged by the purchase of additional land, the present time services are held in the quaint old building once each month.

The graveyard has long been famous for its "ticking grave." The caretaker who keeps the property looking neat and well kept is frequently called upon by visitors from afar who have heard legend of the "ticking grave" to point it out to them. He shows them a tomb stone apparently of native stone lying flat, flush with the adjoining sod. They invariably get down and place an ear to the stone, and those with the most vivid imaginations often declare that

they can distinctly hear the "tick, tick."

For those with less vivid imaginations arrangements have sometimes been made to improve their perception by hiding an alarm clock near the grave. In some cases, according to reports, this has had a surprising effect in banishing skepticism. In one instance, however, the man who placed the clock forgot to turn off the alarm which went off while one visitor had his ear to the stone. Fearful that it might be Gabriel blowing his horn, the visitor jumped to his feet, suddenly, expecting to see unprecedented ghostly developments occur all around him.

Picture of church and graveyard along with brief history furnished by Brother Eugene Osborne.

ARTICLES

I have a few thoughts on my mind concerning my travel here on earth, if the Lord would direct my mind for a few minutes and bring them to my remembrance. I was given a hope in Christ Jesus at an early age but wasn't able to confess it for many years later, but it was still there all of that time and I'm glad that whatsoever God does is forever. Nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it and God does it that we should fear Him. In 1954 I married my wife, Rowena, neither

one of us were church members or never attended church regular. But somewhere in the early 60's it got on my mind, and it wouldn't leave my mind, to join the church. I felt like (and still do) that God has a people in every nation, kindred, tongue and people and surely he has his people where he purposes for them to be or he could bring them to one group very easy so God's people are a scattered people on the face of this earth.

I went though a lot, tried to pray a lot, Lord if you want me in a church show me which one you want me to join, because I can go to any of them and tell what I feel like you have done for me and they will accept me as a member; but if you want me in a church, if it's your will, show me which one to go to. If not deceived, God heard that prayer and answered it. In 1966 on Easter Sunday I asked for a Home and they accepted me as a member. The following Sunday I was baptized somewhere about 2:00 o'clock. My wife was baptized that same day about 2:00 o'clock into another church. For many years I went to church by myself and my family went with her and I never did question them and I never did beg them to go with me. I believe everybody should be satisfied within his own mind. So she never did argue the doctrine or what I believed, we just never talked about it. She went to her church and I went to mine. Because I knew I couldn't open her eyes to see the way I did, and I knew she couldn't open mine to see the

way she did. So we were both honest in where we went and all of that. So many years I worked twelve hours a day during that time barbering, six days a week a lot of times and on Sunday I'd get up and go to the Old Baptist Church and she'd go the Missionary Church.

Many years later, several years later, my great granddaughter was born, Amanda, and when she got big enough she wanted to go to church with Pap-pa. Just me and her would go and she would set there beside of me and when I would start preaching and walking the floor she would get me by the hand and she'd walk along with me. So she asked me if she could sing a song and I said "is it a church song" and she said "yes". She would get up and sing "Jesus Loves Me". The last time she tried to sing it, she choked up and just dropped her little head and stood there and looked down toward the floor. She raised her head back up and she said "I just want to tell you that I love you". I believe that is when God began that good work in her heart and I believe there is a scripture that says "*He that began a good work in you, He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*".

So quite a while after that, I have this farm rented and a lot of it is up hill and down hill and me and her was walking the fence one day and we was climbing this mountain, she looked around (she was in front of me) and she looked around and she said Pap-pa tell me about Jesus.

Well, if God called me to do anything it is to tell people about Jesus, that he loved his people, that he died for them and his blood redeemed them. So we sat down on top of the mountain, and I told her how it was with me. That I tried everything that come into my mind, and I tried everything that anybody had ever told me you had to do to be saved by the Grace of God, and I said "it all failed" and I become a beggar. I began to look to Jesus for His mercy and asking Him to have mercy on me, and I explained to her that He came into this world to seek and to save that which is lost, and that there is no other name given among men whereby we should be saved but the name of the darling Son of God. That was the day before Thanksgiving. The next day, on Thanksgiving morning, she took a tape player out (she lived with my daughter) and my daughter was watching her cause she felt like the Lord was dealing with her. (Course I had never said a word about what we had already experienced). So she goes out in the yard and she sits down with that tape player a playing a song *As I Went Down to the River to Pray, studying about that good ole way, good Lord show me the Way*. I'm sure there's some out there that remembers a time when they wanted God to show them the way cause Jesus is the Way. So she started crying and then she got down on her little knees and she went to calling on God and God Almighty lifted that burden from her

and gave her a hope in Christ Jesus.

So they come up to the house for Thanksgiving dinner and I was sitting in the living room and she walks by me and goes into another room and sits down. I get up and follow her in there and she looked up at me and said "Pap-pa, I'm alright now". She said "I want you to baptize me". So shortly after that she joined the church at Dotson Creek Primitive Baptist Church and I baptized her. Since then, my daughter joined the church. Since then, my granddaughter (the little girl's mother) joined the church.

So our God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. He does His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand. But, I'm thankful for the grace of God, I'm thankful for the love of God, cause there's never been a weapon formed any stronger than the love of God it has a drawing power. Jesus said "*no man can come unto me except the father which sent me draw him and I will in no wise cast out*", so love is a drawing power. I remember when I first started going and attending these Old Baptist churches, that sometimes they would be singing when I'd get there. I'd stop out in the yard and that singing was so sweet you could feel a drawing power. God's love a drawing me to the church, and I want to say this, I've never regretted following Jesus down into the River of Jordan, down into a liquid

grave showing forth His death, burial and His resurrection. He's our leader, He's our teacher, "the same one that anoints you will teach you"; the scripture says, and I'm thankful for that. It seems like that God's people are linked together kindly like a chain. I remember when I asked for a home in the church there was two more come up there when they was shaking hands with me and joined the church one of them were in his eighties. I'm just thankful that God still adds to the church daily such as should be saved. No one can add himself, but God can. On the Day of Pentecost there was about three thousand souls added to the church and were added to the church daily such as should be saved, them that was pricked in their heart and cried out and said "*men and brethren what can I do*". They didn't feel that way before the Holy Ghost came down and the Spirit quickened them but now they are not satisfied. So now they asked the question "*men and brethren what can we do*"? Peter said "*repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sin for the promise is unto you, it's to your children, it's to all that's afar off, even to as many as the Lord God shall call*". No one can go without that call first. Without the drawing power, the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

I just thought that I would share this with the little children of God scattered abroad. God is still God.

He said "*I am God, I change not*". He said "*I am God, therefore ye son's of Jacob are not consumed*" He's still God. He's never changed. The way that God manifested his love on the Day of Pentecost before sinners, before mourners, is the same way that God manifests his Grace to them today by the appearance of Jesus Christ like he appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus and brought forth that change and he became a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things passed away and behold all things were made new to him. He was now a new creature, he was now a spiritual child of God, been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

So, I want to say this, If there's anybody out there that their companion don't believe like they do and don't go to an Old Baptist church, don't persuade them, be patient with them, look to God, He's our leader The wife now goes with me to these meetings around home. She's not able to travel, to ride too far but she goes, she helps us sing and there never was a time when I was getting ready to go to an Association but what she didn't lay my clothes out on the bed. I thank God for her and believe that God joined us together a long time ago; and He said "*whatsoever God joins together, let no man put asunder*". I don't believe that man can put asunder what God Almighty joined together. But anyway, just wanted to share that with you.

I love you. Someday it will all be over here. I'm 73 years old, I've experienced a lot of pain in this life but I've never suffered like Jesus Christ did when he died for us, when he laid down his life for us. He said "*I have power to lay it down, I have power to take it again, this commandment have I received of my father.*"

In Bonds of Love
Elder D. R. Cabbage

VOICES OF THE PAST

Article 9 of *Signs of the Times*' "PROSPECTUS" says: "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."

The purpose of this Article 9 is to briefly state the position of the SIGNS relative to the members, ministers, and rule of the Church of Christ. We pray God to enable us to more fully define the term, BAPTIZED BELIEVERS, in this treatise. We are deeply impressed of the necessity of this endeavor because of so many varied and conflicting opinions confusing our people this day on the subject of VALID BAPTISM. Lack of information often causes misunderstanding. Misunderstanding begets confusion. Confusion leads to errors. Errors often results

in strife. Strife breeds hatred. Hatred breeds malicious actions. Malicious actions cause divisions. Divisions in churches result in each faction declaring null and void all actions of others. For this cause the Lord removes *candlesticks* and *spues* churches and ministers *out of His mouth*. We desire to carefully examine this vital subject and consider prevalent questions.

Primitive Baptists are careful relative to the mode or manner of baptism; that is, the method in which the act is performed. Proper qualifications of the person receiving baptism is important. The administrator of the ordinance of baptism must be properly authorized before the baptism could be considered valid. Proper ceremony connected with this act is worthy of consideration. Different elements are mentioned in the Scriptures in connection with baptism; so, we must ascertain when *water* is the element under consideration. We want to reconcile the expression: "One baptism", in Ephesians 4:5, and "The doctrine of baptisms", in Hebrews 6:2. We shall define the word, *baptism*.

The shortest and most comprehensive definition of the word from which baptism is derived is: *To dip*. This *dipping* includes casting down, submerging, and raising up. When this process is followed it is rightly called *baptism*. The administrator puts his subject into the element, causes this element to completely

engross, and then raise the subject up. There is always a change in status by the subjects being baptized with the baptism spoken of in the Scriptures. We shall now take up the baptisms which are administered by the Holy Ghost in face of this definition.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” To sum this up, it means that we were baptized into the *death* of Jesus Christ, being chosen in Him. It means that we who were chosen in Him, were in Him, while He was dying, engrossed in death, and raised up in Him from death. The changed status was that Jesus having been cast down and engulfed in suffering and death arose to die no more. The changed status of His people who were in Him was; - the dying, the death, and the raising of Jesus from death, made certain eternal life for all who were in Him. No man can perform this baptism of which Paul speaks. Yet, Paul uses this baptism to show what water baptism portrays. Paul speaks of the baptism in Jesus' *death*, which was two thousand years ago, to preface a baptism of the present day. Paul further reasons: *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from death by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*

Water baptism is the “Likeness”

of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul emphasizes that this baptism is but **ONCE**. Then he adds: *“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (v. 11) When you obey from the heart that *form* of doctrine you become free from sin to become the servants of righteousness. The carnal man is a servant of lust. This man has no knowledge of the law, and is alive without it. God causes His Holy law to be written in the mind and heart of this carnal man. This servant of carnality has been thus brought under the dominion of the law, consequently he tries to be a *servant of the law*. His failure in every attempt to serve the law makes him to know that he is in every case a *servant of sin* because he has disobeyed the holy law. This *servant of sin* despairs of life to such extent that his soul faints. (What a terrible death!) Sin has reigned unto death. The spirit of grace and truth raises this servant of sin from death to become a *servant of our Lord Jesus Christ* who accomplished the law for us, and died for us! The killing and making alive is a baptism God administers.

God administers the *baptism of repentance of heart*. Repentance means turning. If we were immersed in repentance and left there, we would forever be turning in a circle. The godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation need not to

be repented of according to 2 Cor. 7:10. There is a turning from error to truth, from darkness to light, from law to Gospel: from which there is no need of further turning.

John *preached* the baptism of repentance, and baptized in water all who gave evidence that they had been given repentance by the Lord. He would not baptize those who came to him for baptism unless they brought forth the evidence that they had repented. See Luke 3:7-8. John was a qualified judge of the ones worthy of water baptism. The administrator is the Spirit not man in the expression: "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...*" (1 Cor. 12:13) These baptisms that God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost performs are essential unto eternal Life. Water baptism is the only baptism that is to be performed by man as the administrator. This baptism is essential unto obedience as it is *the* answer to a *good* conscience toward God. Scriptural water baptism changes the classification of the one baptized. Before baptism one is classed with those who "*walked according to this world*". After baptism one is classed with "*fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God*". (Eph. 2) Paul was told to, "*Purify thyself with them.*" (Acts 21:24) This was necessary because of so many misrepresentations concerning Paul which had caused the Jews to be very angry with him. The actions and explanation of Paul in response to

this request did not make him more pure to himself or God; but it did make him more pure in the sight of the Jews. The sins they had against him were washed away. While in the process of telling his experience in order to abate the anger of the Jews, Paul quoted Ananias: "*Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*" The water baptism *purified* Paul in the sight of the brethren whom he had before persecuted. Before baptism he persecuted Jesus Christ. It took baptism to wash away the accusation of persecution of Jesus Christ and bring him into a new status as a proclaimer of Jesus Christ.

John, the Baptist, and Jesus, the Saviour, were both named by the angel Gabriel. Both had miraculous births in that one was born of a virgin; the other was born to a barren woman well stricken in years. John was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb. John was termed by Jesus as "More than prophet." John had the authority from Heaven to baptize with water. Jesus was sent to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. John instituted water baptism and had no authority to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Jesus did not baptize with water but submitted to baptism of John in water, making manifest that John had this special authority. John was the first preacher in the gospel dispensation.

Facing the fact that a great ma-

majority of professed Christians of this age consider that a little water sprinkled or poured upon a person constitutes baptism, it becomes necessary to point out a few expressions of Scripture that prove otherwise. One who has never heard of baptism can take the New Testament, begin reading, soon simple language will convince the reader of proper mode. The first chapter in which baptism is mentioned is 3rd chapter of Matthew. Verse 16 says: *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water."* This statement would simply prove that Jesus himself was *in the water* when He was baptized. The reader will find in the second book of the New Testament, *Mark 1:5*, *"...and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins."* The simple expression, *In the river of Jordan*, convinces the reader that the baptism was performed in the river, not by a little water taken from the river. *Mark* says, *"And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit Like a dove descending upon Him."* This shows simply that the baptism was *in Jordan*, the river, and that He came up out of the water. *John 3:23* says, *"And John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salem, because there was much*

water there, and they came and were baptized." Why the necessity of *much water*? The unprejudiced reader would by now know that the ones John baptized were in the river at a place in the river where there was more water than at other places of the same river. According to these expressions much water is necessary to perform baptism. As Philip and the eunuch were riding along in the chariot, *"they came unto a certain water."* This must have been a place where there was *much water*. Enough water for both of them, Philip and the eunuch, to go down into the water, Philip to baptize the eunuch, and both of them to come up out of the water.

Let us quote *acts 8:38-39*: *"and he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."* We have already quoted *Romans 6:4* elsewhere in this treatise which shows baptism to include *burial*. The person uninformed of the meaning of the word *baptize*, would gather the meaning of it by the time he read the New Testament to include the 6th chapter of *Romans*. We now understand that baptism in water means that the one doing the baptizing takes the one to be baptized down into much water, buries

him in water, raises him up out of the watery grave, and brings him completely out of it by bringing him to the shore. Sprinkling or pouring a little water upon a subject is not Scriptural Baptism. The administrator really baptizes part of his finger, or hand, by dipping it into the water. He does not baptize the subject upon whom the water is sprinkled or poured. Burying one in water is not baptism until the buried is raised up. Baptism pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We shall next consider the question, Who is qualified to be baptized?

Scriptures plainly show that John baptized persons who confessed their sins, brought forth evidence worthy of repentance, and professed belief in Jesus Christ the Saviour. The same qualifications are necessary now. Last Sunday afternoon I led a brother down into the water and baptized him. My ceremony was something like this: *“Upon confession of your sins and your admission that you cannot save yourself from this condition in any sense by your own merit; and, upon confession of your faith in Jesus Christ being the complete and perfect Saviour of His people; and upon the evidence of your trust in Jesus Christ, your perfect Saviour; and, upon expression of your desire to follow the commandments of Jesus Christ, depending upon Him for imputed*

strength and, in obedience to the command of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ: - I baptize you, Brother, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” As I raised him up I concluded the ceremony with, “Amen”. This is the longest baptismal ceremony I have ever spoken. This is not a model ceremony but it does give in essence the requirements of one qualified for baptism.

We next refer to Acts, 2nd chapter, 37th verse, to show that those who were qualified to be baptized were first, “Pricked in their heart.” They were undoubtedly terribly upset by these pricking sensations caused by the working of the Holy Ghost. Peter’s sermon had brought condemnation to their hearts. The last words of Peter’s sermon must have pierced them sharply. *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”* (Acts 2:36) I have wondered if their thoughts were: I crucified Him! I crucified Him! What Guilt No wonder they said, *“Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* They had undergone such remorse in their hearts toward themselves for having part in such terrible crime! It did not take an altar call to entice them to respond. The Holy Ghost pricking their hearts with condemnation and guilt of the crucifixion of Jesus was enough to make them ask the question What shall we do?

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Scholarly men fed by pride have argued over the term, for the remission of sins, used in this expression which greatly confuses the readers and hearers. Let us look to Matthew 27:24; “When Pilot saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.” He washed his hands in the presence of the people there to prove his abhorrence of the crucifixion of Jesus. This act of washing his hands in water in the presence of this people with the expression, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person,” cleared Pilate in the sight of the people. The people responded, “...His blood be on us, and on our children.” (v. 25) These people who were pricked in heart on the day of Pentecost, as well as all of us who feel that our sins crucified this Jesus, are, and were, willing to do anything to prove our sorrow for such crime. They, as well as we, respond to that command: Repent, be baptized, save yourselves from this untoward generation: calling upon the Lord.

First, these were pricked in heart by the Holy Ghost. Next, their cases were presented before men and

brethren. Thirdly, they wished to know what to do. Next, they received special instructions consisting of definite commands, promises of gracious gifts of God, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost; testimonies, exhortations of many words; all added up to: - ***“Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”*** Fifthly: ***“They that gladly received his word were baptized.”*** Sixthly, they were added to the Church. This is the order of procedure which is given in the second chapter of Acts. This proves that one must be a *Baptized Believer* before becoming a member of the Church. We have no Scriptural evidence that this order has ever been changed.

We next consider: *Who is a Believer?* ***“And when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Acts 8:12)* We ask, what was Philip’s subject on this occasion? We read Acts 8:5; ***“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached CHRIST unto them.”*** We read again in the same chapter of Philip preaching to the eunuch: ***“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” (v. 35)*** When the eunuch asked, ***“See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? Phillip said, if thou believest with all thine heart,*****

thou mayest.” The eunuch answered, *“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”* This testimony was sufficient to satisfy Philip that the eunuch was a *believer*. It was enough to prove that he was a proper subject for baptism. The case of the eunuch’s baptism gives proof that the baptism may be administered before taking the matter up with the church. Of course the church must be consulted before one could become a member of a certain church. He must be baptized before a church could consider him as a member. According to the scriptures we have no precept given which necessitates one subscribing to a list of doctrinal theological ideas before one could be baptized. A true believer in Jesus Christ the Saviour, plus a desire to be baptized is sufficient. A proper administrator who is properly ordained and set apart by a presbytery, is qualified to preach the gospel and baptize believers. If one is not qualified to properly judge who the true believers in Jesus Christ the Saviour are, he should not be *set apart* by a presbytery to preach the gospel and baptize believers. We shall quote a portion of *Church Covenant* as recorded in “Hassell’s History of the Church of God,” page 695: *“Forasmuch as Almighty God by His grace, has been pleased to call us (whose names are underneath subscribed) out of darkness into His marvelous light, and all of us have been regularly baptized*

upon profession of our faith in Christ Jesus, and have given up ourselves to the Lord, and to one another...” This quotation shows that in the 18th century that *the baptism was based upon profession of their faith in Christ Jesus*. It shows that they were baptized before constituting themselves into a church by covenant. These were already baptized when they composed this covenant. The specifics in this covenant was by the mutual consent of the members. Mutual agreement is necessary on many things in order that brethren may agreeably walk together in church capacity. Because of the many and varied opinions expressed by professed Christians relative to *faith in Christ Jesus*; it need be that we clarify our position upon this.

A mere assent to the fact that they believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God is not sufficient proof that they believe in him. I must first be convinced that an inquirer does not have faith in himself to save himself from his sins confessed. My reasoning is that the person who thinks he can merit salvation does not actually feel the need of salvation. Next, I must be convinced of his vehement desire for salvation. Then, I want to know whether or not he has been made to trust in Jesus Christ only for salvation from his sins. I want to be further persuaded that his desire is to keep the commandments of Jesus Christ. I want to be convinced that he looks only to Jesus Christ

to strengthen him to perform works of righteousness. Lastly, I want evidence that he has the God-given, God pleasing faith without which it is impossible to please him: *“for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* (Heb. 11:6) Upon satisfactory evidence of these facts, I gladly baptize anyone in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and leave it to the judgment of the church concerning their membership. We shall conclude this installment on Believer’s Baptism by quoting the last paragraph of the last *editorial* prepared by Elder Gilbert Beebe as recorded on page 941 of “Hassell’s Church History.”

“In more than three score years of our labors in the gospel ministry we have never demanded or required of any candidate for baptism that they should sign any pledge to adhere to any other standard of faith or practice than that which is given in the Scriptures. We have said to them, *“If thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ with all thy heart, thou mayest.”* After hearing from them a satisfactory relation of what we believe to be a genuine experience of the new birth, we have usually asked them if they believe the doctrine and order held and preached by the Old or Primitive Baptist, so far as they understand it, and if their experience is in harmony with it. Upon receiving an af-

firmative reply, we bid them welcome to the ordinance, and hold ourselves ready, if need be in the same hour of the night or of the day, to administer that sacred ordinance. We know of no divine authority for delaying the administration for a more convenient season, or to first bury a father, or take leave of those we are to leave behind us. As every one who is born from above, and who loves the precious Saviour, is commanded to take his yoke, bear his cross and follow Him, and as baptism is the first act of obedience of the Heavenborn child, no other duty or religious privilege can be in order until this is performed.

May the Lord bless this attempt to your edification. Amen.

ELDER E. J. LAMBERT
Reprint-from “Signs” 1968

THINK.

“THEN they that feareth the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.”- Mal. iii. 16.

There are times when this Scripture has afforded me some comfort, especially the very last clause, for that seems to embrace or include me. Yes, even me, who am not able to speak as others

do, but feel that I am made to think upon his name, that name which has all power in heaven and on earth. I might also say under earth, for is there any place that he is not, to whom alone might dominion and power be ascribed. Surely there are times when it is most sweet when enabled to meditate upon these things and I to have a view (although in small degree) of his might and majesty, to know something of his most holy character and glorious attributes, but these things are only known as he is pleased by the light of his Spirit shining in the heart to reveal to us, and that same light that makes known unto us something of his holy character and divine perfection also shows us something of our own vileness and imperfection; and oh what a contrast, how infinitely great the difference, even to the limited view we have of these things. But I trust my God has made known to me that I am altogether vile, and have been made to cry out, Unclean, unclean! and have no power to cleanse myself. This truth we never want to lose sight of, nor to forget the hole of the pit from whence we were digged; but we know that our own heart is treacherous and deceitful and desperately wicked, and it will not do to depend upon, but if kept it will not be by our own strength, which is only weakness, but it must be alone by the power of God, which we know to be sufficient. He alone can keep us from idolatry

(giving to the creature that which belongs to the Creator, which we all are naturally inclined to do), but let this be our desire, that he keep us from denying him and claiming that for ourselves which does not belong to us; that is, the ability to do or not do, which my own experience teaches me is untrue, and my understanding of the Scripture the same. I can do that which is good and well-pleasing in my Master's sight only as he is pleased to work in me. If I have ever done one truly good, unselfish act it was, only as the love of Christ constrained me, and the only cause I know of that I have not gone to the same excess in sin as some others have, is because of restraining grace. If there is any difference in my nature from others, I do not know it, all being children of wrath. The only difference is what grace makes them; to grace all the glory belongs. Then, knowing these things, how very wicked it would be on my part to claim for myself that which I know does not belong to me (power to do good if I see fit and proper to do it), thereby robbing God of his glory. Will a man rob God? The question is asked and answered by God himself. (See Mal. iii. 8.) But God is not mocked. If we sow to the flesh we shall of the flesh reap corruption, and when we undertake to walk by the light of the spark of the fire of our own kindling this shall we have at God's hand: we shall lie down in sorrow. Then how vain to

claim anything of ourselves, who are nothing, less than nothing, and vanity. But how good it is when our minds are led away from the vanity of the flesh, and the utter vileness and weakness of the same, and look alone to that God who has all power, and has created all things for his own glory, who is the only all-wise Creator, and supreme Ruler of the universe, controlling and governing all things after the counsel of his own will, working in his people that which is good and well-pleasing in his sight. He works and none can hinder, and I know that unless he works in me all is vain, for without him I cannot do anything. This truth I never want to lose sight of, that he alone can keep me, and that he alone is my Savior, now, henceforth and forever. I love to think of him, and rejoice in him, having no confidence in the flesh, knowing that if we live after the flesh we die, but if through the Spirit we do mortify the deeds of the body we live. Let us not forget that it is through or by the Spirit that this is done. Then to God, the Spirit, all praise is due, and I love to think of it this way, and right here I want to quote from the apostle Paul to his beloved brethren at Philippi that which has appeared beautiful to me : *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever*

things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things.” But this I can only do as I am enabled by him whose thoughts and ways are as far above my thoughts and ways as the heavens are above the earth.

Brother Dodson, I will mail what I have written to you, not for the purpose of it being published in the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, of which you are an associate editor, for I consider that the limited space in the paper should be taken up, with the writings of those who are better enabled to write of the honor of our King than I am, and also to the good and comfort of his subjects, so this is for your perusal. I have written to ease my own mind, with hope that it may not be a burden to you to read my imperfect writing; you being my beloved pastor, and knowing my weakness as you do, I feel assured of the charity you possess, and I make free to you some of my mind and thoughts.

From one who trusts he has been made to love the Lord, and to be a lover of good men, made good only as the love of God has been shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit that has been given unto them.

Your little brother,
MARTIN D. FISHER.

CHARITY.

FOR some cause my mind has been directed to the word "charity", I have decided to pen a few thoughts as they occur to me. If I have the right conception of the word "charity" ninety percent of the people have the wrong view. The Apostles often use the word in their writings. Paul said in 1 Corinthians xiii. Yet *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I have become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."* *"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."* Faith, hope and charity, and the greatest of these is charity (love). It has been for a number of years the idea among worldly religionists that charity is a gift bestowed upon persons, and for a long time there have been institutions organized for the purpose of taking care of donations named as charity, and they have officers of different ranks to take care of the funds, and of course these officers have to be paid, and now it is a custom to give of their abundance a small amount for charitable purposes, not knowing what person or persons their gift is going to benefit. But listen to Paul: *"And though I bestow all [not part] my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."* Now compare Paul's

statement with the general idea, and note the difference. If he gives all his goods, and even his body, to be burned, and has not charity (love) it profiteth nothing. Charity means love, and where no love is there is no real charity. It has been a practice among the Old Primitive Baptists in all ages to look after their afflicted members, not through institutions, but according as the Lord hath prospered them. (See 1 Cor. xiv. 1-4.) I can well remember back in the latter seventies and eighties, on each Saturday the pastor would during conference make an inquiry as to the welfare of the brethren. His question was: Brethren, is there anyone in need? Anyone sick, needing attention? If so, let it be known. I have witnessed several times some one would rise and address the moderator and brethren with, Brother or sister so-and-so is sick, or had some misfortune. Then the moderator would direct the body to get together and take steps for their relief. The deacons were admonished to do this duty. No contributions were begged from the world, no funds as charity to be sent to some charitable institution, but sent direct to the one in need. Charity doth not behave itself unseemly, rejoiceth not in iniquity; beareth all things, and never faileth. Love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God. So we may safely say true charity is as much the fruit of God's Spirit as is love, peace and hope, for all true love is the outgrowth of that

indwelling love of God, and the performance of any of the commands as are laid down by Jesus and his apostles is only evidence of that love of God shed abroad in the heart. Charity is not, and cannot be, only a custom just handed down for generations, but is the direct command handed down by Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Where there is no love there is no charity, and I have often said love is the strongest and most profound word in use, for God is love, and he hath loved us (those whom he foreknew) with an everlasting love. Yes, those he loved in eternity he still loves, and will love in time and all eternity, manifesting his love to them, causing them to cry, Abba, Father, and also to love one another; for there is no greater evidence of a true child of God than the expressions of love one toward another. Love will let itself be known, for by the standard of honest weights and measurements a true manifestation of God's love is made manifest, for said the apostle John, "*But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*" Well, if charity is love, and one claims to be a lover of God, how can we know it unless there is some manifestation of that love by its fruits, John said, My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Brethren, I have written this in fear. I hope to be remembered by all when at the throne of grace.

I am, I hope, your brother in hope, and in afflictions,

J. B. BOWDEN.
 WARING, Texas, April 4, 1923.

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FOR NOVEMBER 2004

Lessie Sladky, NC	5.00
Joann Fletcher, MD	25.00
Buford Thompson, VA	5.00
Glenna Link, TN	5.00

ST. MATTHEW 18:1-5.

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

And Jesus called a little child unto them, and set him in the midst of them,

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

OBITUARIES

RESOLUTION OF RESPECT

We hopefully bow in humble submission to the will of our merciful and kind Heavenly Father, who works all things after the council of his will. Our Heavenly Father saw fit to call from our midst Sister Gracie E. Mc Clure on October 8, 2004. Sister Gracie was born June 7, 1917, making her stay on this earth 87 years and 4 months. She was afflicted and in ill health many years, which prevented her from attending meetings, She went to sleep in her sleep, now waiting for that great day, when Christ shall return, with a great shout and unite her spirit and body and be made like Christ's glorious body. She had a hope that she was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and her name was written in the Lamb's Book of Life. *"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they rise."* Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead, Our deepest sympathy and prayers goes out to her family. May God in his wisdom and mercy send to them that great comforter to give unto them comfort, bind up their broken

hearts and ease their pain with his everlasting love, *"He will swallow up death and victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces."* *"Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave where is thy victory ."* She was married to Okey K. McClure (Deacon) for 52 years who preceeded her in death. To this marriage was born 3 daughters and 2 sons who mourn her passing, also 17 grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren, and 15 great great grandchildren, two brothers and 1 sister, Sister Gracie had her membership moved to Fairview Primitive Baptist Church when it was built in 1963. Services were conducted at Curry's Funeral Home, Alum Creek, WV. by Elder Ronald K. Crouch, Harold R. Johnson, and Brother William A. Johnson. She was laid to rest beside her husband at Midkiff Cemetery, Sumerco, WV. Written by request of the church.

Resolved 1 copy for church records, 1 copy for her family, and 1 to be sent to the Signs of the Times.

Elder Ronald K, Crouch,
Moderator

Elder Harold R. Johnson,
Co. Moderator

Brother William A. Johnson,
Clerk

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SONG

*Breathe from the gentle South, O Lord,
And cheer me from the North;
Blow on the treasures of thy word,
And call the spices forth!*

*I wish, thou knowest, to be resigned,
And wait with patient hope;
But hope delayed fatigues the mind,
And drinks the spirits up.*

*Help me to reach the distant goal;
Confirm my feeble knee,
Pity the sickness of a soul
That faints for love of thee.*

*Cold as I feel this heart of mine,
Yet since I feel it so,
It yields some hope of life divine,
Within, however low.*

*I seem forsaken and alone,
I hear the lion roar,
And every door is shut but one,
And that is mercy's door.*

*There, till the dear Deliverer come,
I'll wait with humble prayer;
And when he calls his exile home,
The Lord shall find me there.*

Newton.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	26
Elder J. B. Farmer	
CORRESPONDENCE	30
ARTICLES	33
Steve A. Everett	
Jeanette Robertson	
VOICES OF THE PAST	39
Elder Lewis Edwards	
<i>sent in by Edrie Clifton</i>	
Elder Graydon R. Smith	
Elder J. C. Philpot	
MEETINGS	47
CONTRIBUTIONS	47
OBITUARIES	48
Ruth Beatrice Coleman Jeffreys	

EDITORIAL

"...who is my neighbor." Luke 10:29



Elder J. B. Farmer

Here is a great question that was raised and was answered by the same man about two thousand years ago. I am made to believe that this question is also raised and answered in our minds and hearts by the Holy Spirit, if we are the children of God. The true answer to the question "*who is my*

neighbor?" is hidden from all whose names were not written in the Lamb's Book of Life from the foundation of the world – the ones called "*wise and prudent*" by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. But it is revealed to the ones that were loved with an everlasting love – the ones called "*babes*" by Him. May God give us understanding of His truth.

The man who asked the question so long ago was a lawyer. In those days a lawyer was a religious man who spent his time trying to interpret the legal scriptures. He was one who tried to give practical applications for others to follow as they endeavored to keep the law of commandments. No doubt, he labored over hard questions daily, in order to try to do his duty as a lawyer. At some point, this lawyer was given to know that there was such a thing as eternal life, which was to be received by inheritance. And he was given a desire to obtain that life. So he tested Jesus by asking Him this question. "*Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*"

When the "*babes*" of God are brought to the place where they are given a desire to know the truth, and given a desire for it to be applied to themselves, they must have answers to their deepest questions. They must be stripped from all self-righteousness and confidence in the flesh, in order to really know the truth. They must be taught that there is nothing they can do to obtain salvation, for salvation is alto-

gether of the Lord. Any idea that they can do something to gain the favor of God must be killed.

So Jesus put the question back to him saying, "*What is written in the law? How readest thou?*" Jesus drew from the lawyer the understanding that was hidden in his heart. He caused him to make a confession of faith. Certain things were revealed to the lawyer, I am made to believe, that he had never seen before. Things came from his mouth, which were as high above the natural man as the heaven is above the earth.

The lawyer had the written law for reference. He had the commandments, which were written on the tablets of stone. He also had the perfect law of God written upon his tender heart of flesh and in his spiritual mind. This is evident since he gave a good answer to Jesus by saying, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.*"

And Jesus said to him, "*Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.*" Now here is where the killing comes in. The child of God is made to experience the truth for himself. He is given to try to keep the perfect commandments of God again and again. He always finds himself to be a failure. Because of this, he is made to conclude that he is a sinner. He is made to know that in the flesh there dwells

no good thing. He is made to see with the apostle, that when he would do good, evil is present with him. He is made to see that he is vile according to nature. He is made to see that he is lost world without end, if his keeping the perfect law of God is the way to salvation.

The child of God is given to desire to love his neighbor as himself, in order to keep the commandment and to please God. But first, he must know who his neighbor is. Is it the man who lives next door, or one who lives in his town? Is it his relative in the flesh, or the one with whom he is friendly and comfortable? Or is it some other one? So, willing to justify himself, the lawyer said unto Jesus, "*And who is my neighbor?*"

Jesus, in profound wisdom, and in a way of teaching, which is applicable to all generations said, "*A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up*

his wounds, Pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?"

The words of Jesus, God in the flesh, went way beyond the answer expected by any man. They not only revealed who was the neighbor, but went into the deep and hidden spiritual substance of the matter. Jesus, in a mystery, gave the experience of the child of God. This account bears a striking resemblance to the experience of Paul on the road to Damascus. And we are taught that Paul was singled out as a pattern or an example to all who would believe after him. Therefore, in my poor way of expressing what I have been made to believe, all of God's little ones are given to know a little of what Paul and this traveler experienced.

Here was a man that was going somewhere. He was traveling down. We know that to travel downhill is a very pleasant experience since it requires very little labor. It is easy. So it is easy to be traveling along in nature with a feeling of self-satisfaction in ones accomplishments and

strengths. That one is alive in self-righteousness and confidence in the flesh. Paul said that at one time in his life he was like this. He said that he was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, he died. Paul was killed by the law.

All of a sudden, when it is least expected, trouble comes. And this trouble is of an extremely serious nature. It is a life or death struggle. When one experiences this trouble, he sees that death is upon him. He sees no way of escape. He is stripped of his raiment of self-righteousness. He is wounded in his flesh, and shown the weakness of it, and that the pains of death are upon it by the righteous law of God. And he is left half dead. The outward man is killed, but the inward man is still alive. It is made apparent to the man that the flesh is dead to righteousness – there is no goodness in his flesh. But there is still life within him. The outward man is perishing, but the inner man is renewed day by day. So there is still a little window of hope open to the child of grace by the Spirit, even when he sees himself dead in trespasses and sins.

We are made to see that no one, no matter how religious, or how perfect in his own eyes, is able to render the least bit of aid to the suffering child of God. They look upon him, and pass by on the other side. The worldly religionists cannot know the trouble experienced by the child of God. They do not know what

it is to be made to realize that one is a sinner worthy of the wrath of God, even eternal destruction. They think that the suffering of others is a direct result of sin. And they think that the suffering of others is the just reward to them. And they think that others are much more sinful than they are themselves. They are like Job's miserable comforters. They cannot help the suffering child, but only add to its misery. They can only look on the one suffering and pass on by.

But Jesus said that there was a certain Samaritan who came where the wounded traveler was, saw him and had compassion. Now we know that a Samaritan was an outcast. He was neither Jew nor Greek. He was considered a half-breed, which was thought to be worse than any other person in the world. He was thought to be so bad that no righteous person should speak to him, and surely could not touch him lest he should be defiled. Jesus was called a Samaritan by His enemies. Those who hated Him also accused Him of having a devil, or demon, and sought to kill Him. I am made to believe that the Samaritan in this account, stood for Jesus, Himself. A Man of Sorrows acquainted with grief. A Man despised by His own countrymen, and an outcast - one deemed worthy of death.

The Samaritan came to the stripped, wounded, half-dead man and had compassion upon him. So Jesus comes to the Child of God,

who has been brought under the law, which is the ministration of death. The law is the schoolmaster, which brings us to Christ. Jesus sees his helpless condition, has pity, and renders aid. As the Samaritan went to him and bound up his wounds and poured in oil and wine, so Jesus comes to the aid of the half-dead child of God. He binds up his wounds with forgiveness, and pours in the oil of the Spirit, and pours in the wine, which stands for the cleansing blood of the Lamb. The Samaritan set him on his beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. Jesus, in grace and mercy, does for the wounded child what he cannot do for himself. He carries him to the inn, which I am made to believe, stands for the church, and the little one is nurtured there.

The care for the wounded one didn't end when the Samaritan left. But the Samaritan guaranteed that all the needs of the helpless one should be met until he would come again. Even so, Jesus made provisions for the child of grace, which were sufficient for all his days upon the earth and beyond. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is the One who has begun a good work in you, and He shall perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. As the Samaritan promised to come again, so Jesus promised with a promise that cannot fail. He said, *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you*

unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Jesus is coming back to gather His own unto Himself.

Now, what is the answer to the great question, "*who is my neighbor*?" Who was neighbor to the wounded, half-dead man? The lawyer indicated, when asked, that it was the one that showed mercy. That one who showed mercy was the Samaritan. Who is the neighbor to the broken hearted child of God? Without a doubt it is Jesus. Jesus is our neighbor - the one who showed mercy on us. When we could not help ourselves, He came to the place where we were and ministered unto us. He forgave us our sins, gave us of His Spirit, cleansed us from all unrighteousness, carried us to the church, cared for us, paid all our debts, and will come again to receive us to Himself.

Jesus gave the lawyer a command. He said, "*Go, and do thou likewise.*" Here is the command from God to every true believer. They are commanded to do as He did. By the grace of God, we must show pity and mercy to one another. By the grace of God, we must lay down our lives for one another. By the grace of God, we must love one another. Jesus said, "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends.*" And He said, "*These things I command you, that ye love one another.*" And He also said, "*Inasmuch as you have done*

it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto Me." May God give us grace to fulfill His law of love. May we be given to walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. May we be given grace to show mercy to one another, and to be found in Him and in His righteousness.

Written in love and in hope of eternal life.

Elder J. B. Farmer

8-6-2004

CORRESPONDENCE

Dec. 3, 2004

My Dream

Elder Key and dear readers of the Signs:

For two or more years I have wrestled as to whether to share the following beautiful experience with my family - both naturally and spiritually.

When I awoke from this dream that morning I felt that I was standing on holy ground and I seemed to be in a daze. I waited awhile before I told my wife about this wonderful revelation which I hope was from the Lord as it seemed too much for me to fathom.

In Mal. 3:18 it relates that those that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard it. May this be His will in relating this experience to you. May

this book of remembrances embrace each of us that think upon His name.

Note: The natural brothers that were in the dream were Elder Julian R. Williams and J. Leland Williams.

May 20, 2002

During the night of May 16, 2002 I was given a precious dream that I want to leave in writing before I forget all of the details. Some of the dream I'm sure will never leave me.

After two months I was still trying to realize that Julian was gone from this natural life forever. In this dream I met him face to face. It seemed that he had returned from someplace, not clear in the dream as to where. I asked him where he had been and he said I love where I am now. His face was Julian but it had a beautiful shining expression. His eyes were different and good to look into. My next question to him was if I could tell his family I had seen him. He said no, not to do that. This to me meant all of this was just for me to ponder. Next, after this some people around us remarked how wonderful he looked.

We were seated on the front pew in a church. Leland, my older brother that died in 1999 appeared and sat down between us. He said I was hoping that you two would be here. I did not in this dream see his face - just heard his voice and felt his body against me as we sat together. We three were touching as we sat together and it was a feeling of reunion with my natural brothers

but in a way and place I had never experienced before.

After awakening I pondered the dream. We were talking and looking natural it seemed but each had a different countenance.

I believe with all my heart that God showed me in this dream that my brothers were with Him in paradise and my vision was as looking through a glass darkly to glimpse the spiritual realm. While in the natural realm we cannot see fully the spirituality of His beauty. I am not sure of a heavenly home as I was seeing this in a natural view. Great are the mysteries of Godliness.

I'll never see those mysteries fully in this natural world but I hope I have been given a view of the glory that awaits His saints after death. While in this body of clay we cannot see God and I do not believe in natural recognition in heaven as the natural can never see spiritual until we are in the spiritual realm. When the saints see Him as He is, they will be like Him and all will be joy unspeakable and glory forever.

Your unworthy brother,
Burnell B. Williams

PSALM 119:11-12.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.

542 Friendly Dr.
Goldsboro, NC 27530
Dec. 8, 2004

Elder William Hale Terry
Circulation Manager and Treasurer
Signs of the Times

Dear Elder Terry,

12/14/2004

Enclosed is a 1 yr. renewal and a gift for the Signs. We are blessed to have this publication that stands for the truth. God bless everyone who works so hard to keep the Signs coming to us.

We have visited Smith River and Pigg River Associations. We love you and enjoy the ministers whom we have heard preach.

In hope,
Dora Vick

December 7, 2004
Elder Wm. Hale Terry
202 Carousel Lane
Meadows of Dan, VA 24120-4403

Dear Elder Terry:

Iwish to renew my subscription to the Signs Of The Times for another two years. Enclosed is my check for \$50.00. Please use the remainder as you see fit.

May we thank the Lord that He has enabled you and the others associated with the Signs to continue to publish the paper for those of us who enjoy it so much.

Sincerely yours,
Charles Alders

Dear Elder Terry:

Please renew my subscription for the "Signs of The Times" for the coming year. I am enclosing a check for \$30.00- \$15.00 for the subscription and \$15.00 for a contribution.

As I continue to read the Signs I am made to realize that it does not matter when the editorials and articles were written in time, whether it be one hundred years or just a month ago, we can read, relate to, and enjoy them regardless of when they were written. Time has not changed the doctrine that we contend for and nothing has changed with God. I am thankful that He continues to bless us with individuals, both past and present, whom are blessed to write, and individuals whom have dedicated themselves to the publishing of the Signs. I have a hope that God will continue to bless the publishing of the Signs for as long as there are brothers, sisters, and friends, whom are seeking and searching for the truth.

A brother in hope
George W. Hyslip

ARTICLES

6130 Old Cifax Road
Forest, VA 24551
Oct 14, 2004

To the Signs of the Times,

I have had the blessed privilege recently to examine an old family Bible belonging to the late Elder Henry Valentine Cole who lived in Floyd County, Virginia, near Locust Grove. This Bible is now in the possession of Elder Cole's granddaughter, Nancy Cole Leftwich of Madison Heights Virginia.

Elder Cole's parents, Fleming and Abigail Vest Cole were among the early settlers of Floyd County. His paternal great-great-grandfather was Joseph Cole, a soldier in the Revolutionary War. On Oct. 18, 1877 he married Miss Tempy Lawrence. A document found in the Bible states the following: Laurel Creek Primitive Baptist Church Floyd County Va. Saturday before the fourth Sunday in July 1897 Henry Valentine Cole is liberated to go into all the world wherever the Lord may cast his lot and preach the Gospel of Christ. Amos Dickerson, Moderator, A.F. Ferguson Clerk.

Elder Cole faithfully served various Primitive Baptist Churches in the Floyd area including: Laurel Creek, Valley View and County Line and others. He was a close friend of Elder P.G. Lester who was one of the

editors of the Primitive Baptist publication "Zion's Landmark".

Elder Cole was instrumental in the establishment of the Locust Grove Telephone Company and also served as it's president. He was also a well known schoolteacher in Floyd County and also served the County in the capacity of land assessor and justice of the peace. He and his wife were blessed to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in 1928 before his death on Dec 12, 1935 at the age of 82 years.

In his family Bible Elder Cole documented a very accurate record of all the persons he baptized in the time period 1901-1925. No doubt many of the names listed have descendants still living in the Floyd County and Roanoke, Virginia area.

I have attempted to transcribe this list as accurately as I possibly could. I stand to be corrected on some of the spelling as some of it was not legible due to the age and condition of the paper.

Perhaps you would like to publish these names in some future edition of the "Signs" I am also including a photo of Elder Cole and his wife, Tempy Lawrence Cole, a memorial that Elder Cole wrote on the occasion of his mother's death in 1924 and a copy of a Circular Letter to the churches of the Smith River Association in 1897 also found in the Bible. Any or all of this you are more than welcome to publish. I hope it will be of interest to some of the readers.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve A. Everett, Forest, Va.



Elder Henry Valentine Cole and wife
Tempy Lawrence Cole

*A record of persons baptized by
Elder Henry Valentine Cole
1901-1925*

Cole Shanks-1901
Frazier Sowers wife-1902
Austin Martin and wife-1902
Andy J. Martin's wife-1902
Cannon Smith-1902
Wilmouth Jane Conner wife of George
B. Conner-1902
Carra Munsey, wife of Kyle Munsey 1902
widow Dillon (near Auburn)
Wife of Jack Peters
James Maxey
Ellen Roop wife of James Roop-June
1903
Sallie H. Phillips (a widow)-June 1903
Elzora Poff Wife of James Poff - August

4, 1904
Cannada Light-August 16, 1904
Osburn Sowers-May 26, 1907
Charles Reed-August 7, 1907
William C. Booth - May 26 1907
Charles Poff-August 11 1907
Mrs. James Lemon and Daughter Mrs
Plegar-Sept 1907
Joseph Board and wife-Sept 19 1907
Miss Ida Dobyns-Oct 6 1907
Mrs. William H. Poff Nov 9 1907
Miss Bet tie Spangler-May 1908
H. A. Spangler-June 1908
Columbus Rakes-Nov 1908
Letcher Cole-May 1909
Noah Spangler and wife-Oct 3, 1909
Archie Sowers-Nov 1909
Mary Cole Kyle Cole's wife-Nov 1909
A Sister Willis at Salem Church-March
18, 1910
Laura O Board wife of Ras Board-March
27 1910
Pearly Cole wife of Letcher Cole -March
27, 1910
Eliza Cannady wife of Otho Cannady-1st
Sunday in June 1910
Cloe Martin wife of J. T. Martin-Aug. 27
1910
Oma Board wife of Henry Board-Aug. 27,
1910
Fouch Cole wife of Waller S. Cole -Aug.
27, 1910
Mrs. Conner wife of Walter Conner -Aug
27, 1910
Florence Lester wife of William Lester-
June 1910
Samuel and wife-Jan 1911
Henry Board-Jan 1911
Mrs. Amelia Poff wife of Riley Poff April
8 1911
Miss Sarah Furrow-April 9 1911
Charles Poff's wife-July 8 1911
Giles Martin's wife-July 8 1911
Samuel Terry-July 22 1911
Samuel Nowlin-July 22 1911
S. M. Poff-July 29 1911
Oscar Wickman's wife-Aug 4, 1911
Vinie Mills-Aug 4, 1911

Mrs. Oscar Poff-Aug 12, 1911
 Mrs. Charles Reed-Aug 12, 1911
 Robert Conner and wife-June 16, 1912
 Both couples baptized at Laurel Creek
 Jasper Jones and wife-June 16, 1912
 Mrs. Smith-June 23 1912-County Line
 Sister Janie Nichols-July 14, 1912-Salem
 Mary E. Poff (Wife of K. Poff)-Sept 29, 1912-Salem
 Lucy Austin-Oct. 13 1912
 Mande Blackwell (wife of Arthur)-March 22, 1913
 Mrs. Gracie Basham-Aug. 17, 1913
 R. H Bugg - Aug. 24 1913
 Annie Wilson - Aug. 31, 1913
 H. A. Conner and wife-Sept. 18, 1913
 Joseph Clower-2nd Sunday in June 1914
 Wife of Tom Trail 4th Sunday in Aug. 1914
 James Ferano and wife, Abigail-2nd Sunday in June 1915
 Lucy Martin-2nd Sunday in June 1915
 Mrs Cynthia Booth (date not stated)
 Lemuel Farris and wife (date not stated)
 Mrs. Poage Sept 29, 1917
 Mrs. Jarrels-May 1918
 Mrs Palmer-1918
 Mrs. Hattie Collins (widow)-May 25, 1919
 Waskie Conner and wife-July 13, 1919
 Ervine Poff's wife-July 13, 1919
 Mrs. James Conner and daughter, Oakey-April 1921
 William Turner-April 1921 at County Line
 Balard Dobyns-June 5, 1921
 Joseph Justin-Aug. 14, 1921
 Thomas Agee and wife-Aug. 20, 1921
 the widow Aldridge-July 29, 1923 (for Pure Creek)
 Mrs. Robert Smith-1923
 D.W. Vest-1925
 Mrs Homer Kelly-Oct 4, 1925
 Dallas Young-Oct 12, 1925
 Sam Poff-Oct 12, 1925

Mr. Mrs Roy Conner, Laura Conner-Nov. 8, 1925
 J.D. King-Nov. 8, 1925
 Mary Conner, widow of John Aaron Conner
 (handwriting very shaky on last entry)

I will try to write a few lines in memory of the death of my mother Abigail Cole who died on the 8th day of Dec. 1924, at the age of 91 years and 2 months. She was a member of the Primitive Baptist church for about 68 years and had the confidence and fellowship of the church, and lived at peace among her neighbors and was always ready to make any sacrifice that she could make for their comfort. She lived a widow for 36 years. Her husband, Flemming Cole, died in the year 1888. The writer was the only child. She leaves 5 living grand children. O.F., S.W., S.L., C.R. and Minnie M. Cole and several great-grand children, and while she lived with us was old and feeble, yet we miss her and feel so sad and lonely and when we enter her room we are made to feel so keenly that we have no mother. She always tried to impress upon our minds the vital principals of morality and industry. She was called aunt Abbie by all the neighbors and was loved and respected by all so far as I was able to know.

H. V. Cole

CIRCULAR LETTER.

TO THE CHURCHES OF THE
SMITH'S RIVER DISTRICT PRIMI-
TIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION--

BRETHREN: According to our custom you will expect a circular letter, and for a subject we will call your attention to Hebrews, 13th chapter, 1st verse, which reads as follows: "*Let brotherly Love continue.*" Jesus says that by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another. Let brotherly love continue. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently, being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. Love is the fulfilling of the law. We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. It seems to us that by the quotation of the apostle to let brotherly love continue ye ought to strive against everything that would hinder that brotherly love. James says: Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Brethren, we see many things in our brethren we don't like, but let us remember that we are in the flesh, and Paul said in my flesh dwelleth no good thing; for to will with me is present, but how to perform that which is

good I find not, for the good that I would I do not, but the evil I would not that I do. Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? We groan within, and can say, like Paul, Oh, wretched man that I am, a poor sinner. Oh, my leanness, if saved saved by grace. "*Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to Thy cross I cling.*" We trust, brethren, when we have these feelings that we are dead to sin; that is, dead to the-love and enjoyment in sin. We are still sinners and there is a groaning within us that was not so when we were dead in trespasses and in sins. When we were dead in trespasses and in sins there was no groaning within us, but we were satisfied, but when we were quickened by the Spirit then trouble came, and tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience and experience hope. Then we have hope that entereth into that with the vail. Then let us love one another, for love is of God, and he that loveth is born of God. Then let brotherly love continue. Now, brethren, Let us point out some plain duties and please do not get offended. We are commanded to assemble ourselves together and forsake it not. Pay attention to the word preached. Read your Bible at home to your children. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Do not send them to Sunday school. We are to observe what is commanded. Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the Law of Christ. Visit the father-

less and widows in their affliction and keep himself unspotted from the world. Let the deacons look after the poor and exhort the brethren to their duty. Remember your pastors that watch over you and feed you with spiritual things; minister to him of your carnal things; consider his labors; how he travels over hills and mountains, through heat and cold to preach to you and you not give him a nickel. Does that look like Paul's preaching in the 9th chapter of 1st Corinthians? Does it look like feeding a flock and eating of the milk of the flock, sowing spiritual things and reaping carnal things. Is not preaching the gospel to you comforting to you in all our tribulations, building you up and strengthening you in the faith? When you grow in grace. Then remember your feeder and feed and clothe him. Then you will be blessed, for it is more blessed to give than to receive. He that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly nor of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver. Now, brethren, consider well what we have said, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things. Signed by order of the Association.

W. A. VIA, Clerk.
 THOMAS L. ROBERTSON,
 Moderator.

*"If We Suffer, We Shall
 Also Reign with Him"*

As I awakened this morning, a precious scripture was upon my mind, "*If we suffer, ye shall also reign with Him.*" I had always thought of this scripture in an eternal setting but this morning I was given to reflect upon the infirmities I had been blessed to endure through my Lord and Saviour over the past four-and-a-half years and given to think of this time of great affliction as a time of reigning with Christ.

Through all of the suffering, I experienced a great peace and joy in my heart, being made content in whatsoever state I was. We know that this is not possible in the flesh. I also was given to reflect upon a dream I was given many years ago, if not deceived: I was in a high, lifted up place, carried to and fro; and beneath me was water, and I could not understand why I would not fall into that water, but I never did. During these past four-and-a-half years, I have certainly been carried to and fro. I endured a stroke, surgery for ovarian cancer, gone through chemo twice, had my entire digestive system repaired because of damage from chemo, had a staff infection from the hospital after this previous surgery, suffered a stitch abscess in my incision after surgery performed two-and-a-half years ago, and coughing up blood.

One would think that the natural man would be overcome in such a state of constant trials and afflictions that he would give up and curse God as Job's wife told Job to do when he was enduring his time of afflictions. This is how the flesh responds, but thanks be unto God that the spiritual man is kept by the power of God and in the spirit his feelings are, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* As I was lifted up above the water in my dream, the water (trials and afflictions) were still there for me to have to bear, but the power of God sustained me and gave me grace and strength to endure the great trials and afflictions. I never fell into that water; I have not been consumed thus far. My Lord and Saviour has lifted me in the spirit above the trials and afflictions and given me to rejoice in His love and mercy and experience a time of reigning with Him.

We are made to witness with Paul when he said he didn't know if he was out of the body or in the body, that he experienced things it was unlawful for man to speak. You cannot understand how you can feel such peace and joy when the natural body is in such a state of suffering. Your reign with Christ lessens the pain and suffering the flesh is experiencing because your eyes are fixed on Christ. You feel to have a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

I've thought many times over

the past years during this great time of affliction about the precious scriptures recorded in the Bible and how you read them hoping the Lord will bless you with understanding; but when you are blessed to experience the scriptures, they are made alive and you feel the presence of the Lord walking with you in the cool of the day. The night (darkness where there is no understanding) is dispelled and the light (understanding) shines and the Lord blesses you with His wisdom and you can see things you never saw before.

How pleasant it is when you can feel to be in the cleft of the rock. You are in a safe and secure place in the bosom of Christ encradled in His everlasting arms above the cares of this world. You don't feel the pain of your afflictions. Your eyes are fixed upon Christ. I believe this is how it was with Stephen when he was being stoned to death. He wasn't feeling the pain because His Lord had lifted him above the natural state he was in.

The natural man cannot comprehend the great mystery of God and understand how this can be. *"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell*

in You. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Romans 8:5-10) “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:16-18).

I believe the glory of the Lord which is revealed in His children is manifest to those of like precious faith to show forth the power of God in His little ones in their sojourn of their path which is laid out for them to walk in this life. The ways of the Lord are so much higher than our ways and past finding out. He is so omnipotent and we are nothing. *“Without Him, we can do nothing.”*

I feel the Lord’s people do reign with Him in this life when they are lifted up in His spirit. That is the only time they can lie down and rest in peace and joy. *“Perfect love casteth out fear.”* His love is a gift, free and unmerited. Aren’t we so thankful it is this way? If it depended on something we had to do, we would all fall by the wayside.

We bask in the warmth of His tender love and mercy. *“Unto you*

that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.” All things are possible in the Lord. *“He is the author and finisher of our faith.”* He blesses us to reign with Him in the spirit. How precious are these bethel spots which He blesses us to experience. May His name be glorified forever.

Love in Christ,
Jeannette Robertson
December 14, 2004

VOICES OF THE PAST

ELDER LEWIS EDWARDS

Sand Lick, Dickenson Co., Va.
August 1, 1893

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Old Baptist faith and order;

I have been impressed in mind for a long time to leave for you and my dear children a short history of my life, and the many sins I have passed through since I have been a pilgrim through this unfriendly world, from the year 1812 to 1893. I, Lewis Edwards, was born in Franklin county, Va., March 10, 1812. My parents were Brice and Jane Edwards. I was raised by pious parents, they taught me to be strictly honest and never to use profane language, and I can say now I never swore an oath in my life. My father

moved to patrick county in my 15th year, and though I was called a pious youth, I was a sinner, and sin was sweet to the flesh. I loved the company of young people and, their sinful ways until I was about 16 or 17 years old, when my mind began to be troubled about my condition. I saw I was a sinner, and not ready to die and the Bible said the wicked should be turned into hell. I became uneasy, for I knew I was a sinner. I became so uneasy and could see no rest; I thought I must try to pray; I did not want anyone to know that I was trying to pray. At last I went off in a lonesome dark hollow where I thought no one would see me. There the devil tried to shame me out of it; he said I was too young to begin now; I would be slighted by all my comrades ; I might yet have a great deal of pleasure with them and then there'll be time enough when I was much older. But I can say bless the Lord, He is above the devil.

I did not know how soon I might be called to die, and then I would be forever gone to that awful place, forever there to dwell. At last I ventured to get on my knees; I didn't know what to say, I could only say, Lord have mercy on me, A poor wretched sinner. I still went to my self and tried to pray, and I have never got entirely shut of my troubles until the Lord set me free, although it sometimes wore off and I did wrong. I would make promises to try to do better, and some times I would fail, then I would feel dreadful. I went on

in that way trying to do something good in the sight of God and failing until I lost all confidence in myself. The Lord spared me until I was twenty years old, and in my 21st I was married to Nancy Howell, in Floyd County, Va., daughter of Benjamin Howell. After I was married I think it was the blessed will of the Lord to make my condition plain to me in a dream. It was so great I never can forget it.

I dreamed I was going to school with all of my playmates, we were all assembled at the schoolhouse, and I saw our teacher. He was an uncommonly large black man. It seemed I was badly dissatisfied with the teacher, and some of the scholars told the teacher I was going to run away and leave him. I thought he said if I did he would bring me back and burn me in hell fire. I started to run with all my power, for I expected he would follow me, and I awoke running. When I awoke none but the Lord can tell my feelings, the dream was made so plain to me.

My playmates and myself had been going to school to the devil; he was our teacher. My brethren, I then saw my condition, but feared I had seen it too late. I intended to pray as long as the Lord would spare me, I felt there was no chance for me. I wandered from place to place, in secret places, feeling lost and undone forever until at last I dreamed another dream with a circumstance in connection with the other dream.

I dreamed I was standing at the door of torment and the keeper was standing at the door, one said to the keeper, "let us see the souls of some that's gone to torment." he opened the door wide and brought out three, set them on the ground, and they burned continually with a blue blaze like brimstone. I thought he or they must go back. I thought the poor creatures crawled back into a place which looked melting hot, and they held up their heads blowing; It looked like their condition was dreadful indeed beyond expression.

Oh! reader, think before it is too late! I then turned and walked away; I seemed to have a load on my back, and in very bad clothing; I was going straight up to a fine house where sat Col. Jacob Helem at an upper door of his house. I thought I looked mighty low going up to such a fine gentleman, but I thought it was made known to me that he would, in a short time, have to die and go to that dreadful place I had just passed. In a short time when working in my field, a man passed by me and said, "Col. Helem is dead." My dear brethren, it was dreadful to me, I never will be able to tell my feelings. I then had no hope, my trouble, it seemed was more than I could bear. I wandered through the wild woods with my Bible in my hands crying, Lord have mercy on me, a poor sinner, and save me ere I am gone. I had tried all my good works and all had done no good; I saw I was gone unless blessed Jesus was pleased to help

me. I thought I was in a strange way that no man ever was in before; I did not think the Lord ever would have mercy on such a wretch as I was. I cried, Lord, if I must go to torment, let me go a beggar. In that dreadful condition I went to meeting to see my sister; Sarah Arrington baptized. We met at the place and after preaching the church was called together, they began to sing, and their song I can never forget, I was sitting off like a poor criminal, their song was:

*What a mercy is this, what
a heaven of bliss,*

*How unspeakably favored
am I*

*Gathered into the fold with
believers enrolled,*

*With believers to live and to
die.*

My feelings I never can tell, it did seem my very soul hungered within me. I would have given all the world if it had been mine, to have had a seat with the true church. I saw my sister baptized, we started home, it looked like my sister and I were parted; it was a dreadful day with me; we went to my father's and stayed all night, in the morning we started home. We had to go along a spur of the Blue Ridge, called Witt's spur, just before we got to the top, my mind was off my condition; when we got to the top my mind returned to my condition and was entirely easy, the next thought was,

what is the cause?

It seemed like something answered in feelings; *"Your sins are forgiven."* My mind answered it cant be possible, such a wretch as I am can have such good news to tell. In a moment my soul was running over with joy;

I felt like all my trouble was gone and I had awoke in a new world everything looked new; the trees and the mountains looked new and I felt new. It was the best day I had ever seen. I had been so lost, and had thought there was no mercy for me, then to be filled with the love of God. Oh, my brethren, I want you to help me praise the Lord for what he has done for me. I want to praise him while I live. I thought I was free from trouble, free from pain of all kind. I could not see what would trouble me, but alas I was badly mistaken. I have found it a world of trouble. I now wanted to go home to my father's house and tell them what great things the Lord had done for me. I went to Jack's Creek church, and was recieved; there was an arm of Jack's Creek church given off called Green Hill, in Patrick County, Va., and there I was baptized by old brother John Conner; there was a great revival at Green Hill, and from three to twenty persons were baptized in one day. I was one of the deacons chosen when the church was fully organized. I was delighted with the church and had a great feeling for mourners. I felt like I ought to tell them what a great Saviour I

had found, and exhort them to look to God for he is all in all. So I appointed prayer meetings and we seemed to have a good time. After awhile I began to think seriously about what I was doing, and the greatness of the cause, and whether or not I was called of the Lord. I did not think the Lord would call a man that could not preach, and I had but little learning and hardly common sense, and I began to be badly alarmed, I thought I had dishonored the good cause of my blessed Lord and I did not think I ever could live in that country where I had so dishonored the cause of my Lord. So I thought I would leave my native country and go among strangers and it should never be known that I had ever tried to speak in public, but when I got to Russell county, the weight of preaching was worse than in my own country. Often in my mind I was preaching, then I would shake my head and say in mind, *"I never will try anymore, I have done wrong and left my old country to get shut of the great reproach, and I will never try it again."* My troubles got worse and I would leave home and wander in Clinch mountain alone, trying to pray to the Lord O show me what was the matter. At last one of my children, about three years old, having clear blue eyes, was suddenly black. It greatly alarmed me, I thought my child was entirely ruined. I did not know what to do, it came to my mind to go and pray to the Lord, and if He had any-

thing for me to do, He would make it known by restoring my child's eyes. In a very short time it was alright, though yet I could not believe such a being as I would be called. I went in trouble day after day. At last my life of religion seemed to be taken away and I was left in a miserable condition. I felt like my peace on earth was gone. In that condition I promised the Lord if He was pleased to set me free once more, I would try, let the case be what it may. So I went to meeting and went home with brother Shadrick Williams, and my trouble was so great I could not stay with him in the house. I wandered from place to place by myself. At last on Sunday morning, suddenly as I walked alone, these words came on my mind with such power it nearly took the use of my limbs. The words were; *"The day is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those that hear shall live."* Now the request is granted, what will you do? Now came my trial, will you do what you promised, or lie to God? Lord have mercy on me. Lord I am willing if I knew I was called, but I cant believe; I fear I shall dishonor thy cause. My troubles were so bad I told a brother my feelings. He says *"Appoint a meeting house next Sunday."* I did so and that same passage of Scripture was my text, it was with power all the week. On the next Saturday I started to my meeting. Dear brethren, that was one of

the times I never can forget. My trouble, none but God knew, I was greatly afraid I was going to bring a reproach on the good cause of my blessed Lord. I tried to pray to the Lord if I was not called of God, I might be dumb, not able to speak the next day, so I could go home in peace and then I would know I was not called, if the Lord was pleased to answer my prayer in that way. But it was not to be. My tongue seemed to be in a different way to what it ever was in my life. It was, I hope, God's will to show me on that day I had to go. I was made willing to try on that day. I promised the Lord if He would be with me I would try as long as the Lord let me live. So I have been trying in my awkward manner ever since. But my beloved brethren I often think if I have a gift from God I am one of the least and not hardly worthy of the name of a preacher.

Then in a short time I bought land in Dickenson County, Va., it was then in Russell county. In a short time I moved to my land near the Sand Lick church. The church was without a pastor, and the church called me to be their Moderator so I could not refuse and in a short time they sent for a presbytery to ordain me and brother Morgan F. Lipps and brother Shadrick Williams ordained me, so by the request of the church I took the care of Sand Lick church. In a short time the Union church in Buchanan county called on me and I took the care of the Union church and then the Mount Pleasant church

was constituted and I was chosen their first pastor. Then Johnson's Bottom church was constituted and I was chosen their moderator. Then the Cedar Grove church in Pike county, Kentucky, called on me and I took the care of Cedar Grove church. Part of my time there was a considerable number of members recieved and baptized by all the churches named.

Then the Union Association was constituted and I was chosen their first moderator. Brethren I never could tell why it was that I was chosen either by the churches or the associations, when it did look to me that I was the last and the least of all.

It did seem to me nearly any of my brother preachers had a better gift than I, though I tried to always conduct the business of the churches and Associations strictly by my master's rule laid down in His word, though with tenderness and brotherly kindness. All my churches have generally treated me with more respect, it seemed to me, than I deserved. My Association would never give me up until I got so old and deaf I could not do the business. Brethren, if I ever have been any benefit in the cause of my Master the Lord is to be praised, for I am nothing of myself. Brethren, I have travelled over the high and rugged mountains, often alone, wondering and thinking could it be possible if the Lord had sent such a being as I am to do such important work as it app-

peared to be. Brethren, if I am saved, I am saved by grace alone, if I have ever preached, God is to be praised; if I have ever done any good in the churches or Associations, the Lord is to be praised, for I am nothing of myself, if I ever had any true hope in the Lord, it was the last day of December, fifty-six years ago. About fifty-five or nearly that time, since I first began to speak in public. Brethren, the Lord has spared me for a long time in this poor world of trouble. I often think it won't be long before the summons will come, then, brethren, it will be well with all the children of God, we will then no more sigh and mourn for fear we are decieved, but then all the children of God will get home to their father's house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where they will see their blessed Lord, who bled and died to Set them free. Dear brethren of the Old Baptist faith, I love you all you are my people. I want to live with you, I want to die with you, I want to go home with you, there to part no more.

My beloved brethren, Paul says, *"eye hath not seen nor ear hath heard the good things that is laid up for them that love the Lord."* Brethren, I have been through many hard trials in this poor world. I lost my first wife the 20th of January, 1860; I have lost three daughters and one son, all nearly grown; I have raised twelve children. I have always been a poor man, sometimes in great trouble, some-

times it seems, for a short time, all my troubles are gone when it is God's will to speak peace to my weary soul. My dear brethren I am now about to wind up my little book, many of you I shall never see in this world, but when you read these lines, remember me, and that Jesus Christ died to set the mourning free, and you, my dear children, when you read my little book perhaps years after I am gone to my long eternal home and you are left here in a world of dangers, sorrows and troubles, I want you all to have my little book, and to take good care of it; and think you once heard the old white head preach, and tell that Christ died to save the true mourners, I want everyone to take care of my little book.

I am now in my 82nd year, and will shortly have to bid you all farewell, but I hope I shall meet you beyond this veil of tears, where parting is no more. I hope to meet my old father and mother, I hope to see my children. I now say to all my friends, when you hear that I am gone, weep not for me but rejoice that I am gone from the evil to come. Farewell.

Sent in by Edrie Clifton

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.

**THOUGHTS ON THE TWO
PEOPLE THAT TRAVEL
IN THIS TIMELY WORLD**

Dear Beloved,

A few thoughts concerning the two people that travel in this timely world.

One of these people is described in the scriptures, "*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*" I think all people, until touched by the hand of God, travel this way. These people are at enmity with God, have no true knowledge of Him, nor sincere desire for Him. They will not have this Man rule over them. All people are in this condition by nature. They have a heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked and who can know it. This heart is all that a man, by nature, has to go with and the Bible tells us that "*Out of the heart are the issues of life.*"

Jesus tells us that he that does not forsake all, including himself, is not worthy to be His disciple. He tells us to take up our cross daily and follow Him. Man by nature cannot and will not do this, because this is in direct contrast to the desires of the natural heart. Who by nature would choose afflictions, sorrow, and heartaches? We desire and do directly opposite to this except led by the Spirit of God. The scriptures say that God seeks those with a broken and contrite heart and we, natu-

rally speaking, would run as hard as we could from such a condition.

Thanks be unto God, His little ones don't travel this road. Theirs is called "the way of holiness". Nothing foul or unclean shall travel this way, but the redeemed of the Lord shall walk this road.

As I said before, out of the heart are the issues of life. When God, at His appointed time, sees fit to take away this naturally hard and stony heart and gives a heart of flesh, He implants new desires and new thoughts in this man. The scriptures tell us in Proverbs that the preparations of the heart and the answer of the tongue is of the Lord. He does not leave it up to us whether we travel this way of holiness. He goes before His sheep and leads them in paths of righteousness for His name sake. He calls His sheep by name and His sheep do follow Him. In the Songs it tells us He brings His people into the banqueting house and His banner over them is love.

Isn't it wonderful when we consider that our travels on this road are not left to us. The scriptures tell us we are the husbandry of God. As clay in the hands of the Heavenly Potter, He molds His little ones as He sees fit; conforms them by trials, afflictions, and sorrows to a vessel of honor: causes them to walk this way of holiness in such a manner as is well pleasing in His sight. He gives His little ones this quiet still voice, which I believe is the work of the Spirit in the heart of all His cho-

sen people. In this way we do learn to follow on to know the Lord. We learn by our trials this way of holiness. Now we run from all the things we at one time ran after. May it be the Lord's will to keep us always on this road that is called "The Way of Holiness".

In that Blessed Hope,
Elder Graydon R. Smith
Minden, LA. 71055

"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

MEETINGS

THE STAUNTON RIVER UNION

The Lord willing, the Staunton River Union will be held at Springfield Church on the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in January. The song services will begin at 10:00 a.m.

All ministers of our faith and order are invited.

Job 37:24.

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

THE WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union will convene with Moons Creek Church the 5th Sunday in January. The Church is located about a 1/2 mile east of Hwy 86 between Danville and Yanceyville on Park Springs Rd.

Elder Kenneth R. Key, Moderator
Sister Sue Blalock, Clerk

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.

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR DECEMBER 2004

Meta Mills, AR	5.00
Francis Knight, VA	5.00
Wanda Brown, NC	5.00
Eld. Cleo Robertson, NC	5.00
George Blalock, NC	5.00
Charles Alders, TX	25.00
Lena Duncan, VA	5.00
George Hyslip, TN	15.00
Eva Wyatt, NC	5.00
Willie Shelton, VA	5.00
Garlon Vick, NC	10.00

OBITUARIES

**RUTH BEATRICE COLEMAN
JEFFREYS**

Our dear sister in Christ, Ruth Jeffreys, finished her course in this life on December 3, 2003, at High Point Regional Hospital, High Point, North Carolina. Though a native and long-time resident of Alamance County, North Carolina, she spent the last several years of her life as a resident of an assisted living facility in Greensboro, North Carolina. Her husband, Claude Walker Jeffreys, preceded her in death. She is survived by a son, Arnold Coleman Jeffreys and wife, Carol, of Greensboro, North Carolina; a stepdaughter, Doris Jeffreys Allen of Burlington, North Carolina; three step grandchildren; and five great-step grandchildren. She was preceded in death by two stepsons, Jennings and Norman Jeffreys; two sisters, Euphrasis (Becky) Coleman Ingle and Eunice Coleman Gallaway; and six brothers, Osia Coleman, Lofton Coleman, Ira Coleman, Jones Coleman, Percy Coleman and E. W. "Doc" Coleman.

Sister Ruth was a homemaker and a longtime active member in the Alamance County Extension Service and served on many of its county, district and state programs. She also was a longtime member and clerk of McCray Primitive Baptist

Church. The Lord blessed her with understanding of doctrine and order and the courage and firmness to defend it. She stood alone at times in defense of that which she was given to believe and love. She possessed the gift of a beautiful soprano voice and loved to sing the hymns of Zion. She also loved to entertain those of like precious faith and prepared many meals for them over the years. She is missed by all who knew and loved her. Her trials and afflictions are over and now she is at rest awaiting that summons, *"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

The funeral service was conducted by Elder Kenneth Key and Elder C. B. Davis at the McClure Funeral Home Chapel with burial in the McCray Church Cemetery.

Written by request,
Elder Cleo Robertson

ST. JOHN, 15: 23-25.

He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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POEM

*Grace is defined as an unmerited favor,
That comes to us from our Lord and
Savior,
All of our blessings, comes through his
grace,
as things unfold, while he sets our pace.*

*Carnally we are prone to these earthly
sins.
He relieves these earthly burdens within.
He pays us a visit, day by day,
And he reaches down and paves our way.*

*All the blessing comes through his love,
That's meted out from the courts above.
We give thanks for the blessings we
receive
And ask him daily, that we might believe.*

*We are completely helpless to grasp the
light,
That guides us in the earthly fight.
Only he has the power to lighten our
load.
He guides us on this earthly road.*

*In conclusion I would like to say,
That he looks down and guides our way.
We thank him daily, for the blessings he
brings,
And give thanks to him for all earthly
things.*

Riley J. Justice

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	74
Elder Cleo D. Robertson	
CORRESPONDENCE	77
ARTICLES	78
Riley J. Justice	
VOICES OF THE PAST	81
Augustus M. Toplady	
CONTRIBUTIONS	94
OBITUARIES	95
Sister Ellen M. Adams	
Sister Dora M. Adams	

 EDITORIAL

*“Now the Birth of Jesus Christ
Was on This Wise”
St. Matthew 1:18*



Elder Cleo D. Robertson

The birth of Christ has always been controversial and always will be so far as the world is concerned. Many deny the virgin birth of Christ and are constantly seeking to prove that it did not take place. We see programs on television and articles in newspapers,

magazines and books devoted to this purpose. There were those in the days that Christ was upon earth who saw Him and heard Him and yet knew Him not. He had never been revealed to them so they could not know Him. But, there is a remnant called out of nature's darkness into His marvelous light that has an experience of grace that testifies of His virgin birth. Isaiah prophesied that unto us a child is born and unto us a son is given. Every little child of grace experiences the birth of Christ in their heart. As the Holy Ghost came upon Mary and the power of God overshadowed her, she conceived and a holy child was born which was the Son of God. No works of the flesh were involved. Therefore, it was a virgin birth. So it is with each of God's elect. The Holy Ghost came upon you and the power of God overshadowed you and you conceived and Christ was born in your heart. No works of man were involved in this birth. It is a spiritual birth and is all of grace. Therefore, His little ones believe by faith in the virgin birth of Christ because they have experienced it.

We hear it set forth that there were three wise men who were kings from the east that came to worship the Christ child. First of all, we do not know who counted the wise men or ascribed a number to them because Matthew does not. He says only that there were wise men. These wise men set forth God's people and were as many as the

Lord God called. They were wise, not with the wisdom of men, but rather the wisdom of God which is spiritual understanding. If this wisdom was of the flesh, then King Herod and his counselors could have seen the star and understood what it was. By faith, these wise men were following a star they believed was the star of the King of the Jews and they had come to worship Him. God had given them understanding of what the star was and who the child was. Therefore, they are said to be wise men. There is no mention of them being kings. However, Revelation 5:10 says, "*And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*" In that spiritual sense, they were kings and priests unto God and so are each of you who have experienced the birth of Christ in your heart.

The star is setting forth the Holy Spirit which leads and guides the children of the heavenly King. It is from above and is manifested only to the children of God. No one else, with all their human learning, could see this star nor determine where the child was born. Even so today can no man by all the schooling of men know Christ nor where He is born—born in your heart the Hope of glory. The star, so high and so bright, led the wise men to where the child was. When they saw the star over where the child was, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. When each of you experienced the

birth of Christ and felt the comfort and peace for which you had so longed, you too rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Your soul sang out and tears of joy ran down your cheeks. Your very being praised Him whom your soul loveth.

The wise men fell down and worshipped Christ and opened their treasures and presented unto Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Christ said, "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" Their hearts were opened and the gifts manifested. There were three gifts and perhaps this is why the world thinks there were three wise men. The world believes that each one brought a gift. Why would the One who created all things need their gold, frankincense and myrrh? Christ said on one occasion that "*the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*" Though Christ created all things, yet in the world He possessed none of the world's riches. The Apostle Paul writes in *II Corinthians 8:9*, "*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.*" I believe these gifts were spiritual. Each wise man possessed all three gifts that they neither made nor purchased. These were not presents, but gifts and were free with no conditions. They were gifts given to the wise men by

God and are manifested when Christ is born in your heart. They were faith, hope and charity. Every child of grace possesses these gifts from God and when one experiences the work of God in them, these gifts are manifested. The wise men could not go back the same way they came, but went a different way. So every child of God has a different walk and travels a different path after they experience a work of grace. They hate the things they once loved and love the things they once hated. They have no desire to go back to what they once were.

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. These shepherds set forth the ministers under the law. They were in darkness and only abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock during the nighttime of the law. They had no food with which to feed the flock. Then an angel appeared unto them and told them that he brings them *“good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”* By this sign, the shepherds would know that this was the Christ that was born. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes signifying that He was bound by the determinate counsel and foreknowl-

edge of God to be delivered into wicked hands to be crucified and die. He was lying in a manger. No one would have expected the Son of God, the King of kings, to be in a manger but there was no more appropriate place for Him to be as a sign unto the shepherds. This was where the food for the animals was put and where they were fed. He is the food for those who hunger and thirst after His righteousness. Therefore, this was indeed a sign unto the shepherds who this child was. Christ said, *“I am the bread of life”* and *“the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.”*

A multitude of the heavenly host praised God and said, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”* This did not mean that Christ had brought peace on earth to all mankind. You and I know that there has never been peace on earth among all peoples and nations for any period of time. For Christ said, *“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.”* Rather, the angels were proclaiming that Christ who is our peace had come to earth. Christ also said, *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”* Good will toward men speaks of the will of God

as it only is good. Christ stated that He had come to do the will of His father that sent Him and the will of His father was that of all which His father had given Him He should lose none, but should raise it up again at the last day. According to the good will of His father, He had come to earth to redeem those His Father had given Him from their sins and to satisfy the demands of His Father's righteous and holy law. Now, the shepherds had something with which to feed their flock. Day had come and the light of Christ shined forth. Grace had come and the day star had arisen and the Sun of righteousness arose with healing in His wings. The shepherds went preaching the gospel, telling those things which they had seen with their own eyes, handled with their own hands, and heard with their own ears. In other words, they preached that which had been revealed to them and which they had experienced—no man having taught them. God's ministers throughout all ages of time have been called and qualified in the same way. Men taught of man will preach the ways and works of man. Men taught of God will preach Christ.

May the God of all grace continue with each of you is my prayer for Christ's sake.

Elder Cleo D. Robertson

CORRESPONDENCE

1-11-2005

To Elder Terry:

Also other Editors of the Signs:

I just received January issue of "Signs" which I enjoyed, sure sound doctrine.

Elder Lambert on baptism was good seems he was (near) he was my pastor at Rehobeth Church in Eldorado, AR for so many years. Of course the other writers were good also.

I was 96 in Nov. 04 can still stay by myself. I thank the Lord for his watch over me and in all blessings he is my all and all. I send Love to all.

A sinner saved by grace if saved.
Jane Carroll

Newport, N.C.

1-12-05

Dear Brother Terry,

Enclosed find my check for 1 years renewal for the Signs. Please accept the balance as a contribution to your paper.

Thank you for sending the Signs, I have had an eye operation and can't read long at a time but still desire to support the cause. When you are brought down at the Throne of Grace Remember me.

Thank you,
God Bless You and Yours,
J.C. Carroll

Bryan, Texas
Jan. 5, 2005

Dear Elder Terry:

On Jan. 25, 2005 I will pass the 100 mark God chose to leave me here for a purpose I don't quite understand, but do know it is for a purpose he understands.

I want the Signs for as long as I can read it so please send it for another year.

The Signs was in our home when I was a child may it be continued on and on for all lovers of the truth.

Sincerely,
Inez Gearner

ARTICLES

My life among the Old Baptists has given me a rich and rewarding religious life. I would like to try and gather and express my thoughts concerning predestination, prayer and Christ's spiritual message, because these allow me to truly celebrate God's sovereignty. Besides filling my best memories growing up, my journey with the old Baptists has also provided me with the most joyful expression of God's Grace, if not deceived.

First, I would like to elaborate on the word predestination, the idea of being preordained. In substance, we have to say that this means, His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

All the events that transpire, according to His will from the courts of glory at his discretion according to his sovereign power are timed to perfection. They will unfold as proposed.

The Baptist people who advocate the doctrine of predestination are the worst criticized people on earth. They are the only ones who deny the power of the flesh, giving God the glory, praise and honor for this great salvation, which is God's deliverance of his goodness in the hearts of the believing family. This comes through the channels of his precious grace, an unmerited favor from his court above. Only when these things are pleasing to the giver of all good, do they transpire. I want to stress here, that the flesh is helpless in any way to be a partaker of holy events.

When one is elevated from the pits of darkness by his loving kindness and made to see through eyes of faith, they are elevated from this place to walk in the heavenly light. This elevating of our hearts is the fruit of that spiritual birth that makes our nights appear as day. We are pilgrims of God's mercy here on earth, looking to him, the giver of all good, to lead and direct us in this low ground of sin and sorrow.

Though in the pits of darkness we would like to call out in prayer, prayer is not of this nature. I think that the word prayer is one of the worst misused words that there is and it is so abused. The only time an individual ever prays is when he

petitions the God of Heaven at the throne of grace, and asks for his will be done. If this utterance of words are in harmony with his will the believer's prayer will be answered. If this prayer is not in accordance with his will it is just an utterance of words that doesn't go any higher than the head. The old Baptist knows that God knows our weaknesses.

The Lord told Jonah *"to go to Nineveh, that great city and cry against it for their wickedness has come up before me."* Jonah rose up to flee to Tarsus from the presence of the Lord. He went to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarsus. He paid his fare to Tarsus so he thought. All the time he was on his way to Nineveh, which was unknown to him.

A great storm arose instilling fear in the ship's crew and passengers that the ship would be lost. Awakening Jonah from a deep sleep, he was asked, "what meanest thou the sleeper – arise and call upon thy God." This prompted Jonah to tell them that the sea would calm if they would cast him overboard. He told them that he was a Hebrew and that he feared the Lord God of heaven.

The men knew that he had fled from the presence of the Lord. When they cast Jonah overboard, he thought surely death would come. He only changed his form of transportation on the way from Nineveh from a ship to the belly of a whale.

Jonah prayed to the Lord out of the belly of the whale. *"Out of the belly I cried and thou heard my voice."* The Lord's people shall be a willing people in days of his power. While Jonah was in the belly of hell three days he learned something about the Grace of God. "I have vowed that salvation is of the Lord." I don't think Jonah knew anything about the free pardon of sin until he had this graceful experience while in the belly of the whale. Don't you know that Jonah was thankful to be alive? The misery Jonah experienced was horrid, but seeing God's sovereignty demonstrated the saving of his life is definitely a mystery to the fleshly mind.

Jonah's example of the weakness of the flesh was only one. Another example of the weakness of the flesh was when Christ told Peter that he would deny him three times before the cock crowed three times, which he did. That experience brought Peter to real repentance.

Paul, one of the greatest preachers we read about, was on his way to Damascus to persecute the saints of God. When that light shone and Paul heard the voice that said, *"Saul, Saul, why do thou persecute me"*. This is when Paul asked the Lord, *"what will thy have me to do"*? Paul was made a willing vessel in the day of God's power. I think that everyone who comes to the knowledge of his truth comes through the channels of his grace, comes forth singing the same song, praising his high and lofty name.

My experience too has been that of a sovereign God, while traveling on life's journey. I have traveled far and wide to many churches and associations. If not deceived I have been made to feast from the messages that came from the giver of all good, for food for the hungry soul. If there is no hunger there is no feasting from the rations of God's table. The bible says that he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled. I have also experienced going to meetings not to be filled from the messages sent forth.

I have heard many of the preaching brethren say what a dreadful thing it was for them to come to the stand, another good example of the weakness of the flesh. A few times I have seen the elders come to the stand and not be blessed with a message, and they sat down. God's sovereign courts of glory delivers the message, or there will be no preaching.

The above is a beautiful example of God's goodness, bringing to mind the bible verse that says: "take no thought of what you will say as it will be given to you in that self same hour". If one isn't induced with the power on high to preach the unsearchable riches of the kingdom, likewise there will be no preaching. Paul said the preaching of the gospel is not of man, it was taught by the revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul learned all of this when that light shone on his way to Damascus.

These perceptions and feelings about central beliefs of the Old Baptist journey have been wrapped in a wonderful cloak of meaning for me if not deceived. Each having an individual journey and personal road to Damascus, I was born on a little mountain farm at Asco West Virginia. Times were hard and money was near to none. The great depression was an experience I could never forget. Having something to eat was a blessing from God's bountiful table. Looking back I can see how the channels of God's grace prevailed on my own journey,

While we had very little, many times someone would knock on the door and ask for something to eat. My father never turned anyone away hungry, regardless of race or anything else. He always told them that if they could eat what we ate they were most welcome. He always said, never turn anyone away hungry-you might be turning away an angel unknowingly.

My mother was no stranger to poverty. She knew how to can, pickle or dry anything in preparation for the winter. We had pickled beans and corn, made our own molasses, jellies, jams and preserves. Besides all of the canning of vegetables we had root storage areas for potatoes, cabbage, and other things. The apple butter mama made was delicious. Many times it would fall in our lot to entertain the visiting folks during the association. I always looked forward to this. We had a big barn

loft full of hay, and that was where the men slept. There would be as many as twelve or fourteen people sleeping up in the hayloft, among the aromas of a farm that farmers come to appreciate.

We had a high apple orchard where my dad placed hand-hewn benches under the beautiful apple trees for seating. Thinking back, I cannot think of a more fitting environment for the events held here. My dad would always kill a sheep or beef for the association event. When the crowd left the meat would be gone. I have many times wondered how my mother came through with all the cooking and bedding for so many people.

My twin brother Rush and I ran a barbershop in War West Virginia for 55 years. However, we have cut hair since we were twelve years old. During the Great Depression the principal of our school would take us to the basement to cut the hair for the students who could not afford a haircut at the barbershop.

We always had a faithful group of customers. We retired on December 19, 2003, with a great retirement party given by friends and neighbors. There were many farewell speeches, gifts and "tears" throughout the evening. While in the barbershop we had the experience of cutting the hair of families over several generations, including fathers, sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, and even great- great-grandsons. We developed friendships that will live with us forever.

While working, there were very few times that we had the opportunity to communicate with anyone who advocated the belief in a sovereign God. Most of our customers believed in the free will of the flesh.

In closing, I hope readers will enjoy this article, in the bonds of love I hope.

Riley J. Justice
P O Box 272
War WV

VOICES OF THE PAST

OBSERVATIONS ON
THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES
BY
AUGUSTUS M. TOPLADY
1740-1778

Toplady flashed upon and past the world like a meteor. A brilliant streak of light, and he was gone. But he will ever live in the affections of all who love pure religion, and scorn every touchstone save the Holy Scriptures. To have produced the greatest hymn in the English language—"ROCK OF AGES" has, by general consent, been assigned the place of honour - would alone have earned him the gratitude of the churches. So remarkable, indeed, has been its vogue that the public are apt to overlook the fact that he was the author of many other hymns, some of which for example, "Deathless Principle," and "What

Though My Frail Eyelids Refuse” - surpass in euphony and ethereal beauty, though not in depth and intensity of feeling, his acknowledged master piece. In these hymns, written in rapturous moments that come only to the privileged few, and to them but rarely, the ardent soul dis-severs itself from earth, mounts on eager and confident pinions, and flutters ecstasied before its God. But it is not as a hymnwriter only that Toplady excels. The best of his essays are studded with vitalizing thoughts expressed in noble and virile English. His sermons, which contain many magnificent passages are storehouses of sound and lucid divinity.

Necessary to be premised, in order to our better understanding the Doctrine of Predestination.

Although the great and ever Blessed God is a Being absolutely simply, and infinitely remote from all shadow of composition; he is, nevertheless, in condescension to our weak and contracted faculties, represented in Scripture as possessed of divers properties, or attributes, which, though seemingly different from his essence, are in reality, essential to him, and constitutive of his very nature.

Of these attributes, those on which we shall now particularly descant (as being more immediately concerned in the ensuing subject), are the following ones; 1. His eternal wisdom and foreknowledge.

2. The absolute freedom and liberty of his will. 3. The perpetuity and unchangeableness both of himself and his decrees. 4. His omnipotence. 5. His justice. 6. His mercy.

Without an explication of these, the doctrine of predestination cannot be so well understood: we shall, therefore, briefly consider them, by way of preliminary to the main subject.

1. With respect to the divine wisdom and foreknowledge, I shall lay down the following positions:

Pos.1 God is, and always was, so perfectly wise that nothing ever did, or does, or can, elude his knowledge. He knew, from all eternity, not only what he himself intended to do, but also what he would incline and permit others to do, “*Known unto God are all his work, from eternity.*”

Pos. 2 Consequently, God knows nothing now, nor will know any thing hereafter, which he did not know and foresee from everlasting: his foreknowledge being co-eternal with himself, and extending to everything that is or shall be done. All things, which comprise past, present, and future, are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Pos. 3 This foreknowledge of God is not conjectural and uncertain (for then it would not be foreknowledge) but most sure and infallible; so that whatever he foreknows to be future shall necessarily and undoubtedly come to pass. For his knowledge can be no more frust-

rated, or his wisdom be deceived, than he can cease to be God. Nay, could either of these be the case, he actually would cease to be God; all mistakes and disappointment being absolutely incompatible with the divine nature.

Pos. 4. The influence which the divine foreknowledge has on the certain futurity of the things fore-known does not render the intervention of second causes needless, nor destroy the nature of the things themselves.

My meaning is that the prescience of God does not lay any coercive necessity on the wills of beings naturally free. For instance, man, even in his fallen state, is endowed with a natural freedom of will; yet he acts, from the first to the last moment of his life, in absolute subserviency (though perhaps, he does not know it nor design it) to the purposes and decrees of God concerning him; notwithstanding which He is sensible of no compulsion, but acts as freely and voluntarily as if he was, subject to no control, and absolutely Lord of himself. This made Luther, after he had shewn how all things necessary and inevitably come to pass, in consequence of the sovereign will and infallible foreknowledge of God, say that *"We shall carefully distinguish between a necessity of infallibility and a necessity of co-action; since both good and evil men, though by their actions they fulfil the decree and appointment of God, yet*

are not forcibly constrained to do any thing but act willingly."

Pos. 5 God's foreknowledge, taken abstractedly, is not the sole cause of beings and events; but his will and foreknowledge together. Hence we find, Acts ii. 23, that his determinate counsel and foreknowledge act in concert; the latter resulting from, and being founded on, the former. We pass on.

II. To consider the will of God; with regard to which we assert as follows:

Pos. 1 Deity is possessed not only of infinite knowledge, but likewise of absolute liberty of will; so that whatever he does, or permits to be done, he does and permits freely and of his own good pleasure.

Consequently, it is his free pleasure to permit sin; since, without his permission, neither men nor devils can do any thing. Now to permit is, at least, the same as not to hinder, though it be in our power to hinder if we please; and this permission or non hindrance, is certainly an act of the divine will. Hence, Austin says, *"Those things which seemingly thwart the divine will are, nevertheless, agreeable to it; for if God did not permit them, they could not be done, and whatever God permits, he permits freely and willingly. He does nothing, neither suffers any thing to be done, against his own will."* And Luther observes that *"God permitted Adam to fall into sin, because he willed that he should so fall."*

Pos. 2 Although the will of God, considered in itself, is simply one and the same; yet in condescension to the present capacities of men, the divine will is very properly distinguished into secret and revealed.

Thus it was his revealed will that Pharaoh should let the Israelites go; that Abraham should sacrifice his son; and that Peter should not deny Christ: but as proved by the event, it was his secret will that Pharaoh should not let Israel go, Ex. iv. 21, that Abraham should not sacrifice Isaac, Gen. xxii. 12, and that Peter should deny his Lord, Matt. xxvi. 34.

Pos. 3 The will of God, respecting the salvation and condemnation of men, is never contrary to itself; he immutably wills the salvation of the elect, and vice versa: nor can he ever vary or deviate from his own will in any instance whatever, so as that should be done which he willeth not; or that not be brought to pass which he willeth. Isaiah xlvi. 10. My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure—Psalm xxxiii. 11. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Job xxiii. 13, 14. He is in one mind, who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth; for he performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him. Eph. i. 11. Being predestinated, according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Thus, for instance, Hophni and Phineas hearkened not to the voice of their father, who reproved them for their wickedness, because the Lord would slay them, 1 Sam. ii. 25. And Sihon, king of Heshbon, would not receive the peaceable message sent him by Moses, because the Lord God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into the hand of Israel, Deut. ii 26, 30. Thus also, to add no more, we find that there have been, and ever will be some, whose eyes God blindeth, and whose hearts he hardeneth, i.e. whom God permits to continue blind and hardened, on purpose to prevent their seeing with their eyes, and understanding with their hearts, and to hinder their conversion to God and spiritual healing by him, Isa. vi. 9. John xii. 39-40.

Pos. 4. Because God's will of precept may, in some instances, appear to thwart his will of determination, it does not follow either, 1. That he mocks his creatures, or 2. That they are excusable for neglecting to observe his will of command.

1. He does not hereby mock his creatures; for if men do not believe his word, nor observe his precepts, the fault is not in him, but in themselves; their unbelief and disobedience are not owing to any ill infused into them by God, but to the vitiosity of their depraved nature! and the perverseness of their own wills. Now, if God invited all men to come to him, and then shut the door

of mercy against any who were desirous of entering; his invitation would be a mockery, and unworthy of himself; but we insist on it, that he does not invite all men to come to him a saving way; and that every individual person, who is, through his gracious influence on his heart, made willing to come to him shall, sooner or later, be surely saved by him! and that with an everlasting salvation. 2. Man is not excusable for neglecting God's will of command. Pharaoh was faulty, and therefore justly punishable, for not obeying God's revealed will, though God's secret will rendered that obedience impossible. Abraham would have committed sin, had he refused to sacrifice Isaac; and, in looking to God's secret will, would have acted counter to his revealed one. So Herod, Pontius Pilot, and the reprobate Jews, were justly condemned for putting Christ to death, inasmuch as it was a most notorious breach of God's revealed will. "*Thou shalt do no murder;*" yet, in slaying the Messiah, they did no more than God's hand and his counsel, i. e. his secret ordaining will, determined before should be done, Acts iv. 27, 28; and Judas is justly punished for perfidiously and wickedly betraying Christ, though his perfidy and wickedness were (but not with his design) subservient to the accomplishment of the decree and word of God. The brief of the matter is this; secret things belong to God, and those that are revealed belong to us; there-

fore, when we meet with a plain precept, we should simply endeavour to obey it, without tarrying to inquire into God's hidden purpose. Venerable Bucer, after taking notice how God hardened Pharaoh's heart, and making some observations on the apostle's simile of a potter and his clay, adds that, "*though God has at least the same right over his creatures, and is at liberty to make them what he will, and direct them to the end that pleaseth himself, according to his sovereign and secret determination, yet it by no means follows that they do not act freely and spontaneously, or that the evil they commit is to be charged on God.*"

Pos. 5 God's hidden will is pre-emptory and absolute; and, therefore, cannot be hindered from taking effect.

God's will is nothing else than God himself willing: consequently it is omnipotent and unfrustratable. Hence we find it termed by Austin and the school men, *voluntas omnipotentissima* because, whatever God wills cannot fail of being effected. This made Austin say, "*Evil men do many things contrary to God's revealed will; but so great is his wisdom, and so inviolable his truth, that he directs all things into those channels which he foreknew.*" "*And again*" *No free will of the creature can resist the will of God; for man cannot so will, or nill, as to obstruct the divine determination, or overcome the divine power.*"

Once more *"It cannot be questioned, but God does all things, and ever did, according to his own purpose: the human will cannot resist him, so as to make him do more or less than it is his pleasure to do; quandoquidem etiam de ipsis hominum voluntatibus quod vult tacit since he does what he pleases even with the wills of men."*

Ps. 6. Whatever comes to pass comes to pass by virtue of this absolute, omnipotent will of God which is the primary and supreme cause of all things. Rev. ix. 11. Thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created. Psalm xv. 3. Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased. Dan. iv. 35. He doth 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 dost thou? Psalm cxxxv. 6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. Mat. x. 29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. To all which, Austin subscribes, when he says, *"Nothing is done but what the Almighty wills should be done, either efficiently or permissively."* As does Luther, whose words are these, *"This, therefore, must stand; to wit, the unsearchable will of God, without which nothing exists or acts."* And again, *"God would not be much, if he was*

not almighty, and if any thing could be done without him." And elsewhere, he quotes these words of Erasmus: *"Supposing there was an earthly prince who could do whatever he would and none were able to resist him, we might safely say of such a one, that he would certainly fulfill his own desire, in like manner, the will of God, which is the first cause of all things, should seem to lay a kind of necessity upon our wills."* This Luther approves of, and subjoins, *"Thanks be to God, for this orthodox passage in Erasmus's discourse! but, if this be true, what becomes of his doctrine of free-will, which he at other times so strenuously contends for?"*

Pos. 7. The will of God is so the cause; for nothing can be the cause of that which is the cause of every thing.

So that the divine will is the *ne plus ultra* of all our inquiries; when we ascend to that, we can go no farther. Hence we find every matter resolved ultimately into the mere sovereign pleasure of God, as the spring and occasion of whatsoever is done in heaven and earth. Matt. xi xi. 25. Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Luke xii. 32. It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Matt. viii. 3. I will: be thou clean. Mark iii. 13. He went up into a mountain, and called unto him whom he would. Jam. i. 18. Of his

own will begat he us, with the word of truth. John i. 13. Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Rom. ix. 15, 18. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Therefore, he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. And no wonder that the will of God should be the main spring that sets all inferior wheels in motion, and should likewise be the rule by which he goes in all his dealings with his creatures; since nothing out of God, i. e. exterior to himself can possibly induce him to will or nill one thing rather than another. Deny this, and you, at one stroke, destroy his immutability and independency; since he can never be independent who acts *pro re nata*, as emergency requires, and whose will is suspended on that of others; nor unchangeable, whose purposes vary and take all shapes, according as the persons or things vary who are the objects of those purposes. The only reason, then, that can be assigned why the Deity does this, or omits that, is because it is his own free pleasure. Luther, in answer to that question, "Whence it was that Adam was permitted to fall, and corrupt his whole posterity; when God could have prevented his falling & c., says, "*God is a being whose will acknowledges no cause: neither is it for us to prescribe rules to his sovereign pleasure, or call him to account for what he does. He*

has neither superior nor equal: and his will is the rule of all things. He did not, therefore, will such and such things because they were in themselves right, and he was bound to will them; but they are therefore equitable and right because he wills them. The will of man, indeed, may be influenced and moved; but God's will never can. To assert the contrary is to undeify him." Bucer likewise observes, "*God has no other motive for what he does than ipsa voluntas his own mere will; which will is so far from being unrighteous, that it is justice itself."*

Pos. 8. Since, as was lately observed, the determining will of God, being omnipotent, cannot be obstructed or made void; it follows that he never did, nor does he now, will that every individual of mankind should be saved.

If this was his will, not one single soul could ever be lost; (for who hath resisted his will?) and he would surely afford all men those effectual means of salvation without which it cannot be had. Now, God could afford these means as easily to all mankind, as to some only; but experience proves that he does not; and the reason is equally plain, namely, that he will not; for whatsoever the Lord pleaseth, that does he in heaven and on earth. It is said, indeed, by the apostle, that God would have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; i. e. as Austin, consistently with other

Scriptures, explains the passage, *"God will save some out of the whole race of mankind,"* that is, persons of all nations, kindreds and tongues. Nay, he will save all men, i.e. as the same father observes, *"every kind of men, or men of every kind,"* namely, the whole election of grace, be they bond or free, noble or ignoble, rich or poor, male or female. Add to this, that it evidently militates against the majesty, omnipotence, and supremacy of God, to suppose that he can either will anything in vain, or that anything can take effect against his will; therefore, Bucer observes very rightly, ad Rom. ix. *"God doth not will the salvation of reprobates, seeing he hath not chosen them neither created them to that end."*

Consonant to which are those words of Luther, *"This mightily offends our rational nature, that God should, of his own mere un-biased will, leave some men to themselves, harden them, and then condemn them; but he has given abundant demonstration, and does continually, that this is really the case; namely, that the sole cause why some are saved, and others perish, proceeds from his willing the salvation of the former, and the perdition of the latter, according to that of Paul, He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."*

Pos. 9. As God doth not will that each individual of mankind should be saved, so neither did he will that

Christ should properly and immediately die for each individual of mankind; whence it follows that, though the blood of Christ, from its own intrinsic dignity, was sufficient for the redemption of all men; yet, in consequence of his Father's appointment, he shed it intentionally, and, therefore, effectually and immediately, for the elect only.

This is self evident. God, as we have before proved, wills not the salvation of every man; but he gave his Son to die for them whose salvation he willed; therefore, his Son did not die for every man. All those for whom Christ died are saved; and the divine justice indispensably requires that to them the benefits of his death should be imparted; but only the elect are saved; they only partake of those benefits; consequently for them only he died and intercedes. The apostle, Rom. viii. asks, Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies, i. e. his elect, exclusively of others; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died for them, exclusively of others. The plain meaning of the passage is that those whom God justifies, and for whom Christ died (justification and redemption being of exactly the same extent), cannot be condemned. These privileges are expressly restrained to the elect; therefore, God justifies and Christ died for them alone.

In the same chapter Paul asks; *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,*

(i. e. for all us elect persons) how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things? i. e. salvation, and all things necessary to it. Now, it is certain that these are not given to every individual; and yet, if Paul says true, they are given to all those for whom Christ was delivered to death; consequently, he was not delivered to death for every individual. To the same purpose St. Austin argues, in Johan. 45. Col. 335. Hence that saying of Ambrose, *si non credis non tibi passus est, ie* If you are an unbeliever, Christ did not die for you." Meaning, that whoever is left under the power of final unbelief, is thereby evidenced to be one of those for whom Christ did not die; but that all for whom he suffered shall be, in this life, sooner or later, endued with faith. The Church of Smyrna, in their letter to the dioceses of Pontus, insist everywhere on the doctrine of special redemption. Bucer, in all parts of his works, observes, that "*Christ died restrictively for the elect only; but for them universally.*"

Pos. 10 From what has been laid down it follows that Austin, Luther, Bucer, the scholastic divines, and other learned writers, are not to be blamed for asserting that "*God may, in some sense, be said to will the being and commission of sin.*" For was this contrary to his determining will of permission, either he would not be omnipotent, and sin has place in the world; which it could not have, if God willed otherwise; for who hath resisted his will? Rom. ix. No one

can deny that God permits sin; but he neither permits it ignorantly, nor unwillingly; therefore, knowingly and willingly. Vid. Aust. Enchir. c. 96. Luther steadfastly maintains this in his book *De Serv Arbitr* and Bucer in Rom. i. However, it should be carefully noticed 1. That God's permission of sin does not arise from his taking delight in it; on the contrary, sin, as sin, is the abominable thing that his soul hateth; and his efficacious permission of it is for wise and good purposes. Whence that observation of Austin, "*God, who is no less omnipotent than he is supremely and perfectly holy, would never have permitted evil to enter among his works, but in order that he might do good even with that evil,*" i. e. over-rule it for good in the end. 2. That God's free and voluntary permission of sin lays no man under any forcible or compulsive necessity of committing it; consequently, the Deity can by no means be termed the author of moral evil; to which he is not, in the proper sense of the word, accessory, but only remotely or negatively so inasmuch as he could, if he pleased, absolutely prevent it.

We should, therefore, be careful not to give up the omnipotence of God, under a pretence of exalting his holiness; his is infinite in both, and therefore, neither should be set aside nor obscured. To say that God absolutely nills the being and commission of sin, while experience convinces us that sin is acted everyday, is to represent the Deity

as a weak, impotent being, who would fain have things go otherwise that they do, but cannot accomplish his desire. On the other hand, to say that he willeth sin doth not in the least detract from the holiness and rectitude of his nature; because, whatever God wills, as well as whatever he does, cannot be eventually evil: materially evil it may be; but, as was just said, it must ultimately be directed to some wise and just end, otherwise he could not will it; for his will is righteous and good, and the sole rule of right and wrong, as is often observed by Austin, Luther, and others.

Pos. 11. In consequence of God's immutable will and infallible foreknowledge, whatever things come to pass, come to pass necessarily; though, with respect to second causes, and us men, many things are contingent; i. e. unexpected and seemingly accidental.

That this was the doctrine of Luther, none can deny, who are in any measure acquainted with his works: particularly with his treatise *De Serva Arbitrio*, or free-will a slave; the main drift of which book is to prove that the will of man is by nature enslaved to evil only, and, because it is fond of that slavery, is therefore said to be free. Among other matters, he proves there that *"whatever man does he does necessarily, though not with any sensible compulsion; and that we can only do what God from eternity willed and foreknew we should; which will of God must be effec-*

tual, and his foresight must be certain." Hence we find him saying, *"It is most necessary and salutary for a Christian to be assured that God foreknows nothing uncertainly; but that he determines, and forsees, and acts, in all things, according to his own eternal, immutable, and infallible will; adding, Hereby, as with a thunderbolt, is man's freewill thrown down and destroyed."* A little after, he shews in what sense he took the word necessity; *"by it,"* says he, *"I do not mean that the will suffers any forcible constraint, or coercion; but the infallible accomplishment of those things which the immutable God decreed and foreknew concerning us."* He goes on: *"Neither the divine nor human will does any thing by constraint; but, whatever man does, be it good or bad, he does with as much appetite and willingness as if his will was really free. But, after all, the will of God is certain and unalterable, and is the governess of ours."* Exactly consonant to all which are those words of Luther's friend and fellow-labourer, Melancthon: *"All things turn out according to divine predestination; not only the works we do outwardly, but even the thoughts we think inwardly: adding in the same place, There is no such a thing as chance, or fortune; nor is there a readier way to gain the fear of God, and to put our whole trust in Him, than to be thoroughly versed in the doc-*

trine of predestination." I could cite, to the same purpose, Austin, Aquinas, and many other learned men; but for brevity's sake, forbear. That this is the doctrine of Scripture very adapt in those sacred books cannot but acknowledge. See, particularly, Psalm cxxxv .6 . Matt .x. 29. Prov. xvi. 1. Matt. xxve. 54. Luke xxii. 22. Acts iv. 28. Eph. i. 11. Isa. xlvi. 10.

Pos. 12. As God knows nothing now which he did not know from all eternity; so he wills nothing now which he did not will from everlasting.

This position needs no explanation nor enforcement; it being self-evident that, if any thing can accede to God, *de novo i. e.* if he can at any time be wiser than he always was, or will that at one time which he did not will from all eternity, these dreadful consequences must ensue: 1. That the knowledge of God is not perfect, since what is absolutely perfect, *non recipit magis et minus*, cannot admit either of addition or detraction. If I add to any thing, it is from a supposal that, that thing was not complete before; if I detract from it, it is supposed that, that detraction renders it less perfect than it was. But the knowledge of God, being infinitely perfect, cannot consistently with that perfection, be either increased or lessened. 2. That the will of God is fluctuating, mutable, and unsteady; consequently that God himself is so, his will coinciding with his essence, contrary to the avowed assurances of Scripture and the strongest dictates of reason, as

we shall presently shew, when we come to treat of the divine immutability.

Pos. 13. The absolute will of God is the original spring and efficient cause of his people's salvation.

I say the original and efficient; for, *sensu complexo*, there are other intermediate causes of their salvation, which, however, all result from, and are subservient to, this primary one, the will of God. Such are his everlasting choice of them to eternal life: the eternal covenant of grace entered into by the Trinity on behalf of the elect; the incarnation, obedience, death, and intercession of Christ for them; all which are so many links in the great chain of causes; and not one of these can be taken away without marring and subverting the whole gospel plan of salvation by Jesus Christ. We see, then, that the free, unbiased, sovereign will of God is the root of this tree of life, which bears so many glorious branches, and yields such salutary fruits: he therefore loved the elect, and ordained them to life, because he would; according to that of the apostle, having predestinated us according to the good pleasure of his will; Eph. i. 5. Then, next after God's covenant for his people and promises to them, comes in the infinite merit of Christ's righteousness and atonement; for we were chosen to salvation in him as members of his mystic body, and through him, as our surety, and substitute, by whose vicarious obedience to the moral law, and submission to its

curse and penalty, all we, whose names are in the book of life, should never incur the divine hatred or be punished for our sins, but continue to eternity as we were from eternity, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. But still the divine grace and favour (and God extends these to whom he will) must be considered as what gave birth to the glorious scheme of redemption, according to what our Lord himself teaches us, John iii. 16. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, & c.; and that of the apostle, 1 John iv. 9. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that he sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.

Pos. 14. Since this absolute will of God is both immutable and omnipotent, we infer that the salvation of every one of the elect is most infallibly certain, and can by no means be prevented. This necessarily follows from what we have already asserted and proved concerning the divine will, which, as it cannot be disappointed or made void, must undoubtedly secure the salvation of all whom God wills should be saved.

From the whole of what has been delivered under this second head, I would observe that the genuine tendency of these truths is, not to make men indolent and careless, or lull them to sleep on the lap of presumption and carnal security, but, 1. To fortify the people of Christ against the attacks of unbelief and

the insults of their spiritual enemies. And what is so fit to guard them against these as the comfortable persuasion of God's unalterable will to save them, and of their unalienable interest in the sure mercies of David? 2. To withdraw them entirely from all dependence, whether on themselves or any creature whatever; to make them renounce their own righteousness no less than their sins, in point of reliance, and to acquiesce sweetly and safely in the certain perpetuity of his rich favour. 3. To excite them, from a trust of his goodwill towards them, to love that God who hath given such great and numberless proofs of his love to men; and in all their thoughts, words, to aim, as much as possible, at his honour and glory. We were to consider.

III. The unchangeableness which is essential to himself and his decrees.

Pos. 1. God is essentially unchangeable in himself. Were he otherwise, he would be confessedly imperfect; since whoever changes must change either for the better or for the worse: whatever alteration any being undergoes, that being must, *ipso facto*, either become more excellent than it was, or lose some of the excellency, which it had. But neither of these can be the case with the Deity: he cannot change for the better, for that would necessarily imply that he was not perfectly good before; he cannot change for the worst, for then he could not be

perfectly good after that change. *Ergo*, God is unchangeable. And this is the uniform voice of Scripture. Mal. iii. 6. I am the Lord: I change not. James i. 17. With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Psalm cii. 27. Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

Pos. 2. God is likewise absolutely unchangeable with regard to his purposes and promises. Numb. xxiii. 19. God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it; or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? 1 Sam. xv. 29. The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man that he should repent.

Job xxiii. 13. He is in one mind, and who can turn him? Exek. xxiv. 14. I, the Lord, have spoken it; it shall come to pass, and I will do it: I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent. Rom. xi. 29. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. 2 Tim. ii. 13. He abideth faithful, and cannot deny himself.

By the purpose of decree of God we mean his determinate counsel, whereby he did from all eternity preordain whatever he should do, or what permit to be done, in time. In particular, it signifies his everlasting appointment of some men to life and of others to death; which appointment flows entirely from his own free and sovereign will. Rom. ix. The children not yet being born,

neither having done any good or evil (that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth), it was said, the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

The apostle then, in the very next words, anticipates an objection which he foresaw men of corrupt minds would make to this: What shall we say, then? is there unrighteousness with God? which he answers with, God forbid! and resolves the whole of God's procedure with his creatures into his own sovereign and independent will: for he said to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

We assert that the decrees of God are not only immutable as to himself, it being inconsistent with his nature to alter in his purposes or change his mind, but that they are immutable likewise with respect to the objects of those decrees: so that whatsoever God hath determined concerning every individual person or thing shall surely and infallibly be accomplished in and upon them. Hence we find that he actually sheweth mercy on whom he decreed to shew mercy, and hardeneth whom he resolved to harden: Rom. ix. 18. For his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure: Isa. xlvi. 10. Consequently his eternal predestination of men and things must be immutable as himself, and, so far

from being reversible, can never admit of the least variation.

Pos. 3 Although, to use the words of Gregory, "*God never swerves from his decree, yet he often varies in his declarations:*"

That is always sure and immoveable; these are sometimes seemingly discordant. So when he gave sentence against the Ninevites by Jonah, saying, "*Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown,*" the meaning of the words is, not that God absolutely intended, at the end of that space, to destroy the city, but that, should God deal with those people according to their deserts, they would be totally extirpated from the earth; and should be so extirpated unless they repented speedily.

Likewise when he told king Hezekiah, by the prophet Isaiah, "*Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live;*" the meaning was that, with respect to second causes, and considering the king's bad state of health and emaciated constitution, he could not, humanly speaking, live much longer. But still the event shewed that God had immutably determined that he should live fifteen years more; and, in order to that, had put it into his heart to pray for the blessing decreed; just as in the case of Nineveh lately mentioned, God had resolved not to overthrow that city then; and, in order to the accomplishment of his own purpose in a way worthy of himself, made the ministry of Jonah the

means of leading that people to repentance. All which, as it shews that God's absolute predestination does not set aside the use of means, so does it likewise prove that, however various the declaration of God may appear (to wit, when they proceed on a regard had to natural causes), his counsels and designs stand firm and immoveable, and can neither admit of alteration in themselves, nor hindrance in their execution. See this farther explained by Bucer, in Rom. ix., where you will find the certainty of the divine appointments solidly asserted and unanswerably vindicated.

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JANUARY 2005

Carla Horton, VA.....	5.00
Polly Sizemore, WVA	5.00
J.C. Chandler, NC	5.00
Grace Locke, KY	5.00
Patsy Mitchell, TX.....	5.00
Inez Gearner, TX	2.00
Tina Walker, MS	15.00
Edna Shipman, TX.....	5.00
Dorothy Yates, VA	5.00
L.C. Hornsby, GA.....	5.00
Nellie Dalton, VA	5.00
P.T. Phillips, VA	5.00
Ellen Sellars, CA.....	3.00
J. C. Carroll, NC	35.00
Edwin Dyer, VA	5.00
Lloyd Spikes, OR	10.00

OBITUARIES

SISTER ELLEN M. ADAMS

With sorrow for our loss but joy for her great gain, we record the death of a beloved sister in Christ, Annie Ellen Martin Adams, at the age of 88.

Sister Ellen was born in Rockingham County, N. C. on May 2, 1916, a daughter of the late Elder Benjamin H. Martin and Mary Susan Hopkins Martin.

On December 17, 1932 she was united in marriage to the late James Lester Adams. To their union were born five sons: David, Lenwood (who preceded her in death), Troy, Roger and Lonnie Adams. The entire family settled in the Henry County community of Sanville, near Bassett.

Sister Ellen was a devoted wife, mother and homemaker. She took her mother-in-law into the home with her family, and cared for her for several years. She did not hold a public job until the last five years before her retirement age. Truly, *"Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her"* (Prov. 31:28).

She and Brother Lester shared many things together most particularly their religious experience. They were brought under conviction close to the same time; both asked for a home with Liberty Church in July 1967, and were baptized together by the late Elder Bennie Clifton and her dad, Elder Ben Mar-

tin. Two months later, Brother Adams was ordained deacon, together with two other brethren. He served in that capacity for four years, and died in the Fall of 1971.

For the balance of her life on earth. Sister Ellen was a faithful and devoted member of Liberty Church. No one who knew her well ever had to wonder about her love for the Lord and for her home church. Her good example of godly conduct and her wise counsel in church affairs were highly regarded by all her brethren and sisters. She attended our meetings regularly until her physical strength was gone and afterwards she maintained a lively interest in all church-related activities.

Sister Ellen died at the hospital in Martinsville on September 26, 2004. Her funeral service was held at Collins Funeral Chapel on September 29, and was conducted by Elder John Lee and her pastor, Elder John Wingfield. Her mortal body was laid to rest beside the remains of Brother Lester in the Old Center Church Cemetery. The writer feels justified in saying that she died the death of the righteous, and sleeps the peaceful sleep of the redeemed.

In addition to her sons. Sister Ellen was survived by their wives. Bea., Carol, Patricia, and Marcia Adams; a beloved former daughter-in-law. Mrs. Moyer (Peggy) Merri-man; three brothers. Harry, Benny, and Jerry Martin; one sister, Dora M. Adams; ten grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

This memorial record was authorized by Liberty Church in con-

ference, the 4th day of December, 2004.

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

SISTER DORA M. ADAMS

At the request of Liberty Primitive Baptist Church, I will endeavor to record the life and death of our beloved sister in Christ, Dora Martin Adams. Sister Dora was born in Rockingham County, N. C. on October 5, 1917 and died in the hospital at Martinsville, Va. on November 22, 2004, at the age of 87. She was a daughter of the late Elder Benjamin H. Martin and Sister Mary Susan Hopkins Martin.

On December 22, 1934 she was united in marriage to Lemley Jackson Adams. To their union were born eleven children, six of whom preceded her in death. Sister Dora never held a public job; her home, her family and her faith were her chief concerns in life. In her nature, she was very self-reliant, and thus a pillar of strength to her family. Her home was a delightful place to visit; she was always kind and hospitable.

Sister Dora joined at Liberty Church by experience the 1st Saturday in October 1967, and was baptized by the late Elder Bennie Clifton and her dad, Elder Ben Martin. She was a loyal and faithful member for 37 years, and was much respected for her honesty and integrity. Her heart and her hands were always

open to her brethren and sisters.

When Sister Dora began losing her health, her decline was rapid. She dreaded the debilitating effects of disease, and the Lord mercifully shortened its course by taking her spirit home. She was preceded in death by her husband around thirty years ago, together with four sons, Elwood "Woodzie," Dale, Paul and Timothy Adams; and two daughters, Joan Marie and Linda Sue Adams. Her surviving children are: Mrs. W. D. (Doris) Hudson, and John, Carl, Noel and Daniel Adams, together with their companions.

She also left three brothers, Harry, Benny and Jerry Martin; sixteen grandchildren; fifteen great-grandchildren; and three step-grandchildren.

Her funeral service was conducted at Liberty Church by Elders Carl Terry and John Wingfield. after which her mortal body was laid to rest beside that of her husband at Old Center Church Cemetery.

While we bow in humble submission to the Lord's will in removing Sister Dora from among us, we take comfort in the firm conviction that she peacefully sleeps in anticipation of a glorious resurrection.

As our custom is, we agreed to prepare three copies of this memorial: one for our church records, one for the family and one to be submitted to the Signs of the Times for publication.

Elder John T. Wingfield, Mod.
Bro. 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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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

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THE HOUSE OF GOD

*O Come into the house of God,
The temple of our Lord;
Thou pilgrim of the earthly sod
What joy, what peace afford.*

*Tis here we come to worship him,
The author of our faith,
The finisher also to them -
His own, the Scripture saith.*

*Where two or three meet in my
name,
I'm in the midst of them;
So does his holy word proclaim,
And prayer is made to him.*

*The word of truth is sweet to hear,
The gospel sound is great:
On wings of glory, he'll appear;
His mercies is made to him.*

*His gracious, heavenly love we crave
To save from shame of sin;
His holy, righteous life he gave
To blot the guilt we're in.*

*May we our hope in Christ defend
The sinner's race we run;
By faith we view our journey's end
Praise Father, praise the Son.*

By Charles B. Osborne

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 98
 Elder Richard H. Campbell

VOICES OF THE PAST 103
 Augustas M. Toplady
 Elder W.D. Griffin
 Elder E. J. Lambert
 J. K. Booton

CONTRIBUTIONS 120

EDITORIAL



Elder R. H. Campbell

*And David said.
 "What have I now
 done?
 Is there not a
 cause? (1 Sam.
 17:29)*

I have read this scripture many times, and I have always felt that it was a very important statement, containing much of the doctrine that is declared in all of scripture, but never felt to have any understanding of all that it contained. I may still not have any understanding, but it has arrested my mind of late, and I pray that I may be given light on it, for my own benefit, as well as for anyone else who has pondered its

meaning. If not, I pray that I may be given the wisdom to discard my attempt to delve into things beyond my understanding. All of my writings are, in truth, written to myself. I originally began, and I continue to do so, to write in an attempt to get down on paper, in legible form, exactly what I believe about a subject. Many times, in my writing and research, on a subject I will arrive at a different understanding of the scripture than I had when I first began. If I succeed in my research to my own satisfaction, I may then submit it for publication, if not, I delete it, and this has happened many times in my attempts. My prayer is always that the Lord will direct me in making this decision in my efforts, for your benefit, and for mine.

These words were spoken, by David, at a very pivotal point in his life, although he was not aware of it, at the time. He was about to embark upon a race that had been set before him, long before he was born into the world of nature; and although he did not fully understand the meaning of what he was saying, he was made to realize from his experiences, that all things are for a purpose, and therefore this too had a specific cause. As I understand the scriptures, this was the way in which many of the prophets were given to tell of events that would come to pass, many years in the future, never realizing the full intent of that which they spoke. (2 Peter 1:21) *"For the prophecy*

came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

They were but declaring truths, as revealed unto them by the Holy Spirit, and they declared them, never fully realizing themselves, the full import of their prophecy. This is because they were written, to and for the benefit of future generations that they might see in the fulfilling of these prophecies, the handiwork of God in disposing of his will unto the heirs of promise. The apostle Paul said, (*Rom 15:4*) "*For whatsoever things were written aforetime was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*"

David's father, Jesse, had sent him to learn of the welfare of his brothers who were fighting in the battle, and to take cheeses to the captains of the host. At least, this was the purpose in the venture, as far as Jesse was concerned, but, there was a much deeper purpose of God, and although David quoted these words, he was unaware of what the cause, of which he spoke, was.

When David got to the battlefield, the Philistine, a giant of a man Goliath, came forth again and challenged the army of Israel to choose a man from their ranks to come and fight with him, and victory of the battle would be determined by the winner of that conflict. David was

moved greatly by this experience, when he heard this challenge to the armies of Israel, and he inquired of the people saying, (*1 Sam 17:26*) "*And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done for the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?*" He was advised, by the people that the king would enrich the man who killed Goliath with great riches, give him his daughter to wife, and make his father's house free in Israel. David continued to turn from one to another asking them this same question.

David's interest in this situation, and his reason for asking what would be done for the man who killed the philistine, was not that he might profit by it, but his anger was aroused, that Goliath had assailed the honor of the God of Israel, as he stated on one occasion, (*Psa 139:21-22*) "*Do not I hate them, O Lord that hate thee? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*" This is the attitude of all who have been given faith to see the beauty of the spiritual kingdom, and they will have a feeling of personal animosity for anyone who would attack those things which are so precious to them. This is why David so violently opposed this Phi-

listine: his challenge was to the armies of Israel; and the children of God will always take this very personally and oppose it.

Because of his actions Eliab, his oldest brother, rebuked him and asked him, *"Why camest thou down hither? And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle."* And it was this rebuke that prompted David to say, *"What I have now done is there not a cause."* As far as David was concerned, he was only giving an answer to Eliab's question, but in truth, as it is in many situations such as this, that which seems to be the cause, on the surface, is not the real issue at all. David did not realize that what he was doing was in fact, prophesying to the generations to come, a truth that would be of great comfort to them of how God works all things according to the counsel of his own will. It gives them great comfort and supports their faith when their own personal situation seems bleak and unsolvable, because it makes them realize that God is in control of all things, at all times, whether they realize it or not.

It is in this manner, according to my understanding, that all of prophesy has been revealed, down through the ages unto the prophets. There was a purpose to be dealt with, and the inspiration was given

to them, of God, to declare the truth, concerning future events that Israel may know that they are of God. (2 Peter 1:24) *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."* They were not fully aware of the full meaning of those things that they were saying, but it would be understood by the generations following: those who were alive in the time that the prophecy was fulfilled, and they would be greatly blessed by seeing the end results. As on one occasion, God said by the mouth of one of the prophets, *"If the thing prophesied comes to pass, then you will know that it is of me. If not, you will know that he speaks of himself,"* and this is their assurance that their problems too, are in the hands of God.

These prophecies are the foundation upon which their faith in God is based. This belief was expressed by the apostle Paul many times such as, (Rom 8:31) *"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"* And again Isaiah said, (Isa 54:17) *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise up against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."* These scriptures are comforting indeed to those

who believe that their only hope of salvation is by the grace of God, that these things are true, and that these scriptures are a personal assurance unto them that they are involved in them. With this evidence, which is given them by faith, they can face their own personal trials and tribulations, without fear, believing that for all things which come to pass, there is a cause, that it is of God and is for their eternal good.

When the words of David were rehearsed before Saul, he sent for him and David said to Saul *"Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."* Saul's response was, *"Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he is a man of war from his youth."* David then said, (I Sam 17:34-36) *"Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by the beard, and smote him and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God."* This was sufficient evidence for Saul to cause him to believe that this was indeed of God and therefore he said unto David, *"David, Go, and the Lord*

be with thee." Saul wanted to arm David with the armor and weaponry of the soldiers, to go up against Goliath, but David said that he could not go forth with them because he had not proved them. David's faith was that God would give the victory without man made weapons of war.

David then took his staff, chose five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in his shepherd's bag. He then took his sling and went forth to meet Goliath, confident that God would deliver him, and I say this because, when he confronted Goliath he said, (I Sam 17:46) *"This day, will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."* Now, the real cause, of which David spoke, was made manifest, although it was unknown by him at the time he said it. The scriptures do not say what David thought when the deliverance came, but in retrospect, it must have been of great comfort and joy to David to realize that God was with him in this battle, as he had been in all of his battles.

Surely it was upon the memories of these seasons of deliverance that he was blessed to say, in his final days. (2 Sam 23:1-5) *"Now these be the last words of David."*

David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel said, The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." This is a most beautiful testimony of one, who was a man after God's own heart, who expresses the very essence of his faith in such a manner that it renders all of the glory and honor unto God, the Rock upon which the plan of salvation rests.

I believe that it was in like manner that the three Hebrew children faced the trial of the fiery furnace, or Daniel faced the lion's den, and surely they must have experienced the same elation as they experienced the fulfillment of their deliverance. We would say, Oh, I could not do that, my faith is too weak. Well, you could in the same manner that they did, because it is always

of God, as the apostle Paul said, (Phil 4:13) "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth Me.*" and this scripture still holds true today, for Christ was there even as he is with the saints today.

I believe that these experiences occur many times, in the lives of God's children, even in this day and age, when those who are sent about their Father's business, go not knowing, what the outcome may be, nor where it may lead. They go in faith, believing that there is a cause, even as David did; though they do not really understand the purpose in the calling. I believe this to be true, particularly in the calling of his ministers; the impression is there to go yet they cannot really believe or understand it to be possible, seeing themselves as they are in nature.

I read a column in the daily newspaper one time, written by one of the worlds most famous evangelists of our time, where the question was asked, "*How does a man know that he is called, of God, to preach?*" His answer was, simply, "you'll know", and added no further information. I agreed more with him on his answer to this question than I have ever agreed with him on any of his other writings that I have read. Only if you have experienced it, will you understand fully the truth of his answer. You will question the calling, but the impression is there, and will not let you rest until it is accomplished, and you have no choice

in the matter. I believe that it was in this way that David prophesied as he did; he was given an impression, although he did not fully understand it; and therefore he certainly could not have explained it to his brother, in any way that he would understand.

I believe that Elihu, once explained how these occurrences enter the lives of men, when he said, (*Job 33:14-17*) "*For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in the slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.*" In this manner, the will of the Lord is accomplished in the affairs of men, and they are not even aware of how and why these things are wrought in them. They proceed to perform them, unaware that it is God working in them both the will and the do of his good pleasure, and as the work unfolds, they are made to marvel at the power and wisdom which God gives unto men, because they know that it is not of themselves that these things are accomplished.

Many times, as I enter the church building, before services, I utter a silent prayer, "*Oh Lord go with me this day, that I may have some assurance that it is of thee, that it will be profitable unto someone, and is not just*

from the vanity of the flesh." How many times have you said unto yourself, "*Oh Lord, what I am now doing, or am about to do, give me the strength, courage and the assurance that it is of thee, that there is a cause, and that it will be profitable to someone, sometime, in the household of faith.*"

In bonds of love;
Richard H. Campbell

OBSERVATIONS ON THE DIVINE
ATTRIBUTES
BY AUGUSTUS M. TOPLADY
1740-1778

We now come, to consider the omnipotence of God.

Pos.1. God is, in the most unlimited and absolute sense of the word, Almighty. Jer. xxxii. 17. Behold, thou has made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. Mat. xix. 26. With God all things are possible. The schoolmen very properly distinguish the omnipotence of God into absolute and actual: by the former, God might do many things, which he does not; by the latter, he actually does whatever he will. For instance, God might, by virtue of his absolute power, have made more worlds than he has. He might have eternally saved every individual of mankind, without reprobating any: on the other hand he might, and that with

the strictest justice, have condemned all men, and saved none. He could, had it been his pleasure, have prevented the fall of angels and men, and thereby have hindered sin from having footing in and among his creatures. By virtue of this actual power he made the universe; executes the whole counsel of his will both in heaven and earth; governs and influences both men and things, according to his own pleasure; fixes the bounds which they shall not pass; and, in a word, worketh all in all: Isa. xlv. 7. Amos iii. 6. John v. 17. Acts xvii. 26. 1 Cor. xii. 6.

Pos 2. Hence it follows that, since all things are subject to the divine control, God not only works efficaciously on his elect, in order that they may will and do that which is pleasing in his sight; but does likewise frequently and powerfully suffer the wicked to fill up the measure of their iniquities by committing fresh sins. Nay, he sometimes, but for wise and gracious ends, permits his own people to transgress; for he has the hearts and wills of all men in his hand, and inclines them to good, or delivers them up to evil, as he sees fit: yet without being the author of sin; as Luther, Bucer, Austin, and others have piously and scripturally taught.

This position consists of two parts: (1.) That God efficaciously operates on the hearts of his elect, and is thereby the sole author of all the good they do. See Eph. iii. 20.

Phil. ii.13.1 Thes. ii.13. Heb. xiii. 21. St. Austin takes up no fewer than nineteen chapters in proving that whatever good is in men, and whatever good they are enabled to do is solely and entirely of God; who, says he, "*works in holy persons, all their good desires, their pious thoughts, and their righteous actions; and yet these holy persons, though thus wrought upon by God, will and do all these things freely: for it is he who rectifies their wills which, being originally evil, are made good by him; and which wills, after he hath set them right and made them good, he directs to good actions and to eternal life; wherein he does not force their wills but makes them willing.*"

(2.) That God often lets the wicked go on to more ungodliness: which he does, 1. Negatively, by withholding that grace which alone can restrain them from evil. 2. Remotely, by the providential concourse and meditation of second causes; which second causes, meeting and acting in concert with the corruption of the probate's unregenerate nature, produce sinful effects. 3. Judicially, or in a way of Judgment. Prov. xxi. 1. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters; he turneth it whithersoever he will; and if the king's heart, why not the hearts of all men? Lam. iii. 38. Out of the mouth of the Most High proceeded not evil and good? Hence we find that the Lord bid Shimei curse

David, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. That he moved David himself to number the people, compare 1 Chron. xxi. 1 with 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. Stirred up Joseph's brethren to sell him into Egypt, Gen. 34, 20. Positively and immediately hardened the heart of Pharaoh, Ex. iv. 21. Delivered up David's wives to be defiled to Absalom, 2 Sam. xii. 11. and xvi. 22. Sent a lying spirit to deceive Ahab, 1 Kings xxii. 20-23.

And mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of Egypt, i.e. made that nation perverse, obdurate and stiff-necked, Isa. xix. 14. To cite other instances would be almost endless, and, after these, quite unnecessary; all being summed up in that express passage, Isaiah xlv. 7, I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things. See farther 1 Sam. xvi. 14. Psalm cv. 25. Jer. xiii. 12, 13. Acts ii. 23 and iv. 28. Rom. xi. 8. 2 Thess. ii. 11. Every one of which implies more than a bare permission of sin. Bucer asserts this, not only in the place referred to below, but continually throughout his works: particularly on Matt. vi. 2, where this is the sense of his comments on that petition, Lead us not into temptation; *"It is abundantly evident, from most express testimonies of Scripture, that God occasionally in the course of his providence, puts both elect and reprobate persons into circumstances of temptation: by which temptation are meant, not only those trials that are of an outward, afflictive nature; but those also that*

are inward and spiritual; even such as shall cause the persons so tempted actually to turn aside from the path of duty, to commit sin, and involve both themselves and others in evil, Hence we find the elect complaining, Isa. Ixiii. 17. O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear? But there is also a kind of temptation which is peculiar to the non-elect; whereby God, in a way of just judgment, makes them totally blind and obdurate in as much as they are vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," See also his exposition of Rom. ix.

Luther reasons to the very same effect; some of his words are these; *"It may seem absurd to human wisdom that God should harden, blind, and deliver up some men to a reprobate sense; that he should first deliver them over to evil, and then condemn them for that evil: but the believing spiritual man sees no absurdity at all in this; knowing that God would be never a whit less good even though he should destroy all men,"* and again *"God worketh all things in all men; even wickedness in the wicked: for this is one branch of his own omnipotence."* He very properly explains how God may be said to harden men, & c. and yet not be the author of their sin: *"It is not to be understood,"* says he, *"as if God found men good, wise*

and tractable, and then made them wicked, foolish and obdurate, but God, finding them depraved, judicially and powerfully excites them just as they are (unless it is his will to regenerate any of them) and, by thus exciting them, they become more blind and obstinate than they were before." See this whole subject debated at large in the places last referred to Pos. 3. God, as the primary and efficient cause of all things, is not only the author of those actions done by his elect as actions, but also as they are good actions; whereas, on the other hand, though he may be said to be the author of all the actions done by the wicked, yet he is not the author of them in a moral and compound sense, as they are sinful; but physically, simply, and, *sensudiviso*, as they are mere actions, abstractedly from all consideration of the goodness or badness of them.

Although there is no action whatever which is not in some sense either good or bad, yet we can easily conceive of an action purely as such without adverting to the quality of it; so that the distinction between the action itself, and its denomination of good or evil, is very obvious and natural.

In and by the elect, therefore, God not only produces works and actions through his almighty power, but likewise through the salutary influences of his Spirit, first makes their persons good, and then their

actions so too; but in and by the reprobate he produces actions by his power alone; which actions, as neither issuing from faith, nor being wrought with a view to the divine glory, nor done in the manner prescribed by the divine word, are, on these accounts, properly denominated evil. Hence we see that God does not immediately and *per se*, infuse iniquity into the wicked; but, as Luther expresses it, powerfully excites them to action, and withholds those gracious influences of his Spirit, without which every action is necessarily evil. That God, either directly or remotely, excites bad men as well as good ones to action, cannot be denied by any but atheists, or by those who carry their notions of freewill and human independency so high as to exclude the Deity from all actual operation in and among his creatures, which is little short of atheism. Every work performed, whether good or evil, is done in strength and by the power derived immediately from God himself, in whom all men live, move, and have their being, Acts xvii. 28. As at first without him was not any thing made which was made; so now without him is not any thing done which is done. We have no power or faculty, whether corporeal or intellectual, but what we received from God, subsists by him, and is exercised in subserviency to his will and appointment. It is he who created, preserves, actuates and directs all things. But it by no means follows

from these premises that God is therefore the cause of sin; for sin is nothing but illegality, want of conformity to the divine law, 1 John iii. 4, a mere privation of rectitude: consequently, being itself a thing purely negative, it can have no positive or efficient cause, but only a negative and deficient one, as several learned men have observed.

Every action, as such, is undoubtedly good; it being an actual exertion of those operative powers given us by God for that very end; God therefore may be the author of all actions (as he undoubtedly is), and yet not be the author of evil. An action is constituted evil three ways; by proceeding from a wrong principle, by being directed to a wrong end, and by being done in a wrong manner. Now, though God, as we have said, is the efficient cause of our actions, as actions, yet if these actions commence sinful, that sinfulness arises from ourselves. Suppose a boy who knows not how to write has his hand guided by his master, and nevertheless makes false letters, quite unlike the copy set him; though his preceptor who guides his hand is the cause of his writing at all, yet his own ignorance and unskillfulness are the cause of his writing so badly. Just so, God is the supreme author of our action, abstractedly taken; but our own virtuosity is the cause of our acting amiss.

I shall conclude this article with two or three observations. And, (1) I

would infer that if we would maintain the doctrine of God's omnipotence we must insist upon that of his universal agency: the latter cannot be denied without giving up the former. Disprove that he is almighty, and then we will grant that his influence and operations are limited and circumscribed. Luther says "*God would not be a respectable being, if he were not almighty, and the doer of all things that are done; or if any thing could come to pass in which he had no hand.*" God has at least a physical influence on whatsoever is done by his creatures, whether trivial or important, good or evil. Judas as truly lived, moved, and had his being from God as Peter; and satan himself as much as Gabriel; for to say that sin exempts the sinner from the divine government and jurisdiction is abridging the power of God with a witness; nay, is raising it from its very foundation.

(2) This doctrine of God's omnipotence has a native tendency to awaken in our hearts that reverence for, and fear of, the divine majesty which none can either receive or retain but those who believe him to be infinitely powerful, and to work all things after the counsel of his own will. This godly fear is a sovereign antidote against sin; for if I really believe that God by his unintermitted operation upon my soul produces actions in me, which, being simply good, receive their malignancy from the corruption of my

nature (and even those works that stand opposed to sins are more or less infected with this moral leprosy); and if I consider that, should I yield myself a slave to actual iniquity, God can, and justly might, as he has frequently done by others, give me up to a reprobate mind and punish one sin by leaving me to the commission of another; surely such reflections as these must fill me with awful apprehensions of the divine purity, power and greatness, and make me watch continually, as well against the inward risings as the outward appearance of evil.

(3) This doctrine is also useful, as it tends to inspire us with true humility of soul; and to lay us as impotent dust and ashes at the feet of sovereign omnipotence. It teaches us, what too many are ignorant of, the blessed lesson of self despair; i.e. that in a state of unregeneracy our wisdom is folly, our strength weakness, and our righteousness worth nothing: that therefore we can do nothing either to the glory of God or the spiritual benefit of ourselves and others but through the ability which he giveth; that in him our strength lieth, and from him all our help must come. Supposing we believe that whatsoever is done below or above God doeth it himself; that all things depend, both as to their being and operation, upon his omnipotent arm and mighty support; that we cannot even sin, much less do any good thing, if he withdraw his aid; and that all men are in his hand,

as clay in the hand of the potter; I say, did we really believe all these points, and see them in the light of the Divine Spirit, how can it be reasonably supposed that we can wax insolent against this great God, behave contempestuously and superciliously in the world, or boast of anything we have or do? Luther informs us, that he, "used to be frequently much offended at this doctrine because it drove him to self-despair; but that he afterwards found that this sort of despair was salutary and profitable, and near akin to divine grace."

4) We are hereby taught not only humility before God, but likewise dependence on him, and resignation to him. For if we are thoroughly persuaded that of ourselves, and in our own strength, we cannot do either good or evil; but that being originally created by God we are incessantly supported, moved, influenced and directed by him, this way or that, as he pleases; the natural inference hence will be that with simple faith we cast ourselves entirely, as on the bosom of his providence, commit all our care and solicitude to his hand; praying without hesitation or reserve that his will may be done in us, on us, and by us, and that in all his dealings with us he may consult his own glory alone. This holy passiveness is the very apex of Christianity. All the desires of our great Redeemer himself were reducible to these two; that the will of God might be done,

and that the glory of God might be displayed. These were the highest and supreme marks at which he aimed throughout the whole course of his spotless life and inconceivably tremendous sufferings. Happy, thrice happy that man, who hath thus far attained the mind that was in Christ.

(5) The comfortable belief of this doctrine has a tendency to excite and keep alive within us that fortitude which is so ornamental to, and necessary for, us while we abide in this wilderness. For if I believe with the apostle that all things are of God. 2 Cor. v. 18, I shall be less liable to perturbation when afflicted, and learn more easily to possess my soul in patience. This was Job's support: he was not overcome with rage and despair when he received news that the Sabers had carried off his cattle and slain his servants, and that the remainder of both were consumed with fire; that the Chaldeans had robbed him of his camels; and that his seven sons were crushed to death by the falling of the house where they were sitting: he resolved all these misfortunes into the agency of God, his power and sovereignty, and even thanked him for doing what he would with his own Job. i. 21. If another should slander me in word, or injure me in deed, I shall not be prone to anger when, with David, I consider that the Lord hath bidden him, 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

(6) This should stir us up to fervent and incessant prayer. For does

God work powerfully and benignly in the hearts of his elect? And is he the sole cause of every action they do, which is truly and spiritually good? Then it should be our prayer that he would work in us likewise both to will and to do of his good pleasure: and if, on self-examination, we find reason to trust that some good thing is wrought in us, it should put us upon thankfulness unfeigned, and cause us to glory, not in ourselves, but in him. On the other hand, does God manifest his displeasure against the wicked by blinding, hardening, and giving them up to perpetrate iniquity with greediness? Which judicial acts of God are both punishments for their sin and also eventual additions to it? We should be the more incited to deprecate these tremendous evils, and to beseech the king of heaven that he would not thus lead us into temptation. So much concerning the omnipotence of God. I shall now,

(V. Take notice of his justice.

vs.1. God is infinitely, absolutely and unchangeably just.

The justice of God may be considered either immanently, as it is in himself, which is, properly speaking, the same with his holiness; or transiently and relatively, as it respects his right conduct towards his creatures, which is properly justice. By the former he is all that is holy, just and good; the latter manifests him to be so in all his dealings with angels and men. For the first see

Deut. xxxii. 4. Psa. xcii. 15; for the second, Job viii. 3. Psalm. cxlv. 17. Hence it follows that whatever God either wills or does, however it may at first sight seem to clash with our ideas of right and wrong, cannot really be unjust. It is certain that for a season he sorely afflicted his righteous servant Job; and on the other hand enriched the Sabeans, an infidel and lawless nation, with a profusion of wealth and a series of success; before Jacob and Esau were born, or had done either good or evil, he loved and chose the former and reprobated the latter; He gave repentance to Peter and left Judas to perish in his sin: and as in all ages, so to this day he hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth. In all which he acts most justly and righteously, and there is no iniquity with him.

Pos. 2. The Deity may be considered in a threefold view: as God of all, as Lord of all, and as Judge of all.

(1) As God of all, he created, sustains, and exhilarates the whole universe; causes his sun to shine, and his rain to fall upon the evil and the good, Matt. v. And is the preserver of all men, 1 Tim. iv. 19. For as he is infinitely and supremely good, so also is he communicative of his goodness; as appears not only from his creation of all things, but especially from his providential benignity. Every thing has its being from him, as Creator; and its well-being from him as a bountiful pre-

server. (2) As Lord or sovereign of all, he does as he will (and has a most unquestionable right to do so) with his own; and in particular fixes and determines the everlasting state of every individual person as he sees fit. It is essential to absolute sovereignty that the sovereign have it in his power to dispose of those over whom his jurisdiction extends just as he pleases, without being accountable to any; and God, whose authority is unbounded, none being exempt from it, may, with the strictest holiness and justice, love or hate, elect or reprobate, save or destroy any of his creatures whether human or angelic, according to his own free pleasure and sovereign purpose. (3) As Judge of all he ratifies what he does as Lord, by rendering to all according to their works; by punishing the wicked, and rewarding those whom it was his will to esteem righteous and to make holy.

Pos. 3. Whatever things God wills or does, are not willed and done by him because they were, in their own nature, and previously to his willing them, just and right; or because, from their intrinsic fitness, he ought to will and do them; but they are therefore just, right and proper, because He who is holiness itself wills and does them.

Hence Abraham looked upon it as a righteous action to slay his innocent son. Why did he so esteem it? Because the law of God authorized murder? No; for on the con-

trary both the law of God, and the law of nature peremptorily forbid it: but the holy patriarch well knew that the will of God is the only rule of justice, and that what he pleases to command is on that very account just and righteous. It follows:

Pos. 4. That although our works are to be examined by the revealed will of God and be denominate materially good or evil, as they agree or disagree with it; yet the works of God himself cannot be brought to any test whatever; for his will being the grand universal law, he himself cannot be, properly speaking, subject to, or obliged by, any law superior to that. Many things are done by him (such as choosing and reprobating men) without any respect had to their works; suffering people to fall into sin, when if it so pleased him, he might prevent it; leaving many backsliding professors to go on to perish in their apostacy, when it is in the divine power to sanctify and set them right; drawing some of his grace, and permitting many others to future misery whom, if he pleased, he could undoubtedly save, with innumerable instances of the like nature (which might be mentioned, and which, if done by us, would be apparently unjust, inasmuch as they would not square with the revealed will of God, which is the great and only safe rule of our practice. But, when he does these and such like things, they cannot but be holy, equitable, and worthy of himself; for since his will is essentially and

unchangeably just, whatever he does in consequence of that will must be just and good likewise. From what has been delivered under this fifth head I would infer, that they who deny the power God has of doing as he will with his creatures, and exclaim against unconditional decrees, as cruel, tyrannical, and unjust; either know not what they say nor whereof they affirm; or are willful blasphemers of his name, and perverse rebels against his sovereignty: to which at last, however unwillingly, they will be forced to submit.

I shall conclude this introduction with briefly considering in the,

Sixth and last place, the mercy of God.

Pos. 1. The Deity is throughout the Scriptures represented as infinitely gracious and merciful. Exod. xxxiv. y. Mehem. ix. 17. Psalm ciii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 3.

When we call the divine mercy infinite, we do not mean that it is in a way of grace extended to all men without exception (and supposing it was, even then it would be very improperly denominated infinite on that account, since the objects of it, though all men taken together, would not amount to a multitude strictly and properly infinite), but that his mercy towards his own elect, as it knew no beginning, so is it infinite in duration, and shall know neither period nor intermission.

Pos. 2. Mercy is not in the Deity as it is in us, a passion, or affection;

every thing of that kind being incompatible with the purity, perfection, independency and unchangeableness of his nature; but, when this attribute is predicated of him, it only notes his free and eternal will or purpose of making some of the fallen race happy, by delivering them from the guilt and dominion of sin, and communicating himself to them in a way consistent with his own inviolable justice, truth and holiness. This seems to be the proper definition of mercy, as it relates to the spiritual and eternal good of those who are its objects. But it should be observed.

Pos 3. That the mercy of God, taken in its more large and indefinite sense, may be considered, (1) as general, (2) as special.

His general mercy is no other than what we commonly call his bounty, by which he is more or less providentially good to all mankind, both elect and non elect: Matt. v. 45 Luke vi. 35. Acts xiv. 17; and vie. 25, 28. By his special mercy, he, as Lord of all, hath in a spiritual sense compassion on as many of the fallen race as are the objects of his free and eternal favor: the effects of which special mercy are the redemption and justification of their persons, through the satisfaction of Christ; the effectual vocation, regeneration and sanctification of them by his Spirit; the infallible and final preservation of them in a state of grace on earth; and their everlasting glorification in heaven.

Pos. 4. There is no contradiction, whether real or seeming, between these two assertions, (1) That the blessings of grace and glory are peculiar to those whom God hath in his decree of predestination set apart for himself; and (2) That the gospel declaration runs that whosoever will may take of the water of life freely, Rev. ixia. 17. Since, in the first place, none can will or unfeigned and spiritually desire a part in these privileges but those whom God previously makes willing and desirous; and secondly, that he gives this will to, and excites this desire in, none but his own elect.

Pos. 5. Since ungodly men, who are totally and finally destitute of divine grace, cannot know what this mercy is, nor form any proper apprehensions of it, much less by faith embrace and rely upon it, for themselves; and since daily experience, as well as the Scriptures of truth, teaches us, that God doth not open the eyes of the reprobate as he doth the eyes of his elect, nor saintly enlighten their understandings; it evidently follows that his mercy was never, from the very first, designed for them, neither will it be applied to them: but, both in designation and application, is proper and peculiar to those only who are predestinated to life; as it is written, the election hath obtained, and the rest were blinded, Rom. axe. 7.

Pos. 6. The whole work of salvation, together with every thing that is in ode to it, or stands in connec-

tion with it, is sometimes in scripture comprised under the single term mercy; to show that mere love and absolute grace were the grand cause why the elect are saved, and that all merit, worthiness and good qualifications of theirs were entirely excluded from having any influence on the divine will, why they should be chosen, redeemed, and glorified, above all others. When it is said, Rom. ix. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, it is as much as if the apostle had said, "*God elected, ransomed, justified, regenerates sanctifies and glorifies whom he pleases:*" everyone of these great privileges being briefly summed up, and virtually included in that comprehensive phrase, "*He hath mercy.*"

Pos. 7. It follows that whatever favor is bestowed on us; whatever good thing is in us, or wrought by us; whether in will, word, or deed: and whatever blessings else we receive from God, from election quite home to glorification, all proceed, merely and entirely, from the good pleasure of his will, and his mercy towards us in Christ Jesus, To him, therefore, the praise is due, who put the difference between man and man, by having compassion on some and not on others.

Psalm 50:6.

And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. (psa. 34:19).

What a wonderful consolation is found in this statement. Of one thing we are certain, the Lord is not afflicting us because of our unrighteousness. This statement calls for comments in two ways at least. None of us feel that we are righteous, even Christ not excepting himself, And yet a wonderful meditation awaits he and she that has their mind staid on Him. As the sin bearer of His chosen flock, he was guilty by reason of our transgression on him; in His relationship with His father He was all fair, no spot in Him.

It is my own feeling that in the text, He is speaking of His people and the tender relationship that exists between He and them. In the outset let us ever remember that:

Not from the dust afflictions grows

*Nor troubles rise by chance.
Yet we are born to cares and woes;*

A sad inheritance.

*As sparks break out from burning coals,
and still are upwards borne,
So grief is rooted in our souls
and man grows up to mourn.*

When called upon to watch during the trying hours of our often

long night watches, we are inclined to feel that the reason of our afflictions is because that the Lord is displeased with us. Oh, no, no, not that. If His servants are righteous surely it is He that dwells in them as the Lord their righteousness. Whatever his dealing with us, it is then in righteousness. How bright the picture becomes as He teaches us that He loves us, and that all things given us are in love and in mercy given, and that not only are they given for our direct and immediate good, and that ultimately there can be no question, there can be no doubt but that it works together with every experience that we have for good and the glory of He whom we are His and He is ours.

I hope dear reader, that you have noted that these afflictions are many. How can that be? How is it that He esteems me righteous in that He gives me many of these tokens of His love. His messages that when each and every affliction has brought me to lose confidence in myself, then that He overwhelms me with His love by delivering us from every affliction.

I do not come to you in a scolding attitude. Oh, yes, my soul knows the sad lamentations of Jeremiah and Job. I have been hid behind the hedge when the sun has gone down, and the Lord has hid his face. I too have sent inquiries to Him, Art thou the Christ or shall we look for another. I know the long flickering, grotesque shadows when He is seem-

ingly gone forever. But that is why I desire to write to you poor afflicted saint. If I am not mistaken I have felt the dismal feelings when He is eclipsed from my peering eyes, and my heartstrings are seemingly broken asunder because He is not present. But such a thing cannot be. If he is ours and we are His, sores and losses and crosses may multiply on our body and in our mind, but He is not gone. That will never be that cannot be. Oh, yes He seems to go, He seems to hide Himself from us, but that is an affliction sent in mercy to teach us our frailness, our dependence on Him.

Everything pertaining to life and godliness has been freely given. The thorn to Paul was at first hard to be borne, but when seen as an affliction from His Elder Brother to teach him, to wean him, strengthen him, then it was not a token of His displeasure, but a remembrance of the everlasting love of He that had called him out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Wisdom has indeed built her house. The wisdom of God has given his children every affliction. Not one of them has come by satan's hand, nor has God nor Christ nor the Holy Spirit sent one of them as punishment. Perish the thought. God the Holy One, the Perfect Rock who never made a mistake never sent an affliction on a righteous man or woman to punish he or she for their transgression. My soul knows right well better than that. This is a righ-

teous Father giving gifts to His obedient children for their instruction and teaching.

To the afflicted saint it would not do to belittle or to minimize their afflictions. At the time of enduring them, as it was with Paul in regard to the thorn in the flesh, it seems oftentimes, that their afflictions are far more than they can bear. How wonderful that Paul learned the intent of His Lord and Master. This dealing with Paul continued (and with us, if we are subjects of His work) and becomes more glorious as we explore the amazing blessings that were taught him. He says to Paul, For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God, for which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more and exceeding weight of glory (2 Cor. 4: 15, 17).

As the Lord prospers our investigation may we rejoice and be exceedingly glad with unspeakable joy and full of glory at the difference between what David sang long years ago and what the apostle affirmed two thousand years ago. We are not calling in question the number of afflictions of the righteous. They came in great numbers upon every member of that righteous nation whose God is the Lord. However, there is a so called system of salva-

tion that makes a spurious claim that God's children bring afflictions, adversity, tribulations upon themselves by a neglect of their Christian duties. David did not say, many are the afflictions of the negligent and indifferent and careless. He did not say that. Why is it that in the face of the inspired evidence that this is not true, people continue to make this claim?

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (11 Cor.4:17). Did you listen carefully to that? Did it strike a note of praise to your Redeemer God? Yes, we all that are experienced in the dealings of God with us, can readily agree with David that the afflictions of the righteous are many. There are many trials (God sent trials); there is a fiery trial accompanying each child of grace, but the sweetness of the morsels of the feeding time for the sheep, the unity, the togetherness of each delivered child, leads them to join in union of mind and heart as we survey the shortness of those moments of holy ecstasy. They are many, and yet they are light when attended by whispers of His love.

Let us go over that again. This is worth repeating time and again. These numerous afflictions come as a dark and gloomy cloud at times, but there is not a frown in a single one of them. There is not a time when all that occurred in the life of Paul of sorrow and trials and perse-

cutions and tribulations that anything was working against anyone at Corinth. Everything that occurred in the life of Paul, as he wrote these wonderful things that was against them. Perish that thought. Let it ring out loud and clear, as the song of the triumph in the hearts of God's humble poor. Let Mount Zion say, The Lord afflicts His children in love, and that each one of them is in mercy sent, and that every one of them is in the hands of our kind and gracious Father too good to make a mistake and too wise to err.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And not only so but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us (Rom. 5: 1, 5)

What an array of covenant blessings. Yet, if I had a nation of people under my thumb that I desired to herd them into prison and to deal with them in a harsh manner because of their shortcomings, I would not seek any further. But to the contrary, instead of sending hard tribulations upon them, our kind and gracious Father works right opposite to that way of doing

business with them. This gracious God tells us that He has justified them by faith which He has given them. These poor sinners in His charge have peace freely bestowed upon them. And that is not all. They have access by faith into this grace wherein they stand (are now standing), and their hope of better things to come is founded in the glory of God. No poor sinner would ever think of asking more, but the good things the sweet mercy of God still comes stealing in upon us and we are indeed in wonderment and amazement. But there is more yet, Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also. Ah, dear brethren and sisters, What a great mercy it is to have Him on our side (Psa. 124). He is not the hard taskmaster that conditionalists would make Him out to be. Instead, behold how good and kind that He is to His poor weak children. Instead of sending tribulations for punishment for our shortcomings we have better news to tell you. God takes the things that seem so strongly entrenched against us, and we are found rejoicing in those things. Have you ever heard of anything better than that? Has any of the wild fire doctrines ever had the allurements and captivation of your mind like the doctrine of God's sovereign care for poor sinners? Tribulations are not an enemy to the saints of God when they are heaven sent. We glory in them, not in they themselves, but in what God brings out with and by them. I am an impa-

tient person. I am always in a hurry, always a minute man. But God has placed in my life, as I humbly hope and believe, tribulations, and they are as effectual to produce results, being sent, as I hope, by the Sovereign Ruler and in His hands they bring about, again, as I hope, some degree of patience. That much is good; no man has a better doctrine than that, but that is not all. The Lord always has supplied our needs, and He always will. With patience wrought effectually by the Strength of the Lord, any problem ceases to be a stumbling block and becomes a stepping stone to higher ground. Ah, what triumphs are brought about through patience. She is indeed a virtue unexcelled. Of course, we have the full weight of resourcefulness working on our side, and for us, and in us. She works an experience in the children, and those wrought in and wrought out experiences are never forgotten. In exchanging interviews about where we have been, and what we have been taught, are the things we have discussed when we remembered always and all the ways through which He has led us on.

With the cluster of blessings, all in the hand of He that loved us unto death, green fields of living verdure will be opened to us. That lovely gift from God's dealings with us will be in His hands to give us additional beauty to enjoy. This is all the mighty, and yet tender love of God in brightening our little hope. That

is the best news of all other messages. To have our hope revived; to have the borders of the kingdom of heaven enlarged to where we are not ashamed, but rather blessed to lift our feeble voices in praise to He that has delivered, and, by reason of this revival, not afraid, nor not ashamed to claim a hope in the merits of the risen Lord.

And when the borders of the land of Israel are enlarged to you by reason of shedding in our hearts by the Holy Ghost the love of God, our hearts will be melted together in love to God our Father, Jesus Christ, our saviour, and the Holy Ghost, who is the only Teacher that Wisdom our mother has sent us.

Rejoice evermore, brethren,
Elder W. D. Griffin

From Elder Lamberts book,
"Tried In The Furnace",
CHARITY May, 1947

It is alarming to me when I am given to meditate upon the strife and confusion that exists in Zion today! It is heart-breaking to find brethren trying to devour and subdue one another! It makes me shudder to note the coldness that seems revelent in our own midst. All this perplexity of mind has made me to inquire the Lord for an understanding of His Spirit of love. May He define charity for us and make manifest that spirit in us.

Let us now consider the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians where Paul was inspired to write to the Church at Corinth on this grand subject. I realize the modern usage of the word is the giving of alms, but the 3rd verse of this chapter states the possibility of bestowing all goods to feed the poor, yet be destitute of charity. I am persuaded to believe that charity is the love of God, love of Christ, and love to saints. God loves us with a godly love. This same love is reciprocated and also includes Christ and the brethren. We love God because He first loved us. God's children do love one another. I think that Paul in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians was blessed to treat upon the greatness of charity and its properties. He says, *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."* To be enabled to speak with the tongues of men is a natural gift from God, but to be able to speak with the tongues of angels is a spiritual gift from God. Man naturally cannot learn the language of the truth as pertaining to God and the holy Scriptures. Though a man be spiritually blessed to speak fluently and eloquently of the doctrine of God our Savior and have not charity, he is as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. If a person be blessed so that he can understand all mysteries and knowledge and have all faith both believing and doing

miracles and have not charity, he is nothing. Paul does not mean that these gifts are nothing but that the man possessing these gifts is nothing, destitute of charity. If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor in order to gain the reputation of men or for the purpose of obtaining eternal life it would be not profit to me. These deeds must be motivated by love to God or to Christ or to the saints before they could be rightly considered as profitable for me.

Now let us consider the properties and characters of love as Paul was inspired to note them. "Charity suffereth long." The person blessed with charity is patient. He is slow to anger, and not hasty to revenge. He is enabled to bear much; has the grace of forbearance, and is blessed to forgive. *"And is kind."* He does good to all men, even to his enemies. *"Charity envieth not."* He that is possessed with this wonderful grace of God's love does not envy the temporal happiness of others. He rejoices when he beholds a brother is blessed with gifts both temporal and spiritual. He does not envy the happiness of others even though they are decidedly more blessed than he. Joseph's brethren were not charitable when they envied Joseph because he had a greater share in the affections of their father. The charitable person does not envy one of God's children whose usefulness and success in spiritual undertakings are decidedly greater (seemingly) than his. *"Char-*

ity vaunteth not itself." He does not boast of either his natural or spiritual wisdom or possessions. He does not boast of what he does as his motive is love and not for the applause of men. "Is not puffed up." He is not swelled with pride but is humble. "Doth not behave itself unseemly." He is not unbecoming in his conversation or actions and has due respect for the aged and those of authority. "Seeketh not her own." He is not seeking to promote his own selfish ambitions and desires but his care and concern is to the glory of God and to the children of the kingdom. "Is not easily provoked." He is not easily offended. "Thinketh no evil." Not that he is free from evil thoughts such as are sinful and vain, for testimonies throughout the holy scriptures affirm to the contrary. God's children are forever desiring to be delivered from these sinful thoughts that are daily experienced. But I think that this character will forgive a brother his trespasses and will not try to find some way of revenge. He thinks not upon how to get even with someone who has wronged him.

"*Rejoiceth not in iniquity.*" He mourns because of his own iniquities. He is grieved because of the sinfulness of professors. He is troubled when he meditates upon the profanity and immorality of the world. "But rejoiceth in the truth." He rejoices in the doctrine of God, our Savior, he is pleased when God is praised and man is set forth as

nothing, yea less than nothing. Salvation by grace is his meat and drink. "*Beareth all things.*" He feels that all things work together for good to them who love God, even the suffering, persecution, and affliction is not in vain. He bears them without complaint, feeling that if justice were meted out they would be more intense. He does not feel that he should revenge wrong doing. "Believeth all things." Everything that exists is according to the decrees of God. All things are for the praise of God and for the perfecting of God's saints. None of the things existing is by chance. "*Hopeth all things.*" All things yet future is predetermined so that nothing will frustrate any of the promises of God from being fulfilled. "*Endureth all things.*" He is confident that all things are embraced in the eternal decrees of an all-wise and all-powerful God. He endures all the afflictions and persecutions for the elect's sake and for Christ's sake. The last to be endured is death.

"*Charity never faileth.*" It may fail in the lively exercise of it. Selfishness and the cares of the world may be prevalent at times, but the love of God will not permit a child of God to fall finally into perdition. Charity is everlasting. It is ever the same. Prophecies will be fulfilled then cease to be prophecy. Hope will become a reality thus cease to be hope. Faith will terminate into a reality. Charity will be charity in the beyond the same as it was before

the beginning of time. Every object of God's love is just as certain for heaven and immortal glory as before time began. There is no change in the love of God for His people.

Now, I feel that the Lord has blessed us with a few sweet thoughts on the properties and characteristics of God's love as made manifest in brethren. Permit me to say, "*By their fruits we shall know them.*" I wish to suggest to the citizens of Zion, that you beware of impostors. Beware of those having a form of godliness but not manifesting the grace of charity. I believe the time has come to watch as well as pray. May God grant us the grace of charity and the eye of watchfulness.

Elder E. J. Lambert

GEN. VI. 3.

And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his day shall be an hundred and twenty years.

"The Lord God said; not to Noah, for as yet he is not taken notice of, or any discourse addressed to him; but to himself: my spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh;

not only carnal and corrupt, but sadly corrupted, and wholly given up to, and immersed in sensual lust and carnal pleasure, so as not to be restrained or reformed; even the posterity of Seth, professors of religion also, as well as the profane world and posterity of Cain: *yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years;* meaning not the term of man's life reduced to this, from the length of time he lived before the flood; but the space of time God would give for repentance, before he proceeded to execute his vengeance upon him; this is that *long suffering of God*, the apostle speaks of, that waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20."

J. K. Booton

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WAITING

*How long dear Lord will troubles last
How long before the storms are past
How long before the trials cease
How long before I feel Thy peace*

*It seems so long since I have known
The hand that Thou alone hath shown
Times of sorrow that have no end
Joy and peace I long Thee to send*

*We know that we should not complain
For its in Thy hands to come again
Yet longing hearts desire to know
That Mercy and Love continue to flow*

*Thou measureth time not in days
As do men of worldly ways
Yet it seems so long between
The times when Thou alone art seen*

*Give us patience Lord to wait
Until Thou openest Grace's gate
To let us look within the Fold
And view the Flock of young and old*

*Relieve us Lord of toil and strife
Renew our hope of eternal life
Manifest Thy presence so dear
Among Thy children Thou holdest near*

*Give us to feel that short at hand
We'll see and walk the Promised land
Where trials and tears come no more
On God's celestial and peaceful shore*

Elder C.B. Davis, Jr.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	122
Elder J. B. Farmer	
VOICES OF THE PAST	126
Elder John L. Hastings	
Hannie B. Grehan	
Elder Silas H. Durand	
Asa Howard	
Elder J. C. Philpot	
Nancy Creel	
MEETINGS	139
CONTRIBUTIONS	141
OBITUARIES	141
Sister Vera Worley Brumfield	
Sister Mabel Cox Carey	
Ocie Ellar Phillips Hollandsworth	
Brother Wade Marshall Poff	

 EDITORIAL



Elder J. B. Farmer

“And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” John 9: 39-41.

As with all scripture, that which is written above is hidden in a great mystery, and the mystery is impossible to be unraveled by the natural mind. Only the little children of God are given to understand His words in truth, and to take them to heart as they are revealed to them. The understanding of the words of God is hidden from all others, regardless of their intellectual powers, their intensive study or their religious zeal. Though a spiritual thing be explained ever so carefully and exactly, it cannot be understood apart from revelation. The inspired apostle said, *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God.”* 1 Cor. 2:9-10. The natural eye is blinded to the things of the Spirit of God, and the natural ear is deafened to them, and the natural heart of understanding has no place for them. But God, in mercy and love, reveals His things to His elect vessels of mercy as it pleases Him. May He give us understanding in these things.

With much assurance we may say that no one on earth knows anything about the kingdom of God except the children of God, and they know only as much as has been revealed to them. Thus, boasting is

excluded. So, all people are blind in the beginning, and only certain ones are ever given sight into Spiritual things. Now here is a great and deep mystery. Those who are blind spiritually, think they see. They think that by their efforts to see and their diligence to know they may take hold of the things of the Spiritual kingdom. They set about to make a religion based on their understanding naturally. They are deceived into thinking that the works of their own hands and heads can save them. They develop a self-righteousness that despises any who fall short of their supposed attainments. They exalt themselves and think they are able to instruct others. Pride and arrogance fills their hearts to the exclusion of love. This not only applies to the wicked, but also to the children of God before they are converted. God made that plain, through the beloved apostle Paul, who was made to be the pattern for all that should believe after him. Paul hated and persecuted the church before he was converted.

Here is another profound mystery. Before Paul was given eyes to see the Spiritual kingdom, he was blinded. The one who thought he could see and who had his own religion and righteousness, was blinded. A great light shined round about him from heaven, and the Lord spoke to Saul, as Paul was called in those days. The Lord said to Saul, *“Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou*

must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.” Acts 9:6-9.

To what then was Saul blinded? We know that he was blinded naturally, but what was it that he seemed to see so clearly before this experience, that he would never see again? What is it that he would forever be blinded unto? He initially thought he saw that a man could be saved by his own works. He thought he saw that it was a good thing to be exalted above others - that it was good to outstrip them in zeal and knowledge. He was proud of his attainments. He, in his extreme self-righteousness, thought he saw that he could justly pursue and violently persecute others whom he categorized as heretics. When the Lord appeared to Saul, He changed him into a totally different person. *“He saw no man.”* Paul's former confidence in the fleshly abilities of men was taken away. He was made to deny all that he thought he saw before. He could no longer view himself or any one else as being righteous of himself, but was made to see with all saints, that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. He could no longer look to his at-

tainments with pride. They were made to be worthless to him, even as dung. All his previous boasting was excluded. He could no longer see the church as the enemy of the truth, but rather as the very pillar and ground of the truth – even the bride of Christ and beloved. Saul was a new man, set on a new journey, with new thoughts and a new understanding and a heart of love. Is it so with you? Is it so with me? If so, I am made to believe that we are walking in the way the fathers trod.

Isaiah, the prophet, uttered these words by the inspiration of God, and as prophesy, and as a promise to the people of God: *“And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.” Isa. 42:16.* And also: *“Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord’s servant?” Isa. 42:19.*

I am made to believe that all of God’s servants are blinded to the things of this world when they are in a Spiritual mind. They are made to have no confidence in their fleshly work or in their carnal mind or in that of others. They are made to look unto God for all things. They are lifted up and made to sit together in

heavenly places in Christ. All their confidence and trust is placed in Him who cannot lie or fail in a promise. The apostle said, *“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” 2 Tim. 1:12.*

I am made to believe that the little children of God are blinded to the world, as was their pattern, Paul, before they are made to see Spiritual things. After they are made to see the weakness, corruption and futility of the flesh, then are the wonderful, powerful, incorruptible things of God made manifest to them by the Spirit. They, like little babes, begin to see the wonders of a kingdom high and lifted up, which is not of this world. With the Spiritual eye of faith and love, they view the King of glory upon His majestic throne. They begin to see the Son of God as the creator and the One Who sustains all creation. They see Him as the victorious Savior of His beloved people. They are made to see the church, the new Jerusalem, as a bride adorned for her Husband. They see her as without spot, wrinkle, or any other kind of blemish. They see her as all glorious, the perfection of beauty in whom God is shining.

They begin to sing a new song of salvation in the pure language of grace. They begin to hear and know the certain sound of the gospel. They overflow with thanksgiving

and praise to the One Who took away all their sins forever, never ever to be remembered against them. They begin to learn and speak a new language, which the world cannot learn. They begin to hope in that great salvation with the faith, which is given to them. Their hearts begin to glow with love for their brethren who travel with them here on their journey. They begin to see and know that this world is passing away. It is not their home. They are strangers and pilgrims in a desert land, just passing through. They are given a great desire to please Him Who loved them, and gave Himself for them. Now instead of heaping up for themselves the pleasures and treasures of this world, they desire to have the treasure, which is laid up in heaven for them. They are looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. They are even made to glory in infirmities and sufferings for Christ's sake. They are made willing to suffer the reproaches of the world, that they might please God. They are considered by those who hate them as the off-scouring of the world - wretched, miserable, poor, naked and blind.

Yes, God's people are all these things according to the flesh, including being "*made blind.*" But as Jesus said, they "*have no sin.*" Their sins have all been forgiven and washed away. But concerning all who say "*We see,*" Jesus said that their "*sin remaineth.*" Their sin

is not forgiven. May we be given to know and to acknowledge that we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and naked, and blind according to the flesh. And may we be given to buy of Him (without price) gold tried in the fire, that we may be rich, and white raiment, that we may be clothed, and that the shame of our nakedness doesn't appear. And may we be given eye-salve to anoint our eyes, that we may see. The wicked are never blind in their own thinking, and they go on in the broad way that leads to destruction. The righteous, who are made so by the blood of the Lamb, are made blind to the things of this world, that they might see the glorious things of heaven. And they are given eyes of faith to see the narrow way that leads to life, and ears to hear, and a heart to hearken to the voice of the Son of God, which says, "*This is the way, walk ye in it.*" *Isa. 30:21.* May God continue to bless and keep you in his love and care.

This was written in love and in hope of eternal life.

J. B. Farmer
1-17-2005

PSALM 116.5-6.

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

VOICES OF THE PAST

GENESIS I. 3.

“AND God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”

I will first say that this is a subject too high, sublime and wonderful for me to attempt to expound, but I am impressed to write a few thoughts in connection with it. I trust that he who is able to guide our minds, will guide my pen, and I will leave what I shall write for the brethren to judge.

In the first place, I believe every word that is written in the Scriptures was written by inspiration of God, and that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. In the first verse we are told: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” What is intended by the expression, “In the beginning, With our God there was no beginning; for if we believe the Scriptures he is eternal. But there was a beginning with this earth, and this creation which God created and of which he said that it was good, was the beginning that is spoken of. We should carefully notice the first thing that was created. It was the heaven, the abode of his people, and then the earth, which is his footstool. Then all things were created upon the earth before man was made, to support and sustain his natural life. As all things were created before man was made, he could not say that he

created anything; to God he must give all the glory. If this be so naturally, much more must it be so spiritually. Then God prepared the garden and all the trees that were in it, of which Adam might partake, save the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; but by this man’s transgression were many made sinners. The Lord purposed that Jesus should come in the flesh, and prepared him a body to this end, yet without sin, that by one Man’s obedience many might be made righteous. We are told that the earth in the beginning was without form and void. Now, to my mind, the Scriptures do not only set forth these things as one would write history, but they are also types of better things. To the carnal mind they are not anything more than a history of that which is natural and that is as far as the natural mind can see. It is as impossible for the natural mind to see above this as it is for water to rise above its own level; but to the spiritual mind, when it pleases God to reveal the glory and beauty which shines forth out of these things, they bring forth praise to God for his goodness and mercy in preparing such things for them that love him. We can see that this earth which was created, and upon which we live, with all creeping things, with all its storms and tempests and all things else that it contains, is a type of the heavenly world; but how void was this body of ours of all spiritual things when it was born into this world.

It is said, "*Darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*" These Scriptures are beautiful when it pleases God to give us to look into their depths and see the spiritual beauty which is in them. As the natural earth was void and dark, so we by nature are void of the knowledge of God until he moves upon the face of the great deep. Darkness covers from our view all spiritual things. We have no thought of the things that are hidden, as it were, beneath the sod until in the warm springtime they burst forth, green and tender.

Now I come to the first verse which I quoted: "*And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*" How mysterious is the work of God. He created the heaven first, showing that the heaven is above the earth, and that the darkness was before the light. The earthly man is before the spiritual man, and all is darkness to the soul until God says, "*Let there be light,*" or until he moves upon the face of the waters, and we are born into that new kingdom. We knew no more about that light until he said, "*Let there be light,*" than we knew about the natural light of this world before we were born into it; and when we are delivered we know not what the light is. But the newborn babe soon learns to know the light from the darkness, and while it does not know what either is, it soon learns to cry for the light; just so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit, like Saul of Tar-

sus, when the Lord says, "*Let there be light,*" they fall to the ground. Not that they all fall to the ground literally, but they are brought down and made to cry with Saul, "*What wilt thou have me to do?*"

Now further on in this chapter it is said that God divided the light from the darkness. In spiritual experience we are made to realize this dividing, for at the first, as said before, the child does not know one from the other; yet it knows that it likes the light and will cry for it. Until it pleases God to divide the light from the darkness we are constantly crying for the light, yet not knowing what we are crying for, but we know that there is something we desire and long for, and when it pleases God to divide the one from the other, then the evening and the morning are the first day with our souls. This, the first day in our experience; we have not known what all this meant before. We may have seen the light for some time, but to us it was dim, and as though in the distance, but now it is divided, and we are basking in the sunlight of his presence. He does not take away the darkness entirely, he only divides it from the light. Had he taken away the darkness altogether, we should never have any more dark seasons. This would not be good for us, the night must come. But we do now know the night from the day, the darkness from the light. Our God has divided them, and how we long for the light when the dark seasons come, and how we rejoice when we hear the

singing of the birds again and catch a glimpse of the light in the east shining forth from the Sun of righteousness. We rejoice to see the dark cloud pass over, and to behold the bow in the cloud shining in its radiant beauty as a token of the covenant of God with man. O what glory is in these things; it is high; I cannot attain to it. How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. It is written: *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."*-2 Cor. iv.6. What wondrous grace he has bestowed upon his people, saying, *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* It is not glorify man, but give God all the glory. O may he divide the light from the darkness in us, that we may praise him for his goodness, and to him be all the praise, honor and glory. Amen.

Your brother,
JOHN L. HASTINGS.
BROOKLYN, N. Y., Nov. 6, 1907.

REVELATION 7:15.

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.

ALEXANDRIA, Va., Dec. 4, 1907.

DEAR HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH: - If we read the Bible as a history, and study its admonitions, it is profitable. It warns us to do unto others as we would wish to be done by; this is morality. Then we reach the limit of our earthly power, and to hope for a better and purer life. We must leave this vile body, *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*- 1 Cor. ii. 14. Then we are helpless children, tossed by the temptations of a carnal, sinful world, dead in trespasses and sins, so prone to err that sometimes we cry out in anguish of soul for mercy and strength, and wonder if the Lord has entirely forsaken us, or if we have an inheritance not made by the law as given by Moses, but grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. Then the sweet, assuring memory comes back to us of our first love and our baptism; surely they were not of the law. How lovely everything spiritual seemed to us then, and we felt assured of the Savior's pardoning love. If this joy was permitted to last we would be unfitted to cope with the carnal world. Our Savior was a man of sorrows, and if we in any way try, or are led, to follow him, we must glory in tribulation; it is the christian's heritage, *"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."-Rom. 1 viii. 28. There are times when our trials are almost more than we can bear, but, the Lord suffers it to be so, and we rest on his everlasting arm; this life's trouble is only for a short while, if we have a hope in Christ our compensation is incomparable. "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ-shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword*", "*Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.*"-Romans viii. 35, 37. Though our lives are passed with those who fear not God, our best and truest impulses are of "*the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*" -John xiv. 17. May our humble petitions always follow this glorious Leader, the humble christian's un-failing Friend.

We have a dear, aged sister who is seldom absent from our meetings; she is afflicted with deafness, but seems to enjoy meeting with us, and always seems cheerful and ready to talk about those glorious things pertaining to our Father's kingdom. The Lord gives her consolation in a way that I know not of rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation and continuing

instant in prayer. It is the sweetest privilege we experience in life to meet with our brethren and hear them tell about their hope through Christ; these dear ones, who come so close to us in our experience of grace, whom we love with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Our cognizance of this love is not premature; it is our birthright, given before the world was made, with those "*which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*"-John i. 13. Knowing our weakness in the flesh, can we be over zealous in our supplications for divine mercy "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*"-John v. 24. Can we doubt this support? O no, it comes from the Rock.

*"Rock of Ages, shelter me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
(Let the water and the blood,
From thy wounded side
which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and
power."*

Sometimes we get gloomy and impatient when we look over our small congregations and count less than are visible members of the church, and in our fleshly weakness

we wonder if the Lord will sustain this little band, then we compare them to our neighbor's larger congregations and their beautiful houses of worship, and we note they are zealous of good works; then we are made to feel and know the Lord's purpose in choosing the meek and lowly to confound the wise and great; they boast of their wealth and power, we are just poor sinners, saved by God's grace. Would any of these lowly little children exchange their inheritance for our neighbors' self-confident faith I think not. Only to know that we are heirs to that inheritance spoken of in Daniel's vision and the final redemption.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."- John iii. 15.

I trust we can rest on this support as we journey through this vale of tears. I feel to be one of the least, if one at all, in our Father's love.

We dearly appreciate the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, and congratulate our dear editors on their constant adherence to the faith; also our dear brethren and sisters, who write such comforting letters; we feel that we love them, and hope we will hear often one from another.

Unworthily, your sister,
HANNIE B. GREHAN.

THEY SHALL NOT HURT NOR DESTROY. (Isaiah xi. 6-9; I xv. 29.)

THE natural disposition of the four wild beasts and the two serpents presented in this wonderful figure, is to hurt and destroy the four domestic animals and the little child spoken of in connection with them. In nature the contrast between the animals here placed in pairs is very striking, the one of each pair being ferocious and destructive, while the other is mild, peaceful and defenseless. But here each of the wild beasts is placed in an attitude and position contrary to that which it would naturally assume, and in which its ferocious disposition does not appear. This natural disposition, however, does not appear as changed or eradicated, but as brought into subjection and held under powerful control. So the lion is eating straw like the ox, the wolf is dwelling with the lamb, the leopard lies down with the kid, the cow and the bear are feeding and the sucking child is safely and fearlessly playing with the most deadly of serpents.

It is not in nature that this miracle is seen, not in any earthly place, but in God's holy mountain, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here are seen two contrary and inconsistent principles, the flesh and the Spirit, brought together in one person, in the experience of grace, and held under the control of that Spirit of Christ which is represented

by the little child.

The coming and kingdom of Jesus Christ is presented by the prophet Isaiah in each of the places referred to above, and this figure is employed by the Spirit to show the effect of gospel power in the church of the living God. I do not regard this figure as showing something that is hereafter to be seen upon this earth among the nations of men, but as something that belongs to the work of grace, and is seen and felt in the gospel church and in the experience of every child of God.

These wild beasts do not represent natural men tamed, but natural principles, passions and propensities belonging to the flesh of a child of God. In our natural birth the life of Adam is manifested in us, with all the qualities and powers created in him, which are now depraved and vile. In our spiritual birth there is manifested in the same person the life of Jesus, with all its holy and sinless principles and perfections. This new birth, manifesting a new life from above, does not change the sinful nature of the Adamic life, but brings it into subjection.

Now are seen and felt in the one person of the christian the two lives, two principles, flesh and Spirit, the result of two births, *"and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."* Gal. v. 17. This in spiritual birth causes a great change to be experienced in the heart and life of a poor sinner but

not a change of the Adamic nature, as he soon discovers to his sorrow. A birth does not change the nature of anything, but greatly changes the circumstances.

If these animals, coupled together in this peculiar figure, are intended to represent the opposing principles of the human and the divine nature in the christian, how well and appropriately is the contrast arranged. The lion and the ox, the bear and the cow, the leopard and the kid, the wolf and the lamb, the asp and the suckling child. Here we may see the graces of the Spirit, as faith, affection, meekness, love, peace and the like, and over against each one is represented that natural power, passion or propensity which is most directly opposed to that spiritual grace, and most likely to hurt and destroy it. So the lion may well represent the natural intellect, the carnal mind. It is lordly, proud, self-confident, domineering, and has controlling power in natural things, but it *"is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."* Opposed to that towering intellect is faith, which is the only power that can see and receive and understand spiritual things. They stand contrasted with each other, as the lion and the ox. The ox is patient, steady, reliable. Without faith it is impossible to please God, for faith sees the things of God, and by faith we walk, and not by sight.

Now the ox has no power over

the lion, but the Spirit, the little child, has controlling power, and in God's holy mountain, in the church of God, the mind is brought under control by the Spirit, and is made to employ its powers, as a servant, in the work that will be to the benefit of the Lord's people. So, as the lion eats straw like the ox, the natural powers of the mind, when controlled by the Spirit, are employed in things that are for our good. Its learning and knowledge are used in reading, in writing, as holy men of old did, moved by the Holy Ghost, in attending to the things that pertain to external forms of worship. In these things the controlling power is manifested through faith. The ox does not do things like the lion, but the lion eats straw like the ox. But the lion is a lion still, and when in any degree released from the controlling power of the Spirit in that holy mountain it will tear and devour. The mind that was employed in reading the Bible, speaking of experimental things, singing hymns to God's praise, will, if controlled by the flesh, be engaged in profane and unwholesome literature, and in worldly and even vile enterprises. Thus living after the flesh we die, in the sense meant by the apostle; but neither faith nor any other grace of the Spirit shall be finally hurt or destroyed. Even Peter's faith did not fail, though he appeared to be at the borders of death and destruction. He yielded much to his strong, determined mind, but the little child had still the controlling power. Some-

times the intellectual power seems to prevail, and we are proud to see so fine and powerful a creature as the lion engaged in the things of the kingdom of Christ, and feel that the brighter mind and the superior learning do have more influence and success in religious work. Then we are suddenly brought to see that we seem to be coming down from the beautiful eminence of God's holy mountain, and are being drifted to a fancied exaltation of our own, and the lion is not seen beside the unmoved, patient ox, but is "seeking whom he may devour."

How good it is of the Lord that "*the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*"- 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. We cannot trust our own minds, we need the constant presence of the little child to lead us. Our own minds would lead us soon away from the things of faith, and then we cease to walk in the path of holiness, for we walk in that path only by faith, not by sight. How constantly we feel our need to call upon the Lord to lead us "*in the paths of righteousness.*"

Sometimes we seem unable to distinguish between natural and spiritual affection, though there is

as much difference as between the cow and the bear. When feeding together we might be well satisfied with them; but one is altogether a selfish principle. True spiritual affection, brotherly kindness and motherly care may be represented by the cow. They are unselfish. These affections are to be set upon things above.

I do not understand the leopard, the wolf, the asp and other animals to represent some specially vile and terrible passion or evil propensity that may spring up in our hearts suddenly, as fierce intruders which do not really belong there, and which we ought to, and can, drive out and destroy, but I regard them as representing all the principles and characteristics of the flesh, in which, Paul says, dwelleth no good thing. *"The heart is deceitful above all things;"* it is as a cage of unclean birds; it is a waste howling wilderness; nothing good dwells there, but howling beasts of prey and deadly serpents. To the wise of this world such statements appear the height of foolishness, but the exercised people of God know that the representation is none too strong. And the really good things that are in any man are from the Spirit; they are the fruit of the Spirit, as *"love, joy, peace, long-suffering; gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."* When we consider the terrible list of the works of the flesh given by the apostle, we wonder how one spiritual grace can

remain unhurt and not destroyed, and how hope can be left alive; But here is where we see the manifestation of spiritual power, *"the power of God unto salvation."* Power can only be manifested by an opposing force. We could see no power in the wind if we did not see the grass wave and the tree fall before it, or feel its force against ourselves. The power of God caused peace on earth. The power of Jesus was seen in the falling of the wind and the waves before his word. How can there be peace in the heart of a sinner when such opposing principles are there as are represented by these different animals mentioned by the prophet Only by the power of the Spirit bringing the natural powers under control. And, still more wonderful, when the lion or the leopard or the asp appear to us to have broken away from under control and to have done their destructive work, so that we feel that love and peace and spiritual joy are dead in our hearts forever, to find ourselves again melted down in thankfulness and love before the Lord, and to find that all those things which the kid and the lamb and the weaned child mean to us are still there in our poor hearts.

This is because the decree has gone forth that they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain.

We shall die if we live after the flesh; if we sow to the flesh we shall of the flesh reap corruption; if we do

despite to the Spirit of grace we shall have sore punishment, (Heb. x. 29,) but the fruit of the Spirit, though its manifestation cease for the time, shall not be hurt nor destroyed.

We feel sometimes the warfare between the flesh and the Spirit so fierce that we wonder if we still live; but today we have to acknowledge that the same hope is ours which was given so long ago, and although we still see evil and vileness in us, that is, in our flesh, yet we have to acknowledge that we are favored at times to enjoy sweet peace and confidence in our souls. Why is this? Because these graces of the Spirit cannot be hurt nor destroyed; they are altogether spiritual, but it is through the flesh they must be manifested. The little child leads not only the ox and the lamb, but the wild beasts also, when we are in God's holy mountain; that is, the whole man is led. Not only is the spiritual mind led to desire to dwell in the Lord's house, but the natural mind is made to yield to that desire, and the feet are turned toward the place of meeting. It is as men, as having the two contrary natures, flesh and Spirit, that we are led, and desire to be led, by the Spirit of God. Sin is terrible to a child of God, and he can but groan under "the bondage of corruption;" but it is a comfort to be assured that the spiritual graces once planted within us shall never be hurt nor destroyed, but shall remain till our change comes, when

we "*shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*"- *Romans viii. 21.*

"*For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*" This cannot mean the literal earth, nor the nations of people upon it. The language and the figure will not allow of such a thought. Like all gospel truth this is known only in experience. The knowledge of the Lord is life, eternal life. (John xvii.3.) It is said to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. This is the new earth which the Lord has created, the people of Jerusalem. (Isaiah lxxv. 18.) They are new creatures in Christ, but are partakers of flesh and blood, and so are still troubled by a sinful nature. No man can teach them the things of God. It is written in the prophets, "*They shall be all taught of God.*" Just as knowledge concerning natural things comes from the head to every member of the body, so the knowledge of the things of God comes from Jesus, the Head, to every member of his body. The knowledge in each case is life. This knowledge of God, which is eternal life, fills the earth as the waters cover the sea. All the dark depths of the sea and its fearful gulfs are covered and hidden from our sight by the water; so when the Lord is pleased to give us to feel the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, the power and blessedness of that

eternal life-knowledge so fills these earthen vessels, this new earth, that we lose sight for the time of the great depths and gulfs of evil and sin in our depraved nature, and to see Jesus only as our life and our righteousness, our song and our salvation.

SILAS H. DURAND.,
SOUTHAMPTON, Pa., Dec. 4, 1907.

THE EMPTY VINE.

"ISRAEL is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself."-Hosea x. 1.

This solemn, momentous prophecy of Hosea was announced and put forth to the Jewish nation, or chosen Israelites, according to Bible chronology, about the year 760 B. C., for reproof and sundry judgment because of their idolatry and disobedience to the mandates of the eternal God, also as indicated in similar places of the Scriptures. The forlorn condition and adverse state of the churches here in Texas, as well as elsewhere, our barrenness and declension, brought the above subject seriously to bear upon my mind, and therefore, by the mercy and grace of God, I will endeavor briefly to write a few things relative to this sacred portion of holy writ.

In touch with its importance of warnings, and the absolute neces-

sity of correction, returning to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, the church in her typical order is frequently alluded to under the appellation of a vine, showing the culture, growth and fruit are of the vine, which, in the literal rendering, means "*a plant producing grapes; the slender, trailing stem of other plants.*" How beautiful to see the lily, or vine, growing in rich soil under the vitalizing influence of the sun and the cool, refreshing showers of the rain, bringing forth fruit in its season. But when the carnal Israelites, or national Israel, became elated through the lusts of the flesh and allured by the vanities of the world to follow strange gods, being enticed by their cunning craftiness to join field to field, then they become as represented by our text, "*an empty vine,*" bringing "*fruit unto himself,*" and become "*the degenerate plant of a strange vine.*" "*For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God.*"-Jer. ii. 21, 22. All through the ages of the old testament dispensation we notice numerous instances this vine withered, became sickly by reason of the poisonous nature of sin and rebellion, producing confusion and discord in their midst; a decay, distemper, and, for a time, a cessation of growth, until God's divine justice was satisfied and his holy law vindicated, delivering Israel from the

iron grasp of her enemies and again planting them in their own land to be a goodly heritage unto the Lord their God; (Jer. iii. 19; Psalms xvi. 6,) corrected in measure, chosen in the furnace of affliction, led through the angry floods of persecution, tortured in the vehement flames of temptation, buffeted by the cold waves of a frowning world, yet in all the visitations of God's judgments upon his people, the objects of his love, he remembered them in mercy even in the midst of deserved wrath succored them and fed them in the wilderness with "angels food," led them about, instructed them and kept them as the apple of his eye, and there was no strange god with him. (*Deut. xxxii.- 12.*) "*O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up? For their Rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.*" The rock of antichrist "is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps," so antagonistic to Christ, the Rock of our salvation. The old vine or covenant of works must languish and vanish away. Christ is our Redeemer, our Passover, the High Priest in the blood of the new covenant ordered in all things and sure, the Intercessor and Mediator of a better covenant, established on better promises. The poor, weeping

children of Zion have —, one Father and one Lord, Jesus Christ, who atoned for their sins through perfect sacrifice of himself, the perfect coetaneous Son of God, the gracious Preserver of Israel, the cloud and pillar of fire that directed them in all their wanderings across the river Jordan into the land of promise. The ceremonial law was given from Mount Sinai, with its typical offerings and divers washings, to be perpetuated to the coming of Christ. When left to ourselves we are an empty vine that can only bring fruit to the idol." Their heart is divided: now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images."

Affectionately,
ASA HOWARD.

Job 37: 21-24.

And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.

Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.

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.

“My soul followeth hard after thee.”-PSALM Ixiii. 8.

THE Lord (we would speak with reverence) does not suffer himself at first to be overtaken. The more the soul follows after him, the more he seems to withdraw himself, and thus he draws it more earnestly on the pursuit. He means to be overtaken in the end: it is his own blessed work in the conscience to kindle earnest desires and longings after himself; and therefore he puts strength into the soul, and makes the feet like hinds' feet “to run and continue the chase. But in order to whet the ardent desire, to kindle to greater intensity the rising eagerness, the Lord will not suffer himself to be overtaken till after a long and arduous pursuit. This is sweetly set forth in the Song of Solomon, v. 2-8. We find there the Lord coming to his bride; but she is unwilling to open to him till “he puts his hand in by the hole of the door.” She would not rise at his first knocking, and therefore he is obliged to touch her heart. But when she opened to her Beloved, he was gone; and no sooner does he withdraw himself, than she pursues after him; but she cannot find him; he hides himself from her view, draws her round and round the walls of the city, until at length she

overtakes, and finds Him whom her soul loveth. This sweetly sets forth how the Lord draws on the longing soul after himself. Could we immediately obtain the object of our pursuit, we should not half so much enjoy it when attained. Could we with a wish bring the Lord down into the soul, it would be but the lazy wish of the sluggard, who” desireth, and hath not.” But when the Lord can only be obtained by an arduous pursuit, every faculty of the soul is engaged in panting after his manifested presence; and this was the experience of the Psalmist, when he cried, *“My soul followeth hard after thee.”*

Elder J.C. Philpot

CHAGRIS, Ind. Ter.

BRETHREN EDITORS: - The time for renewal of subscription to our dear family paper, the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, is at hand, and I cannot do without it, for it is all the preaching I get. I sometimes wonder if the good Lord has forgotten me, but when my paper comes then I say, No, for he has sent me some more sweet messages of his love. I am not worthy of such, so with tears running down my cheeks and my soul filled with joy I trace the lines, with my heart all a glow. Dear brethren and sisters, none but those isolated from the

people of God can know how precious it is to read after the dear saints; by this *"we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."* I feel from my heart that I love the Old Baptists above all people. I know if I love them with a pure love I am one of them; the Lord is my Judge, and I leave it all with him. He is my only help, for of him and to him are all things, and without him I can do nothing. Yes, according to the Lord's will, mercy and love I shall wait on the Lord all my appointed time till my change come. Through the many years of toil, hardship, trouble, sorrow, affliction and mourning I can say the Lord has been with me, and I can say, Wait, O my soul, upon the Lord. Sometimes I am so cast down that I begin to look and wonder, and say, Where is my hope? I cannot place it on anything good I have done, and sometimes my path is so dark I fall by the way and mourn like the dove. O where is my Love, that I might find him. Sometimes when I have stayed in this dark pit for days and weeks the light begins to shine and I rejoice, and the first thing I know I am praising the Lord for the great and mighty work he hath done for me. *"Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name."* Dear saints, tell me, is it thus with you? O that I may run and not look back, for surely my soul is the fall of the love of God and my tongue is loosed and I can say, The

Lord be magnified. Sorely the Lord is good to me, for he has had mercy upon me. *"Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sack-cloth, and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent."* *"My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."* My dear friends, it seems to me when I read after you that we all do magnify him who is the Author of our redemption. O that I were a Mary, or a Hannah, or a Ruth. When I read about them it seems that I am nothing at their feet, and I feel to say with the woman at the well, *"O give me this water, that I thirst not, neither came hither to draw."* *"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."* *"Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountain; thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast: How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God!*

Therefore the children of

men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me." "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

I would thank some brother or sister to give their views on Revelation xvii. 17, if it is not requesting too much.

Now, my friends, this letter I commit unto your care, it is with your judgment to publish or not; as for me, I had rather read after you than myself. I will make one request of you: if it is not in accordance with the divine teaching of our Savior and the travel of those born of the Spirit, please throw it aside; I would rather be silent than deceive anyone, for I find in me, that is, in my flesh, no good thing; but by the grace of God I am what I am. May the Lord's mercies be over all the household of faith. O that it is his will to count unworthy me one of that number. Remember me at the throne of grace.

Farewell in the Lord.
NANCY CREEL.

MEETINGS

MALMAISON PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH

As per precepts and examples as set forth in the written word of God Malmaison looked out among themselves and recognized a certain gift. They therefore called for a presbytery to be formed Sat. 5th March at 2:30 pm. at Malmaison Primitive Baptist Church, Hwy 726, for the purpose of examination of this gift, brother Randolph Wells and if found qualified to be ordained to the full work and service as deacon.

All Elders of our faith and order present were invited to sit in the presbytery and all deacons were asked to sit together. The meeting was opened by prayer by Elder Carl Terry. Elder Raymond Goad was elected as moderator and Carl Terry to serve as Clerk.

Brother Burnell Williams, acting as spokesman for the church, delivered brother Randolph Wells to the presbytery.

The qualifications for deacon was read as set forth in scriptures 3rd Chapter of Timothy by Elder Junior Conner. Examinations followed by Elders Tom Solomon, W.T. Conner, Marvin Brumfield, Jimmie Gray, Joe Sawyer, Mark Terry & Cleo Robertson, The presbytery being satisfied as to the qualifications of this candidate proceeded with the laying on of hands and prayer was

offered by Joe Sawyer. The charge was delivered to brother Wells by Elder Junior Conner. He was then delivered back to the church by Smith Walton as an ordained deacon.

The minutes of the work of the presbytery were read and adopted, a copy to be placed in the church records, a copy to be sent to the Signs of the Times for publication and a copy to be given to Randolph Wells along with a certificate of ordination.

Presbytery was dismissed by
Elder Cleo Robertson.
Elder Raymond Goad, Moderator
Elder Carl Terry, Clerk

ELDERS:

W.J. Conner
Thomas Solomon
Mark I. Terry
Junior L. Conner
Joe Sawyer
Jim Gray
Cleo Robertson
Marvin Brumfield
Raymond Goad
Carl Terry

DEACONS:

Jamie Cooper
Harvey Wood
Guy J. Holley
Donald L. Agee
Calvin L. Plybon
Irvin Holley
William Midkiff
Hubert W. Murphy
Dave Duncan
R. Allen Carroll
John Collie
Oscar Pickral
Burnell B. Williams

Dear Brethren,

We were so honored by you coming to Randolph's ordination service. In what ever way you participated, we thank you more than words can say.

Our love,
The Wells Family

STAUNTON RIVER UNION MEETING

The Lord willing, the Staunton River Union will be held at Springfield Primitive Baptist Church, located on Route #29 - South Main Street, Gretna, VA, (Pittsylvania County) the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in May, 28th & 29th, 2005.

The song services will begin at 10:00 a.m.

We invite the ministers of our Faith and Order, our Brethren and all lovers of the truth to be with us.

Oscar D. Pickral, Clerk
1-434-656-1782

THE WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union will convene with Moons Creek Church the 5th Sunday in May. The Church is located about a 1/2 mile east of Hwy 86 between Danville and Yanceyville on Park Springs Rd.

Elder Kenneth R. Key,
Moderator
Sister Sue Blalock, Clerk

Romans 8:24

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?

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR MARCH 2005

Livie Thompson, VA	5.00
Betty Nutter, MD	5.00
Bernard Cox, VA	5.00
John Smith, FL	25.00
Ted McDaniel, VA	100.00
Eld. Kenneth Hopkins, VA	5.00
Priddy Shaw, VA	5.00
Francine Fortner, TX	10.00
Mrs. Bennie Clifton, VA	5.00

ANNIVERSARY NOTICE

On April 1, 2005 Brother R. Allen Carroll and wife Virginia J. Carroll were blessed to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary.

OBITUARIES

IN LOVING MEMORY OF SISTER VERA WORLEY BRUMFIELD

Our beloved Sister Vera Worley Brumfield was born May 22, 1921 in Pittsylvania County and passed away January 1, 2005 in Gretna Health Care Center.

Sister Vera was the daughter of the late Claude Swanson Worley and Fannie Dalton Worley. She was married to the late Brother Elmo Brumfield and to this union they were blessed with three sons. She

was predeceased by her husband Brother Elmo Brumfield and a son, Marshall Dean Brumfield. She is survived by two sons Roney Brumfield of Gretna and Shelby Brumfield of Richmond, one brother, J. B. Worley of Danville, four sisters Audrey Slaughter of Kentuck, Freda Metz of Roanoke, Gerline Weatherford of Danville and Ginny Talley of Richmond. Seven grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Sister Vera was given a hope and joined Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church August 2, 1962 and was baptized August 12, 1962 along with her husband. She faithfully attended worship service until her death and was a believer in salvation by grace.

Her strong faith carried her through life's trials and tribulations and she had many. She believed everything happened for a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

I was blessed to visit her and she always greeted me with a smile and asked me to pray for God's will to be done. Sister Vera was a loving mother and if she could not say anything good about someone she would not say anything.

Her family did all human hands could do for her. Sister Vera's sisters and brother were there when she needed them and she said many times she had the best sisters and brother that anybody could have. She praised them highly.

Her funeral was held at Weatherford Primitive Baptist Church at 2:00 p.m. January 3, 2005 by her pastor Elder Raymond Goad and Elder Marvin Brumfield. Her body was laid to rest beneath a beautiful mound of flowers in the Gretna Burial Park waiting that day when God will come in the cloud with great power and glory to receive his elect from the four winds of earth, be like him and be satisfied without spot wrinkle or any such thing.

May we all be reconciled to her death and be able to look back on what we had and not what we have lost.

Written I hope in Love
Elder Marvin Brumfield
Elder Raymond Goad-Moderator
Pam Betterton - Clerk

MABEL COX CAREY

It is with much sadness that I attempt to write a memorial for Sister Mabel Cox Carey. It has pleased our Heavenly Father to call from our midst another precious member.

Sister Mabel was born March 6, 1921 in Floyd County, Virginia. Her parents were the late Isaac Luther Cox and Necie Hollandsworth Cox.

Sister Mabel lived all her adult life in Danville, Virginia where she worked as a spinner in No. 4 Dress for 38 years before her retirement.

On June 5, 1948 Sister Mabel

married Brother R. W. (Bill) Carey. To this union was born a son, Wayne, who is a very talented and artistic person. They were blessed to be married for 56 years.

Sister Mabel joined Dan River Primitive Baptist Church December 16, 1962 and was baptized by her dear pastor, the late Elder David Spangler. She was a faithful member and attended church regularly until her health failed about two years ago. Sister Mabel and Brother Bill visited many different churches in several states. The joy of her life was cooking and preparing meals in her home which was always open to the brethren. Often visitors in our area spent the night with them. It was her great pleasure to entertain large groups in her home. Many of her church family have enjoyed hours of sweet fellowship and wonderful meals in their home as well as at church, especially her delicious flat snaps and hot homemade rolls which disappeared quickly. Their home was a haven for the Lord's people. Also Sister Mabel departed this life January 28, 2005. She is survived by her husband of the home and her son Wayne of Atlanta, Georgia. Also she is survived by a brother, Herbert Cox of Christiansburg, Virginia and four sisters: Mary Marshall of Christiansburg, Virginia, Dornie Semones of Salem, Virginia, Nettie Duncan of Virginia Beach, Virginia and French Hogan of Roanoke, Virginia.

Her funeral was held at Dan

River Primitive Baptist Church on February 2, 2005 by her pastor Elder Kenneth Key and Elder Raymond Goad. She was buried in Dan River Church Cemetery to await the second coming of Christ.

May God comfort and sustain all who mourn the loss of our dear sister but we feel our loss is her eternal gain.

Written in love,
Phyllis H. Stroud

OCIE ELLAR PHILLIPS
HOLLANDSWORTH

Our dearly beloved Sister in Christ, Ocie Ellar Phillips Hollandsworth fell asleep peacefully at the Heritage Hall Nursing Home on February 10, 2005. We feel our loss is her eternal gain.

Sister Ocie was born December 11, 1904 in Indian Valley, VA., making her stay on this earth 100 years. She was the daughter of the late Elkana C. and Ruth Jane Phillips. Sister Ocie was preceded in death by her husband, Brother Burman T. Hollandsworth, three son's, Alpha, Theodore, and Vernon. One daughter, Belva also preceded her in death.

She is survived by: daughter's and son-in-laws Sister Lena and Brother Vance Duncan, Sister Lora and Sonny Gunter, Helen and David Haynes, Phyllis and Glen Boyd, and Eloise Funkhouser. Eight Grandchildren and eight Great-Grandchildren.

The loving care given to Sister Ocie by her family could only come from God above. Each family took turns caring for her in their own homes and made her as comfortable as they possibly could.

In the last few months of her life she was not able to attend her meetings at Old Union Church, due to ill health. Sister Ocie was a faithful member of the Primitive Baptist faith for 75 years. She believed in Salvation by Grace and Grace alone, and loved to hear good preaching. Her mild manner, loving handshake and beautiful smile manifested the love she had for her dear family, and for all her Brothers and Sisters in the church.

Her funeral was conducted at the Mayberry Funeral Home Chapel in Floyd, Va., by her Pastor Elder Hale Terry and by Elder Larry Hollandsworth. She was laid to rest at the Hollandsworth Family Cemetery in Willis, Va., under a beautiful mound of flowers to await the second coming of our Lord.

Although we have suffered a great loss we feel she has much more to gain. May God reconcile us to his will and give us comfort as only He can. Done by order of the church in conference February 27, 2005, with one copy to be sent to the family, one to the Signs of the Times for publication, and one copy for our church records.

Elder Hale Terry, Moderator
Sandra Hollandsworth, Clerk

WADE MARSHALL POFF

It is with great heartache and God's everlasting grace that I attempt to write the obituary of my dear husband of 55 years, Wade Marshall Poff, who was called away from his earthly home on December 14, 2004. There will be no more heartaches, trials or troubles for him. He loved the church long before he became a member.

He was born May 1, 1925 to William H. and Ora Rierson Poff who have preceded him in death. Also a brother and foster sister preceded him in death. Survivors include his wife, Mary Conner Poff; five daughters and husbands; Judy & C. J. Ravan, Cathy & Elwood Holden, Cindy & Wayne Sutphin, Candy & Charles "Bubba" Creasy; all of Copper Hill, Virginia and Vicky & Stuart Childress, of Ararat, Virginia; eleven grandchildren, three great-grandchildren; one sister and husband, Becky & Richard Janke, Seattle, Washington; one niece, Dawn Gray of Dunae, Oregon; one nephew, Derek Janke of Edmonds, Washington.

Brother Wade believed that salvation was by the grace of God without any works of man involved. He was a member of Salem Primitive Baptist Church, also a deacon and trustee. He was drafted into the U.S. Navy on January 11, 1944 and served until April 16, 1946. He was Seaman First Class, serving on the USS Wisconsin.

The funeral service was conducted at 11:00 a.m., Friday, December 17 at Salem Primitive Baptist Church with his pastor Elder Hale Terry and Elder Lane Carter officiating. Interment followed in Restvale Cemetery with the flag ceremony by the Floyd V. F. W. Post #7854.

His passing saddens our hearts but we hope that our loss is his eternal gain. God has given me much strength to get through my heartaches. He gave me a dream showing me that trouble was coming and there was nothing I could do. I was helpless in the dream and I knew that everything was in His hands. The helplessness was my feelings as I stood by Wade's bed and could only say, "Lord have mercy". God is my strength as I continue my journey here. May He have all the praise.

Written by request of Salem Church.

Mary Poff, Clerk
Hale Terry, Moderator

EPHESIANS i. 21-23.

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Which is his body the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

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

LOVE

*Love gives us this guiding light,
Love gives us this Godly sight.
Love is imputed day by day,
this love guides us on our way.*

*Through this love we come to confess,
this love comes daily to us to bless.
Oh how precious does this love appear,
love brings rations from our Savior dear.*

*Love keeps us under the cloak of Amazing Grace.
Love sustains us daily in this earthly place
Oh how precious is this Godly love,
that's meted out from the court above.*

*Through this love we are made to see,
through this love He sets us free.
Love makes God's believing family able,
to feast from the rations from His table.*

*Love gives us this precious hope within,
love brings about the forgiveness of sin.
Love is a deep and tender fondness of devotion,
that guides the believing family in motion.*

By Riley Justice

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 146
 Elder Cleo D. Robertson

VOICES OF THE PAST 149
 Elder F. A. Chick
 Mary D. Brewster
 Elder Silas H. Durand
 Elder Gilbert Beebe
 B. F. Coulter

MEETINGS 167

CONTRIBUTIONS 168

OBITUARIES 168
 Annie Belle Rowland Pickral

EDITORIAL

Power and Purpose of God



Elder Cleo D. Robertson

The reports state that over 170,000 people in eleven nations were killed and over 125,000 are still thought to be missing. Tsunami in Japanese means “storm wave” and may occur when there is an undersea earthquake or a hurricane far out in the ocean.

There has been much in the news about the tsunami that devastated portions of several countries on December 26, 2004.

When a major catastrophe occurs, everyone begins to question the reason for it. How could such a deadly event happen? Many ask how God could allow such a thing to take place. Some say that it is by God; some say it is by Satan; and some say that it just happened by chance. Over the centuries, catastrophic events have affected most countries including the United States. There have been earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, famines, droughts, wars, and violence that have killed multitudes of people and destroyed many homes and possessions. The bible records such events showing that these are nothing new. A very wise man wrote, *“There is no new thing under the sun.”* His name was Solomon.

In the days of Noah, men began to multiply upon the earth and the wickedness of man was rampant as *“every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually .”* The Lord said He would destroy man, beast, creeping things, and the fowls of the air from the face of the earth. The earth was corrupt and filled with violence, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God commanded Noah to build an ark and then commanded Noah and his family to come into the ark. The ark was a type of Christ. God opened the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven and it rained forty days and forty nights. The waters of the flood were

upon the earth and this was a flood the like of which the world has never witnessed since. The waters covered the highest mountains and all flesh that moved upon the earth died. The ark, with Noah and his family inside, was lifted up as Christ was on the cross. This was not by Satan nor by chance, but by the decree of an omnipotent God. It showed forth His power. *"I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."*

The Lord appeared unto Abraham and told him that He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because their cry was great and their sin very grievous. Abraham asked the Lord would He destroy the city of Sodom if there were fifty righteous found in the city. The Lord answered that He would not if He found fifty righteous in the city. Abraham continued to ask down to ten righteous and the Lord answered that He would not destroy the city if there were ten righteous. Abraham did not know the number to be delivered from the city, but the Lord did. Two angels took Lot, his wife, and two daughters out of Sodom before the Lord rained fire and brimstone upon both cities. The people of those cities were destroyed along with their properties. The cities were never rebuilt. The Lord showed His power.

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, He brought them to the Red Sea. There appeared to Israel no way for them to go. The sea was in front

of them and God hardened Pharaoh's heart and the Egyptian army followed behind them. Israel felt that they had come to the end—that death was eminent. The Lord revealed to Moses that Israel would be delivered and the Egyptians destroyed. *"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."* The Lord rolled back the waters of the Red Sea with a high wall of water on either side. A way was opened for Israel that was life and deliverance. Then, as the Egyptian army attempted to follow, God brought the waters together again and closed the way. The Egyptians died. God had said that He would be honored upon Pharaoh and upon all his host that the Egyptians may know that He was the Lord. Also, *"And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Moses."* The Egyptians that remained in Egypt knew His power because they knew that the God of Israel had destroyed their army. Israel saw the power of God manifested and feared and believed. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom or understanding.

There was a famine in the land

of Israel and a certain man of Bethlehem went to the country of Moab with his wife and two sons. The man died and the two sons married women of Moab. The country of Moab was located east of the Dead Sea near where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah once were. In the current day, the country of Jordan encompasses that land. The country of Moab was named after one of Lot's sons who was born of one of Lot's daughters. The name means "from my father." The two sons of Naomi also died leaving her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. When Naomi returned to Bethlehem, Orpah stayed with her people but Ruth went with her mother-in-law. Her plea was "*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 thy 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,*" *Ruth 1:16-17*. God sent the famine in the land of Israel that Ruth would be brought to Bethlehem to marry Boaz and become the great grandmother of David and through this lineage Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. God has a purpose in all things.

There were earthquakes, famines, droughts and other events recorded throughout the bible as well as in our time. The Lord hath said, "*I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I*

girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 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." *Isaiah 45:5-7*. We either believe that God controls all things or He doesn't. If He doesn't, then did Christ suffer and die in vain? How could He foreknow all things? How could His prophecies be sure to come to pass? How could the foundation of God standeth sure? What great power and authority He has over all things!

In the experience of a child of grace, he faces tsunamis in the trials, tribulations and afflictions that he must go through. These storm waves seem to overflow and overwhelm us and we feel they will surely destroy us. "*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.*" Jesus rebukes the wind, and the raging sea and commands, "*Peace, be still.*" What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him? The storm that was raging about you is now a calm and you have a peace that surpasses all understanding. Never a man spake like this man. God has given you faith to believe that He has all power and He controls all things. He doesn't take you out of the trial, but He gives

you faith to believe that He is God and all is well. *"My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."*

We grieve over the loss of loved ones no matter how they die. We understand that there is a time to be born and a time to die, but the death of a loved one is a break in the ties of nature. It brings sorrow to the flesh. But, not even death can separate a little child of grace from the love of God. We do not understand why one person dies and another one does not. The issues of life and death are in God's hand. It is not for us to understand. Aren't you comforted that your life is in His hand?

The point that I want to make is that no matter what the catastrophe that occurs, God has a purpose in it and power over it. Roman 8:28 says, *"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."* This covers all things, not just those that we consider good. Somehow, someday, every trial that you are blessed to endure is working for your good. It is conforming you to the image of Christ. Someway, even in the tsunami, God received praise and honor. Our hope is that when we experience such a trial, God will bless us with His reconciling grace and comfort and peace. May we be blessed to praise Him in the midst of our greatest tribulation.

Cleo D. Robertson

VOICES OF THE PAST

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES.

IN the obituary of sister Charlotte Wright, which appeared on page 701 of the last number of the SIGNS, we said that it was in our mind to write editorially of some things which we came to know in connection with her experience of the grace of God. It is not in our mind neither is it in our power, to give a narration of all the early exercises of mind and heart by which she was taught to know the things of God, but to write of some things of which she spoke during our conversation with her concerning the dealings of the Lord with her. She said (and we give here her exact words), *"The name of the Savior has been precious to me from my earliest recollection; I cannot remember when I did not feel drawn to that name. It has always been so with me to the present time, but I cannot speak of sudden convictions of sin, nor of sudden change to joy and peace."* We said, *"What kind of a change do you desire?"* In reply she said, *"All christian experience of which I have read, or which I have heard about tells of a sudden deep conviction of sin. and then of a sudden deliverance into light and peace. It has not been so with me, and so I cannot think that I am a child of God, yet I love the preaching*

of the name of Jesus, and it is sweet and precious to me." In reply we recall that we said, "*What change could take place that would give you greater assurance of the love of God shed abroad in your heart than just this state of feeling? There are some things recorded in the word of God that may prove to be light to your mind and consolation to your heart.*" We then went on to speak of some things recorded in the Scriptures, of which it is our mind to write here.

We will add however to the above, that the Lord blessed the conversation to her, and the next Sunday she came to the church in Baltimore, during the prayer-meeting, and the next Sunday it was our privilege to baptize her in the name of the Lord.

The things of which we spoke to her, and of which we desire to write now, enlarging somewhat upon what we then said, are these: There is no fixed or settled standard of circumstances laid down in the Bible which must always attend the dealings of God with his chosen, neither is there any fixed standard of the travel of the mind and heart recorded there as the Lord leads souls to himself. There are indeed some things inseparable from the works of grace in the heart; of some of these things we spoke in the SIGNS for November 15th. There must be a conviction of sin and guilt, and of just condemnation, and then

of the futility of all human excellence and power, and a coming at last to rest in the finished work of the crucified and risen Jesus for justification and salvation. These things must become real and abiding in the soul of all who are taught of God, and without them there is no evidence that one is a subject of saving grace. The sum and substance of all this is summed up in the brief sentence, "*A sinner saved by grace.*" Of this we spoke in the last number of the SIGNS, and we do not desire to repeat it here, but in this unity there is wonderful variety of exercise of mind and heart. As no two faces of men are precisely alike, so no two records of christian travel are precisely alike. So the blessed Lord by the prophet has said, "*I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known.*" Here we see one way, but many paths, and while the apostle meant the various gifts of the church when he said, There is a diversity of operations, but one Spirit, yet we do not think it will be doing violence to the text to speak of the same language as applying to varied experiences in the call by grace.

Still further, as we read of the Lord's dealings with numbers of the children of men in the Scriptures, we see great variety of circumstance, and equal variety of thoughts and feelings; to some was given that which was not given to others. Paul was no more or no less a child of

God called by grace to be His disciple than were all the rest of the apostles, and yet of none of them was it true that they were stricken with blindness in that solemn hour of their call of the Lord. Of many of them it is just said that the Lord called them and they followed him. So also in the Old Testament the record of the way in which holy men were led is as diverse as the men themselves were diverse. It is sure that the Lord led each one according to His own will, and that he led them all to know and love him as their Savior and their God, but yet each one was led in ways peculiar to himself. The Lord dealt with each one as each one had need, and as should be most to the glory of, His holy name. So also in the record of healings wrought by the Lord in the days of his flesh no two instances are alike. Two things were alike in each and every case, viz., the fact of need and despair on the one hand, and the power of Jesus to save on the other. But what a variety of circumstance appears in the different records. Some were blind, some were deaf, some were lame, some were leprous, some were bowed with a spirit of infirmity, and some were possessed of devils. One man was told to take up his bed and walk; one was told, Thy sins are forgiven thee. Jesus touched the eyes of another; one touched the hem of his garment; one he seemed not to answer for a time, and then apparently rebuffed her all together; one he

healed at a distance, and another he touched, yet all had deep need, and all were healed. Infinite variety, and yet perfect unity in the Spirit. So also to some were given deeper experiences than to others. Moses was led in ways peculiar to himself, for the accomplishment of wonderful things by him, for which he was thus prepared. David could write of experiences peculiar to himself, as a living type of the great King. Visions were given to the prophets that do not seem to have been vouchsafed to others of their time, and there is equally as great a variety to be seen in the lives and travel of mind of the various prophets as is to be seen in their writings, yet they all spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Referring again to the New Testament, we do not read of any having been called up into the holy mount and made witnesses of the transfiguration of the Lord, save Peter, James and John, and of these three alone is it recorded that they were near Him in the garden in the hour of his supreme agony. So also it is recorded of none but Paul that they were caught up to the third heaven, into paradise; and to John it was given to see visions, as they were not revealed to any other of the apostles.

Now how many of the people of God think of these recorded instances of peculiar experiences and write bitter things against themselves, because they know that such peculiar leadings have not been

theirs. How many have wished that their experience had been like that of Paul, or like that of some other brother or sister whose travel they have heard narrated, or of which they have read, and because they cannot tell of such deep convictions, or of sleepless nights and wretched days, when their whole life was a burden to them, nor of receiving such a deliverance that they could not contain themselves for joy, they have sorrowfully thought that they had never known the plague of their own heart at all, nor had ever received any tokens of love from the Master's hand, and yet, when these same troubled ones hear the name of Jesus, like the sister referred to above, that name is precious to them, and when they hear narratives of christian experience they can but feel sure that they do know what the writers mean; and when they read many things which Paul wrote, as recorded in the New Testament, they cannot say that these things sound strange to them. How many times the words of Paul come to the hearts of even such doubting ones, searching their very thoughts, and revealing themselves to themselves. Could this be so did not they also know these things for themselves? While not stricken blind, and while not hearing any voice with the natural ear, as did Paul, yet the things which he writes out of his soul's experience come to them with power, and falls upon their hearts as the words of a familiar friend who

has shared with them common experiences. After all, they do know what Paul knew; after all, they do know what those of deepest experiences in the present day know, and so they have fellowship with them in these things.

In response to the words of sister Wright at the time when she said that she had never known any change as had others, but to her the name of Christ had from the first been sweet, we called attention to some instances recorded in the word to which we now also desire to refer, for the comfort of some others who may be troubled in the same way. There are instances recorded in the Scriptures which have always seemed to us to be similar. First, the prophet Samuel was set apart to the service of God from his infancy. This was not only so by the desire of his mother, but he was possessed of a devout spirit; his heart was reverent toward God from the first. It is not our mind that he ever could have pointed to any special time when he was first called by grace to know himself a sinner and to know Christ as a Savior.

He could refer to occasions when the Lord spoke to him with reference to the special work as a prophet to which the Lord had appointed him, and special gifts were bestowed upon him, and seasons of blessed communion with God were his in after life, of which mention is made, but, so far as the narrative goes, he was a follower of God in

heart and spirit from his earliest childhood. Likewise the prophet Jeremiah is expressly said to have been known and sanctified and ordained as a prophet to the nations before his birth; the Spirit of God was with him from his birth. No doubt the name of the Lord was always his delight, and in the word of the Lord it must have been his delight to meditate. With him also there is no mention of deep struggles of mind before the coming of peace, nor of great and overwhelming joy when that peace came. Our understanding has always been that he could never have pointed to any period of time as that in which he was called by grace, yet how deeply was he led into the knowledge of the Lord, and how steadfast he was in defense of the truth. Of Timothy it was said that from a child he had known the holy Scriptures. How wonderful is the inspired language concerning John the Baptist, who by the Spirit recognized his Lord, even before he was born, and thus assured Elizabeth, his mother, that she was come into the presence of the mother of the blessed Lord. In all these instances we feel well assured that from infancy the Spirit of God was with them, and that they could not have told of any special time when the good work of the Lord began with them. There was doubtless a time when that work did begin, but they could not have known of that hour. So there is also a time when the work of the Lord in grace begins

with all his, but in many instances the subjects of that work cannot point to the time of its beginning, and this is not needful. It is needful that the work of the Lord be begun, but it is not needful that the subjects of it should be able to fix that time. It is needful however that the fruits of that work of grace should appear, and, as in the natural world, some come to a knowledge of (their own feelings, and of the things around them, sooner than others, so also is it, as we have long believed, in the kingdom of God. The evidences of life naturally, are not deep, profound things; the little child has just as many and just as satisfactory evidences that he lives as does the man of grey hairs. He sees the sunlight, he breathes the air, he hungers and thirsts, he can move, think and feel, he knows what love and fear and hope mean just as much as the man of many years, and these simple every day things are the evidences of life. So also in the kingdom of heaven the evidences of living in that kingdom are just as plain as and evident to the little child of grace as to the man who has long traveled there. Love to the brethren, calling upon the name of the Lord, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, desiring to know the Lord and to follow him, a knowledge of one's own sinfulness, and a deep conviction of unfitness and unworthiness, which often produce doubts and fears as to whether the subject of these conflicts can be a child of God

or not, are the true evidences of the new birth, and these the babe in Christ knows and feels as well as I they of older years.

Again we say that the time when these exercises begin to be felt in the soul does not matter, but it does greatly matter that these fruits of the Spirit be found there, and by the indwelling of these fruits do we know that the Spirit of God dwells in the heart.

Reading the obituary of sister Wright, and recalling her words upon the occasion above named, have suggested these reflections to us. May they be as pleasant to others as they have many times been to us.

Elder F. A. Chick

WILMINGTON, Del.
November, 1909.

DEAR ELDER CHICK:-I am sitting here alone, and my mind has fallen to, musing upon the things of the kingdom, and how the Lord leads his children through the wilderness-journey, and the time has gone quickly while I have been writing. I will send what I have written to you; do with it as you think best.

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness." What does he cry? One thing is, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Dear heaven-born child, when did you first cry? It was when you

were first made alive to God. What did the blessed Lord do, allow you to perish? No, he lifted you out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and placed your feet upon a rock. How firm and sure is this foundation; there is no stronger. He said, *"Upon this rock I will build my church,"*- He establishes our goings.

How glad I am that he establishes my going. I cannot get far away from it. He does this, yet how often I feel that I am not established in the truth, rooted and grounded in it. Then he puts a new song in our mouths, even praise to his name. What is more sweet and beautiful than to hear the children of God sing. Some of them may have cracked voices, but O how sweet they sing unto the Rock of their salvation. *"Let the inhabitants of the rock sing."*

What else do we find in this wilderness-journey. We have found a desert, a waste howling wilderness. The desert is of burning sand, with no food and no raiment, and no water to drink; all is desolate. We feel that there is no hope, that the Lord has forgotten to be gracious, and has left us to die. Ah! but he finds us even there, and he makes the desert blossom like the rose, and to send forth richest perfume and beauty when the presence of God is with us.

Then he feeds us on his precious word of truth, and we know that it is the Lord. He gives us to

drink from the cup of everlasting life, and clothes us in purple and fine linen. He leads us into green pastures, and we come up out of the wilderness leaning upon the arm of our Beloved, and we say, "*My beloved is mine, and I am his.*" "*This is my Beloved; his person is divine.*" How beautifully the words of this hymn describe him.

I have come to the place where nothing seems to give me joy or comfort except these blessed things concerning Jesus. The world is gay, but it has no charms for me. Let me sit down with and clasp the hand of some dear saint of God, or some precious child just learning to walk. These cry in the wilderness, and sing, "*How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear.*" I sometimes get in such fearful places, and doubt whether I am a subject of grace or not. What if, after all, I should be but a wolf in sheep's clothing God knows my heart, and I am glad it is so; I cannot deceive him. I often wish that I could express my mind at all times regarding these things, but more often I am shut up. If one asks me to tell my exercises, I stop to think, and wonder if I ever had spiritual exercises. One thing I do know: that I love these dear people who bear the name of Old School Baptists. I cannot remember the time when I did not love them. If I am saved at all it is by the grace of God; it is nothing that I have done, for all my righ-

teousness is as filthy rags. I am glad that when the sheet Peter saw was let down, it was filled with all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things; even the worm was there. That has been of much comfort to me. I am a poor worm of the dust, so that this suits me. "*O thou worm, Jacob.*" I pray that God may ever keep me walking in that manner which is pleasing in his sight, and that becomes a child of God. May he keep me at his feet. This I know means great and sore trials. I feel that I know something of them, yet I love to sit at his feet, and wash them with my tears and wipe them with the hairs of my head, as did one of old. "*Trials make the promise sweet.*" "*'Tis my happiness below, not to live without the cross.*" Pray for me; I need your prayers. The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and hold up their hands, and strengthen the feeble knees.

I have written here as my mind has been led; if it be in accord with christian experience God be praised. My dear brother and pastor, may God fill you with his divine presence, and give you food for the lambs, as he has so graciously done in the past, is my prayer for his name's sake.

From a poor sinner, for whom I hope Jesus died,

MARY D. BREWSTER.

THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

(John v. 2-4.)

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda [House of mercy], having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, or blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

In one of Newton's hymns he says :

*"Beside the gospel pool,
Appointed for the poor,
From time to time my help-
less soul
Has waited for a cure."*

Why this wonderfully experienced and clear-minded man should have called this a "gospel pool" I do not know, since he has acknowledged in this hymn that he has waited in vain, and since also, he is waiting for a cure, as appears from this same sweet hymn, not from the troubled waters, but from the hoped for appearing of the dear Savior, and the manifestation of his gracious power.

There appears in this pool nothing like the gospel to me. We are not told of anyone who has been healed by stepping into the troubled water. No individual case is mentioned, but

the statement is made in a general way, as one would repeat a tradition. How often the angel came down is not told. "At a certain season;" the seasons may have been far apart. But only one can be healed at each season, and all the rest of that "great multitude" must wait for the next coming down of the angel. We may also be sure of one thing concerning the one who will be healed at each season: he will be the strongest, the least afflicted, of all the multitude; the one who is best able to crowd by the others, who are weaker than he, and to stand nearest the water, and be on the alert, ready to step in in a moment; or he will be one who has some powerful friends to help him, and who can rush him in before the rest who are struggling to get in. There is nothing, that has a gospel appearance in all of this, for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and therefore it is "glad tidings" to the poor. No rushing, and crowding, and pushing the weaker aside in the gospel, such as we see always in the crowds of this world. When the gospel finds one it finds him alone, helpless, undone, with no strength to go forward any more, nor to step into the pool, even if there were no one to push him aside, and the gospel does not require any movement on his part as a means of cure and salvation, but brings him health and cure just where he is, in a way he had never thought of before, causing his soul

to *“break out in unknown strains and sing surprising grace.”*

The way of salvation by unexpected grace is evidently taught in this wonderful incident, as contrasted with that salvation which the natural man expects to result from some effort of his own, or from some help that another man may give him. The two systems of salvation are side by side in this world, among men. The one can be seen and understood by all men; the other can never be seen or understood but in its experience.

“And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.” Here is the gospel character. He has been a long time in this condition. There appears to be no difference between this man and all the rest of the great multitude, only that he has become absolutely helpless. He is still looking to the pool alone for salvation, as all the rest are, and evidently has no thought or hope of help from any other source. He represents the poor sinner who is at the ends of the earth, unable to do anything for his own help, or to find help from any other. He looks hopelessly at the pool, but cannot look elsewhere, for he knows of no other way in which a cure is possible. To every such poor, helpless soul salvation will come in the Lord’s own time, and by a new and unexpected way.

“When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith

unto him, Wilt thou be made whole”, What tenderness is expressed in this language, and what care for the poor and helpless. The path of Jesus just now, on this Sabbath morning, passes this way, and comes to this poor man. His paths always lead to the afflicted souls, and always “drop fatness.” A wonderfully strange question to ask of one in this infirm condition; but it brings out an expression of his pitiful state, and evidently causes some little hope to spring up in his heart that here at last may be a man who can and will help him into the pool when next its waters are troubled, and he answers by an expression of his sad and helpless state, still looking alone at the pool:

“Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.” That will always be the case with every poor sinner who is looking for salvation by any work of his own, or by the help of any man; others appear to him to be getting salvation, but with him it is impossible. There must be manifested to such an one another way, a new and living way.

Now a wonderful miracle is performed; words are spoken such as have never been thought of by this infirm man before, words that are spirit and life: *“Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.”* In an instant the bondage of disease is broken, and the flood of

life are flowing healthfully and gladly through his frame; he was made whole immediately, *“and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.”* It was always the Sabbath when Jesus did his works of healing. Whenever the day is named it is the Sabbath. It is the day when Jesus gives to his poor, afflicted people rest from work, rest from their vain labor under the law, rest from the sickness and pain of sin. The Pharisees never could understand the Sabbath, or anything more or less than the literal seventh day of the week. The natural man cannot see that the end, or spiritual meaning, of the Jewish Sabbath is Christ; that the Sabbath is one of those legal ordinances which are the shadow of good things to come, but the substance or body is Christ; that he has fulfilled the legal ordinances, and rested from them, and that those who believe have entered into this rest of Jesus; and he who hath entered into this rest hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. (Hebrews iv. 10.) So the Jews told the man that it was unlawful for him to carry his bed on the Sabbath; he gave them all the answer he could: *“He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.”* But he did not know who he was, for Jesus had conveyed himself away in the multitude. *“Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made*

whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” Sin is the cause of the infirmity which renders the poor sinner helpless. He appears to himself vile beyond expression when his sins are shown to him in the light of God’s countenance. When his sins are forgiven, and he is made whole of his infirmity, then the temple, the church, is his dwelling-place, and there Jesus finds him, and teaches him more of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and teaches him of the sad condition into which those are brought who live after the flesh, who sin wilfully, who walk in the ways of the wicked. He teaches them to profit, and says to them: *“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.”*

ELDER SILAS H. DURAND.
SOUTHAMPTON, Pa.,
Sept. 29, 1909.

EDITORIALS OF THE LATE
ELDER GILBERT BEEBE.
INVITATIONS OF THE GOSPEL.

WE have received a communication from the north, over the signature, “A Friend of Truth,” desiring our views in regard to what are called the invitations of the gospel; whether they are addressed indiscriminately to sinners or exclusively to the quickened children of God. We learn from the letter that

some of our esteemed brethren are differing seriously on the subject. Such passages as Matthew xi. 28-30: "*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,*" &c. "*Many are called, but few are chosen.*" *The marriage of the kings son: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* Also the first and eighth of Proverbs. Some brethren take the position that these are invitations to sinners indiscriminately, and others contend that these are invitations addressed only to the children of God.

In giving our views we beg leave to differ, very respectfully, however, from both parties. We deny that there are any invitations, either in the law or gospel, to saints or sinners. We think that a little reflection on the subject will satisfy all honest inquirers after truth that it would be altogether incompatible with the eternal perfections of Jehovah to issue invitations to any of his creatures.

First. We will remark that none of the communications from God to men are, anywhere in the Bible called invitations, and it is therefore speculative and idle to "argue theologically a position or question which has no scriptural foundation, and therefore, like the endless genealogies and questions about the law, which the apostle warns us against, is only calculated to gender strife, but cannot edify or comfort the family of God.

Second. An invitation is a complimentary request or message from a party having, and claiming to have, no authority to enforce the request, or message, which concedes to the party invited the undisputed right to respectfully decline the invitation, leaving it entirely optional with the party invited to accept or decline without transcending his right.

Third. All who have been brought to a saving knowledge of God will admit that He speaks the word, and it stands fast; he commands and it is done. "*Where, the word of a king is, there is power,*" and God is the King eternal, and the word that proceeds from him shall not return unto him void of the work hereunto he hath sent it. Even the carnal Jews perceived that our Redeemer spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Should the writer of these remarks receive a card of invitation from the president of these States, or from the governor of New York, the fact of its being an invitation guarantees the right to accept or to decline without involving a wrong or a crime in doing either. But should either the president or governor, as chief magistrate of the nation or the State, send an authoritative message to any citizen, summoning him to be or appear at any place, that message would be clothed with all the authority and power of the magistrate from whom it issues; but it could not be regarded as an invita-

tion, because it does not concede to the party to whom it is addressed any right to decline or disobey its authority.

Will any of our brethren contend that when the God of heaven peremptorily says to the seed of Israel, "*Seek ye my face,*" that they have a right to disobey or regard it only as a mere invitation, If he says to them, "look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else," does this imply that the people thus addressed have the same right to decline it as an invitation as to obey it as a sovereign mandate from the throne of God, Since God has commanded men to look to him for salvation, have they a right to look anywhere else for that salvation, If there be any authority implied in the address it destroys the nature of an invitation. Indeed, we cannot, without detraction from a proper sense of the eternal power and majesty of Jehovah, entertain the preposterous idea that he deals in invitations to any of his creatures in heaven, earth or hell. All his words are big with power and high in authority; he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, and submits nothing to the volition of any of his creatures' wills. But in regard to the passages referred to, they bear the impress of his divine authority; they can none of them be disregarded or disobeyed. The passage referred to, Isaiah xlv. 22, is a sovereign command to the seed of Jacob scattered

to the ends of the earth, to look to him for salvation, because he is God, and beside him there is no Savior. All who looked anywhere else, or to any other being, or to themselves, for salvation, were not only guilty of disobedience, but also of idolatry.

The passage, "*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,*" &c., is sufficiently clear and explicit. It is addressed to all who labor and are heavy laden, and to no others; and whenever and wherever these words are applied by the eternal Spirit to any poor, laboring, heavy laden sinner that sinner will as surely come to Jesus as it is sure that the dead will rise when the voice of God calls them forth. The dead neither labor nor are they heavy laden, they slumber unconsciously in their graves; and all men are dead in sin, and as destitute of spiritual vitality until they are quickened by the Spirit, as the body of Lazarus was of natural life before Jesus raised him from the grave. But as soon as a sinner is quickened by the Holy Ghost he becomes a laborer, and is burdened with a heavy weight of guilt, and such are called to Jesus and find rest to their souls in bearing his yoke, which is easy, and his burden, which is light. To take the yoke of Jesus is to come under his law, to be baptized in his name and be yoked together in communion and fellowship with his disciples in all the privileges of the church of God. But are the unregen-

erated called to be baptized and identify themselves with the church of God? Philip did not so understand it when he said to the eunuch, "*If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.*"—Acts viii. 37. None but believers are called or commanded to be baptized and come under the yoke of Jesus, for they must first be delivered from the yoke of Moses, the yoke of bondage.

In Matthew xx. 16, in the conclusion of the parable of the householder and his hired laborers for his vineyard, Jesus used these words: "*So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.*" There was murmuring among some of the disciples; the sons of Zebedee desired distinguished places in the kingdom, and some said, "*We have forsaken all,*" &c. What shall we receive? The parable was to rebuke this selfish principle, and to show not only the right of our Lord to choose from the whole company of his called children whom he pleased, to labor in his vineyard, but also to reward them equally. Those who had labored the most or longest were amply rewarded, but Jesus chose to make those who had labored least, equal with those who had borne the heat and toil of the day.

Again, in Matthew xxii. 14, the same words are used at the end of the parable of the marriage of the king's son. The application was made to the Jewish nation, which had been called as the carnal or fleshly de-

scendants of Abraham, and under the covenant of works. God, by the prophets, had informed them of the approaching marriage. In the type they were bidden to the marriage, but in the election of grace they were not the chosen people of God. As the apostle Paul explains: "*For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*"—Rom. ix. 6-8. Although the whole nation of Israel was called in the type, or shadow of good things which were to come, how very few of them were found to be included in the covenant of grace. "*Esaias, also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.*"—Romans ix. 27. "*What then Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election [or the few chosen] hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.*"—Romans xi. 7. We have not time or space to enlarge on these parables, but it is sufficient for us to demonstrate that there are none called by grace but the chosen people of God, whose salvation is fully secured in our Lord Jesus Christ. "*For whom he [God] did foreknow, he also did*

predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."-Romans viii. 29, 30. In this calling none but the predestinated are called, and all who are called are justified and ultimately glorified. They are saved and called with a holy calling, not according to their works, but according to his own (God's own) purpose and grace, which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began. (2 Tim. i. 9.) To prove, therefore, that they are the called according to God's purpose, is to prove that they love God; that all things work together for their good; that they are predestinated to bear the image of the Son of God; that they are justified and glorified in Christ. The passages, therefore, which speak of many being called and but few chosen, do not, nay, they cannot possibly relate to this holy calling in which Christ, the good Shepherd, calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. For in this calling the dead shall hear his voice, and they that hear shall live. (John v. 25.) The promise of God is unto "*all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*"-Acts ii. 39.

The declaration of Christ to the self-righteous Jews that he had not

come to call or save righteous people, but to call sinners to repentance, does not admit of the construction that he had come to call all the sinners of Adam's race to repentance, for millions of them had already left these mortal shores. The Pharisees up-braided him for associating with publicans and sinners, and he told them that this was his business into the world, to save sinners. The whole did not need a physician, nor did the righteous need one to save and purge them from sin.

The first chapter of Proverbs is also referred to as favoring the doctrine of invitations, &c. But an examination of, the Proverbs of Solomon will show that Solomon personifies Wisdom; and Wisdom, we are told, is justified of her children. In a spiritual sense Christ is the Wisdom of God to his children. He is of God made unto them wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. But wisdom, abstractly considered, is the opposite of folly and madness. As rational beings, we disobey the maxims or proverbs of wisdom when we transgress her dictates; and wisdom will laugh at all in our calamities, into which we foolishly plunge ourselves, and mock us when our fear cometh. The voice of wisdom is loud in her reproofs when we rush heedlessly into trouble. But the wisdom of God is only known to those who are made wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

Brethren should be careful to avoid any interpretation of the Scriptures which will clash with other plain declarations of the inspired word. We may fail to comprehend or understand some portions of the divine testimony, but our ignorance will not justify us in forcing interpretations which must necessarily conflict with the teachings of the word and the Spirit of the Lord. If our views are right, both the word and the Spirit will harmonize with our views, but if we entertain opinions or views which the Scriptures do not so justify, they must be discarded as wrong; and pernicious. Now, in conclusion, we will reiterate to our legally inclined brethren of the north the appeal which the great apostle to the Gentiles made to the bewitched Galatians: *"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith Are ye so foolish having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh,"- Gal. iii. 2, 3.* Review your own experiences, see if in your own salvation you only accepted an invitation and availed yourself of it to secure your acceptance with God, or were you awakened to a sensibility of your guilty, lost and helpless condition by the irresistible and almighty power of God was it left optional with you to decide whether you would live or die, when by the arrows of the Almighty you were arrested and arraigned before the bar of eternal

Justice, Why did you there cry, Lord, save, I perish? Why did you not say, Lord, I will accept thy Invitation.

MIDDLETOWN, N. Y.,
March 1, 1863.
Elder Gilbert Beebe

PSALMS CXIX. 89.

"For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven."

This Psalm no doubt was written with a twofold object. The primary object was to sing unto the Lord the song of the heart, touching the many and varied strings and chords in harmonic rhythm, echoing sweet strains of entrancing grace in the fullness of justly measured faith, now soaring to the very top of God's holy mount in heavenly strains of exaltation and praise for God's abundant and enduring mercy, then descending the scale to the deepest depths of the valley of humiliation, sorrow and weeping, with pleadings of a bleeding heart for life and light, strength and salvation, again ascending to the walk of faith in love and obedience, beholding the church in its order and beauty, with the King of saints reigning with power and majesty, clothed in the glory of the Father, full of grace and truth. Clustered together in the many verses of this one hundred and nineteenth Psalm is the burden of the whole song of the redeemed, in its line and

shadows, in its varied hues of joy and suffering, of heartaches and soul searchings. The transcendent loveliness of faith's view of the travel of the saints from nature to grace can never be attained unto by the natural mind, but when viewed by faith and not by sight we look beyond in flight of time, to the crowning glory of the risen, living Savior, who hath put all things under his feet which stain and spot the raiment of the King's daughter, who "is all glorious within," whole clothing is of wrought gold, who "shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework." Again we hear the enticing music of the soul's confession to the Father of mercies, laying upon the altar of God's grace the body's vileness, blasted with sin, its infirmities, faithlessness, backslidings, with every evil from the heart, which is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," all of which is surely felt and passed through because, "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." This confession which declares the truth of God's salvation is written in the fleshly tables of the heart, never to be erased until "forever" is dissolved and melted away in eternity. "Forever" applies to time, and embraces the things of time it is that which is from the beginning to the ending. In time the Lamb of God was led to the slaughter, in time we become followers of him, in time his work is accomplished, in time we fulfill all that God has ordained con-

cerning us. Jesus is the beginning and the end of all our hopes. "Forever" embraces our life under the law and under the gospel. "Forever, O Lord." The confession and declaration is to the Lord alone; no human agency stands between the confessing soul and his God, and when he takes the name of his Lord upon his lips it is with reverence and godly fear, and comes direct from a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

"Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." Jesus is the word of God, that perfect word which is life and light to his people, the glory of which filleth the earth with the "knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" it has all power in heaven and in earth, it killeth and it maketh alive, it teareth down and it buildeth up, it changeth the night into the morning, and the morning stars sing for joy. When the legal heaven-encompassed spiritual Israel in its firm grasp of death, the "word," yet unrevealed, was forever settled there, guiding the church through every vicissitude, through all dark places and every trial. For the "Word" was in the beginning with God, and the Word was God." The power of "the Word" delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, it was a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to Israel through all the wilderness journey. It was the sword that turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life at the entrance of Eden; its wondrous power turned back the

proud waves of the Red Sea, and also the Jordan. It was the end of the law for righteousness. When the settled Word finished the work under the law in righteousness, making honorable the law, in the death of the gracious Word (Christ Jesus), then the legal heaven was put away and rolled up as a scroll, yet still living in the memory of all who continue in time, and whose forever is enfolded in the beginning and the end. Immediately, however, a new heaven and a new earth spread their canopy and carpet about our lives, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." The "Word" fills the new creation, and is forever settled there. The gospel bringeth good tidings of the "Word," what its signs of promise are, how every promise is fulfilled in the heart of the church, and the faith and the order of the church are made beautiful and glorious in its ordinances and in its assemblies. "Out of Zion, [the church] the perfection of beauty, God hath shined " in his word. In him they obey, in him they walk in the light of truth, in him the little ones of the flock abide, and he in them. *"In my Father's house are many mansions."* Each individual heart is a mansion in the Father's house (the church), where Jesus, the living Word, has set up his temple and makes his glories known. The church as a loving mother watches over and cares for all her children, and clothes them with the spirit of her precious grace, which the happy bridegroom be-

stows upon her to comfort them withal. Then the "Word" is to them a strong tower in his garden of nuts and pleasant fruits. Far reaching and in perfect control is the sacred word of God as it becomes settled in every secret place in the gospel heaven. As the dew of heavenly grace spreads its mantle of moisture over the parched earth of our thirsty souls, bringing strengthened hope and renewed life through the night, so in the morning light the Sun of Righteousness with healing rays to brighten and cheer our lonely way. God is our sun and shield, whom having not seen, we love, for his word is settled, established and confirmed in our life of faith. Where Christ is, there is heaven; he reigneth his kingdom; throughout all his kingdom his law and firm decrees are all obeyed; his one commandment ruleth his subjects: "That ye love one another." The song of the redeemed is a song love, divine, unchanging love. It was love that caused the dear Redeemer to suffer and to die for the objects of his great love. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and it was while we were yet sinners that Christ died for us, therefore is his love entirely unmerited on our part. May we all sweetly rest in his love and be established and settled therein forever.

B. F. COULTER.

STATE ROAD, Del., Dec. 3, 1897.

My DEAR YOUNG FRIEND:-
 Yours just came to hand this morning. You are justly entitled to a reply, and I am seated to reply today for some reasons that seem to urge it upon me. I want to say to you that you have given me all the outlines of a genuine christian experience. You do not go into very extensive details, but so far as you go you have evidently learned the lessons that are taught in the school of Christ. As to believing, the apostle John says, "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.*" When we have the evidence in our own experience we believe, and the belief comes along with the evidence. We believe what we know, and we do not and cannot believe beyond that. If we come to know the Savior it is as a deliverer. We know him in what he has done for us in giving us to hope in his mercy and opening the prison door. No one ever believes in the Savior or loves the Savior until he becomes a Savior to them, then they know what a loving and pitying Savior he is, and they love the salvation that has come to them, and they cannot help loving it. For myself, I did not experience any outburst of joy, or feel like shouting. I was disappointed, for I had been led to think that if I ever experienced that change it would come in a sudden outburst of joy unspeakable. I did not have to say,

*"On the wings of his love
 I was carried above
 All sin and temptation
 and pain,"*

but there was a sweet calm, and an entering into peace and rest, and the condemnation and gloom passed away, but the peace that came to me then came to stay, and the Savior that found me then I still believe in and love, and I love all his little ones, and love to encourage and comfort them. I think that those who have the most trouble with themselves, and the most doubts, and worry about their experience and their fitness, have the most satisfaction afterward. Preaching does them more good, for the reason, I suppose, that they are more needy. I do not wonder that you could get nothing at the kind of meetings you spoke of; there are many places about that city where the bread that comes down from above is unknown. Your experience will lead you to the right place and to the right people, and I cannot advise you to wait to become more fit or more worthy. You do not say whether it has been on your mind to ask a place in the church. It may have been that that was just what you wanted to have some talk with me about. It could hardly be otherwise but, that you would feel to want the company and confidence of those who had traveled in the same pathway with yourself. Folks who have waded through trouble and sorrow

want sympathy and companionship. The Lord's people are called companions. I wanted to know something more of the state of your mind, so I could know better what I might say to you. The story you have told me will satisfy experienced people that you have come to know and love the same gospel that they have, and I doubt not you would be gladly welcomed to a home and a place among them. If we have the Spirit of Christ we have also a spirit of obedience to his will, and it leads us to desire to follow him and to confess him before men. We do not persuade people, but we try to encourage them and help them along. We know that they are often timid and weak. Write again if you feel so inclined.

Yours to serve in the gospel,
E. RITTENHOUSE.

MEETINGS

GLENWOOD CHURCH

Glenwood Church, Princeton, WV, announces a Saturday meeting, July 30, 2005 starting at 10:00.

Those coming by way of 1-77 take exit 9. Turn left onto 460W. Go 5 miles, Turn Right onto 19N, then immediately left on Glenwood Park

Road, 1 1/2 miles to the church on the left.

Those coming by way of 460, follow the same directions from the 1-77/460 Intersection.

Sister Marilyn Shaw

VALLEY VIEW CHURCH 4th of July Meeting

The meeting will be held at Valley View Church meeting to begin at 10:00 a.m.

Traveling on Highway I -81 exit at #114. Take #8 south for 4 miles turn left on Rustic Rift Road - then right on Valley View Church Rd. Church will be on right.

From Floyd, Va. take route 8 north. Turn right on Rustic Ridge Road, then right on Valley View Church Road.

All lovers of the Truth are invited to come.

Elder Hale Terry

REVELATION 7:15-16.

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.

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR APRIL 27, 2005

A. U. Hocutt, GA	5.00
Mary Poff, VA	3.00
Herbert Dodson, VA	5.00
Reidy Pickral, VA.....	25.00
J. D. Neely, AR	5.00
Mary Janney, VA.....	5.00

OBITUARIES

ANNIE BELLE ROWLAND PICKRAL

It has pleased our Heavenly Father to remove from our midst, sister Annie Belle Rowland Pickral. She was born July 16, 1921, a daughter of the late Robert Lee Rowland and Nannie Simpson Rowland. She was predeceased by nine brothers and four sisters.

Sister Bell passed from this life December 13, 2004. She was married to the late Arthur Oscar Pickral.

Sister Bell united with Springfield Primitive Baptist Church September 14, 1952.

She was a faithful member and attended meetings as long as her health allowed. She believed and loved the doctrine Salvation by The Grace of God.

Sister Bell's funeral was held December 15, 2004 at Springfield Primitive Baptist Church. Her pastor Elder Marvin Brumfield and Elder Raymond Goad conducted her funeral. She was laid to rest in the Gretna Burial Park, to await the coming of our Lord and Savior.

These left to mourn her are daughters Elaine Gibson and husband Bobby, Vivian Dawson, Brenda Rowland and husband Tommy, Donna Clemmons and husband Steve, eight Grandchildren and fifteen Great-Grandchildren.

May each and every one be reconciled to God's Holy Will.

Written in Love and Hope,
Carol R. Pickral

Elder Marvin Brumfield,
Moderator

Oscar Pickral - Clerk

ST. MATTHEW 5:9-10.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

SONG

*"The Lord has been so good to me
I want to praise His name
His mercy long has been my plea
His grace I would proclaim.*

*Yea though of sinner I'm the worst
Still I desire to praise
The gracious God who loved me first
To Him my voice I'll raise.*

*I pray the Lord that I might see
Myself released from sin.
It's burden long has harassed me,
How sore a plague is sin!*

*I long to leave this world of woe
And with my Savior reign
Where self no longer is my foe
And I am free from pain."*

*Composed by Joyce Pittman
Sent in by her mother,
Sister Mae Williams*

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	170
Elder Kenneth R. Key	
VOICES OF THE PAST	175
Gerald R. Buss	
Gospel Standard	
<i>(Crosby's History of the Baptists)</i>	
Elder E. J. Lambert	
Gospel Standard	
<i>(From Robert Trail on</i>	
<i>"The Throne of Grace"</i>	
Elder J.C. Philpot	
MEETINGS	190
CONTRIBUTIONS.....	191
OBITUARIES.....	191
Dewey Anderson Tate	

 EDITORIAL



Elder Kenneth R. Key

The following is an article written a long time ago by Sister Mary Ellison of Topeka, Kansas. I want to present it to you as our editorial for this issue. I hope you will be given to enjoy the sweetness and the similitude of the days of a tree as the days of the Lord's people. Please read on.

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

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

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

"When converts first begin to sing,

Their happy souls are on the wing:

Their theme is all redeeming love,

Fain would they be with Christ above."

Oh what lovely blossoms, and what a 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 ambitions, every branch of earthly aspirations and joys broken off,

strength to endure. But oh the weakness of the flesh. How we do shrink and dread when we see the storm coming, though there is a "needs be" for it all, and we know that

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

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

"As the days of a tree." How often have we seen the tall cedars, the sturdy oaks, beaten by the storms of many seasons almost to the ground, nothing left but their bare old trunks, and to all appearance have lived their time and served their purpose, yet they do not quite fall; not yet, their downward roots have not yet parted from the earth, they must wait the appointed time to fall. So shall the days of my people be. Old age is come, the bare old trunk is stripped of every alluring earthly joy, until there is nothing left to live for, and *"I long to lay my armor by, and dwell with Christ at home,"* for

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

*"When a few more days I've
wasted,
When a few more scenes are
o'er,
When a few more griefs 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 comforteth, so will I comfort you.”* Then shall we see him as he is, and be like him. *“As the days of a tree [He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief] are the*

days of my people.”

Elder Kenneth R. Key

VOICES OF THE PAST

“WHAT THOU OUGHTEST TO DO”

A Meditation on Acts 10

By Gerald D. Buss

The events of Acts chapter 10 and their further telling in the following chapter have a deep significance in pointing the manner in which it is ordained of God that the gospel is to be preached to sinners.

It was the Lord’s will that the Apostle Peter should, contrary to his own preconceived traditions and notions, be the instrument in the hands of the blessed Spirit in being the first to bring the glad tidings of sins forgiven through a precious Christ to the Gentiles. In bringing this to pass the Lord, as always, worked at both ends of the matter.

Firstly, there was the Gentile, Cornelius, one of the centurions of the New Testament of whom is recorded some good thing. In his case it is evident that the Holy Spirit had already implanted the fear of the Lord in his heart and that of his household. The fruits of this were apparent to all with whom they had to do. Yet for all of his prayers and alms-giving Cornelius felt that there was an aching void in his heart that

had not been filled. It was this Holy Ghost-wrought emptiness which prepared him for such a filling of the Spirit under Peter’s ministry and especially for that revelation of Christ which alone can fill the hungry with good things whilst the rich are sent empty away. Nothing short of this could render him acceptable to his Creator before whom he so deeply felt to be standing. He deeply felt that there was a solemn, unanswered question in his life for which he had neither wisdom nor strength to attend to aright. Yet how vital it was to Cornelius that this solemn matter be dealt with!

But how could he learn the way of salvation? “How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?” Whilst the Holy Spirit could have revealed a precious Jesus to him without any human instrumentality, yet it is His general method to save sinners through the foolishness of preaching. So at the other end of the matter the Holy Spirit was preparing His servant Peter to be the minister of grace to Cornelius and his household. It was to Simon the tanner’s house that the angel of the Lord commanded him to send, which command Cornelius immediately obeyed.

We find Peter resting upon the housetop awaiting his meal, when he falls into a trance. Before him descends, from heaven, a great sheet, knit at the four corners, thus securing all the contents of this

mysterious vessel. Within it, to Peter's deep consternation are found all manner of unclean creatures, forbidden under the law of Moses to be touched. Yet a command attends the vision, *"Arise, Peter, slay and eat."* *"Not so, Lord,"* answers Peter with his usual instinctive reaction to events. *"I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean."* Back comes the almighty silencing voice of divine majesty: *"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."*

Three times this was repeated, before the sheet was finally received up into heaven, intimating that whatever objections Peter may have on earth, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit each welcomed into heaven these cleansed beasts. This reminds us of the work of each of the three glorious Persons of the Trinity in salvation. The Father's electing love, the Son's redeeming love and the Holy Spirit's regenerating love. Again it is very significant to notice that in the holy Word of God there are three beginnings referred to. We have the beginning of creation in Genesis I; the beginning of redemption in John I; and then in Acts II. 15 Peter refers to the beginning which was wrought by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. This inward regenerating beginning which the outward anointing of the Holy Spirit confirmed with His special gifts at that time, Cornelius was a subject of to Peter's amazement. Surely Peter's hesi-

tancy was somewhat like Jonah's, though thankfully not with the same spirit of rebellion to which that well-known prophet was left.

Just as Peter was meditating on these things, the three men commanded of God to be sent by Cornelius arrived at Simon's house where Peter lodged. At that very moment Peter was shown what he "ought" to do. "Behold, three men seek thee Go with them, doubting nothing." How wonderful is God's timing of His works. Just as minutely planned here as at the well when Eliezer met Isaac's, God-appointed wife to be, Rebecca. So Peter, without gainsaying (that is without any more questioning!), departs on the next day to find the congregation to which God had appointed him to preach.

How wonderful is the constraining power of the Spirit, when He overrules all objections and sweetly draws the feet of Christ's disciples in the appointed way! Then what we "ought" to do is no longer a cumbersome duty, but a loving privilege, all the strength and willingness coming from Him whose command it is. It is the Holy Ghost who reveals these solemn obligations and responsibilities to the children of God and then gives the enabling grace to do what we "ought." *"It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."* *"I will walk in them,"* says their God. This is what Peter means in his Epistle when he speaks of being

elect unto obedience. Not just to be justified by the obedience of Christ, but also to be sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ.

How different the law is in this respect! It clearly reveals our responsibilities but lends no help to the awakened sinner to fulfil its obligations.

“Run, run and work,’ the law commands,

Yet finds me neither feet nor hands;

But sweeter news the gospel brings;

It bids me fly, and lends me wings.”

How transcendent in all this is the sacred example of Christ, who in speaking of His sufferings to the two favoured disciples on the Emmaus road said, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” O how attractive is the sweet submission of Christ to His Father’s will in the Garden of Gethsemane! What holy love and zeal filled His holy Person, God and Man, to bear that solemn “ought” that His Father had laid upon Him! Isaiah says of Him in prophecy: *“Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth.”*

On Peter’s arrival at Cornelius’ house he finds an expectant congregation waiting to receive the Word. How diligent Cornelius was for the souls of those with whom he had to do, to gather them in this manner!

And of how many congregations can it be said: *“We are all here present before God, to hear the things commanded thee of God”?*

Before he preached, Peter had to remind his attentive hearers that he was but a man, and therefore was not to be the object of adoration or praise. How even John in the Revelation was twice reprovved for worshipping an angel! In all our gatherings in His name how conscious we need to be of the command: “worship God”! But how is He to be worshipped?

“Worship God, then, in His Son; There He’s love and there alone.”

This was the lesson Cornelius and his household and the gathered friends were about to learn.

What subject did Peter preach? He preached of Christ as the Judge of all; of Christ crucified; of Christ the one Mediator between God and Man. In all this he published (not offered) the glad tidings that *“through His name whosoever (Jew or Gentile) believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins”*; that God is no respecter of persons. The dear Holy Ghost, who alone can give power to the ministry, accompanied Peter’s sermon with double power: the power to believe on Christ for salvation within, and the outward witness of His work so often repeated in New Testament times, the speaking of tongues to magnify God. Whilst the miraculous gift of speaking with other tongues has

ceased, the grace and gift of God in putting a new song in the mouth of God's believing people, "*even praise unto our God,*" has not ended. At such times of love, the very stones would cry out if these should hold their peace.

Cornelius' aching void was at last filled with an application of the atonement and a view of a precious Christ. Now at last his cup ran over in praise to God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Like Simeon his eyes had seen by faith His salvation. Nothing else could have brought his weary, aching soul into "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." It was the cross of Christ which alone answered his deepest needs.

Peter, on seeing the evident approbation of God Himself upon these Gentile believers, commanded them, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to attend to His own command, to be baptized, asking that question: "*Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?*" Without any gainsaying on either Peter's or Cornelius' part, they entered into loving obedience in that which the Lord had showed them that they "ought" to do.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of

the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the midst of all His people."

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

From The "Gospel Standard"
December 2004

We need trial upon trial upon trial, and stroke upon stroke to bring our soul out of carnality and death. We slip insensibly into carnal ease; but afflictions and trials of body and mind stir us up to some degree of earnestness in prayer and supplication, give a force and reality to the things of God, show us the emptiness and vanity of earthly things, make us feel the suitability and preciousness of the Lord Jesus; and as we taste any measure of sweetness and blessedness in Him, He becomes more feelingly and experimentally all our salvation and all our desire.

Elder J.C. Philpot

LUKE 6:45.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

PERSECUTION OF BAPTISTS

Benjamin Keach was often seized when preaching and committed to prison, sometimes bound, sometimes released on bail, and sometimes his life was threatened.

On one occasion soldiers, who had been sent into Buckinghamshire to suppress meetings of Dissenters, with great rage and violence swore they would kill Keach. He was seized, tied up on the ground, and four horse soldiers prepared to ride over him to trample him to death. At the last minute an officer forbade it. Keach was then tied behind one of the soldiers on horseback and taken to prison, where he suffered great hardship.

The following is taken from J. M. Cramp (based on Crosby's History of the Baptists). Crosby was Benjamin Keach's son-in-law.

Benjamin Keach, a Particular Baptist minister, wrote a small book for children, entitled, *The Child's Instructor; or, a New and Easy Primer*. In the catechetical portion of the book, Baptist sentiments were inculcated. It was affirmed that "*believers, or godly men and women only, who can make confession of their faith and repentance,*" should be baptized. The personal reign of the Saviour on earth for a thousand years, held at

the time by some Baptists [for example, Bunyan], was taught. And, which was peculiarly offensive, Mr. Keach said, that "Christ's true ministers have not their learning and wisdom from men, or from universities, or human schools; for human learning, arts and sciences are not essential to the making of a true minister; but only the gift of God, which cannot be bought with silver or gold. And also, as they have freely received the gift of God, so they do freely administer; they do not preach for hire, for gain or filthy lucre; they are not like false teachers, who look for gain from their quarters, who eat the fat, and clothe themselves with the wool, and kill them that are fed: those that put not into their mouths they prepare war against. Also, they are not lords over God's heritage; they rule them not by force and cruelty, neither have they power to force and compel men to believe and obey their doctrine, but are only to persuade and entreat; thus is the way of the gospel, as Christ taught them."

For this he was indicted at the assizes. The language of the indictment may seem strange to the reader:

"Thou art here indicted by the name of Benjamin Keach, of Winslow, in the county of Bucks., for that thou, being a seditious, heretical and schismatical person, evilly and maliciously disposed, and disaffected to his Majesty's government of the Church of England, didst

maliciously and wickedly, on the first day of May, in the sixteenth year of the reign of our sovereign lord the King, write, print and publish, or cause to be written, printed and published, one seditious and venomous book, entitled, *The Child's Instructor*; or, a *New and Easy Primer*; wherein are contained, by way of question and answer, these damnable positions, contrary to the Book of Common Prayer, and the Liturgy of the Church of England."

The trial took place October 9th, 1664. [Keach was 24.] Chief Justice Hyde presided, and conducted himself with a malignity wholly unbecoming his office. Under his direction, a verdict of "Guilty" was recorded, and the judge then proceeded to pass sentence, in the following terms:

"Benjamin Keach, you are here convicted for writing, printing and publishing a seditious and schismatical book, for which the court's judgment is this, and the court doth award: That you shall go to jail for a fortnight, without bail or mainprise; and the next Saturday to stand upon the pillory at Aylesbury, in the open market, for the space of two hours, from eleven of the clock to one, with a paper upon your head with this inscription: 'For writing, printing and publishing a schismatical book, entitled, *The Child's Instructor*; or, a *New and Easy Primer*. ' And the next Thursday to stand in the same manner, and for the same time, in the market of Winslow; and there your

book shall be openly burnt, before your face, by the common hangman, in disgrace of you and your doctrine. And you shall forfeit to the King's Majesty the sum of twenty pounds, and shall remain in jail until you find sureties for your good behaviour, and appearance at the next assizes, there to renounce your doctrines, and make such public submission as shall be enjoined you."

The punishment of the pillory was abolished by Act of Parliament in the year 1837. The instrument so called was an upright frame placed on a scaffold, upon which the offender stood, his head appearing through one hole of the frame, and his hands fixed in two others. As this punishment was generally reserved for persons guilty of perjury and other infamous crimes, the mob were accustomed to pelt them with rotten eggs or various kinds of filth, and even with stones and brickbats, so that death sometimes ensued. To such an exposure the Lord Chief Justice of England delivered up a worthy minister of the gospel. The sentence was duly carried into execution, and the sheriff, who was himself a fierce opposer of the truth, took care that the judge's directions should be obeyed to the very letter.

It was market day at Aylesbury. The town was thronged. People flocked thither from all parts of the country to see the new and strange spectacle. But though many of them were prepared to deride and sneer,

the usual expressions of popular indignation were wanting. Hitherto the pillory had been reserved for the vilest criminals. But Mr. Keach was a good man, and a preacher of the gospel. They could not find it in their hearts to pelt *him*.

Precisely at eleven o'clock he was placed in the pillory. Many friends attended him, and stood around the instrument of torture for the purpose of sympathy and encouragement. And there, too, stood his wife, and "frequently spoke in vindication of her husband, and of the principles for which he suffered." A true helpmeet!

"Good people," said he, "I am not ashamed to stand here this day, with this paper on my head; my Lord Jesus was not ashamed to suffer on the cross for me; and it is for His cause that I am made a gazing-stock. It is not for any wickedness that I stand here, but for writing and publishing His truth."

"No!" exclaimed an Episcopal clergyman, who was standing by; "it is for writing and publishing *errors*."

"Sir," replied Mr. Keach, "can you prove them errors?"

He would have answered, but he was too well known by the multitude. One told him of his being pulled drunk out of a ditch. Another upbraided him with being lately found drunk under a haycock. At this all the people fell to laughing, and turned their diversion from the sufferer in the pillory to the drunken priest; insomuch that he hastened

away with the utmost disgrace and shame.

When the uproar had subsided, the voice from the pillory was heard again. Having somehow slipped one of his hands out of the hole, he took his Bible from his pocket and said, "Take notice, that the things which I have written and published, and for which I stand here this day a spectacle to men and angels, are all contained in this Book." The jailer snatched the book from him, and replaced his hand in the hole.

Still the voice came from the pillory: "*A great concernment for souls was that which moved me to write and publish those things for which I now suffer, and for which I could suffer far greater things than these. It concerns you therefore to be very careful, otherwise it will be very sad with you at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven; for we must all appear before His tribunal.*"

The officers interposed, and he was compelled to be silent for a time. But again he ventured: "*O! did you but experience the great love of God, and the excellences that are in Him, it would make you willing to go through any sufferings for His sake. And I do account this the greatest honour that ever the Lord was pleased to confer upon me.*"

The sheriff was furious, and declared that he should be gagged if he did not hold his tongue. So he refrained from speaking. Yet he

could not forbear uttering these few words: "This one 'yoke' of Christ, which I can experience, is 'easy' to me, and a 'burden' which He doth make 'light.' "

When the two hours had expired, he was released, and "blessed God with a loud voice for His great goodness unto him."

That day week he was exposed to the same indignity at Winslow, where he lived, and bore it with equal patience and manliness. There also his book was publicly burnt, according to the sentence.

From "Gospel Standard"
January 2005

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

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

the subject of the cross.

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

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

God-man, Divine-human, King-priest, Master-servant, abased-exalted, and crucified-resurrected, we preach the cross. When we declare Him to be possessed of both strength and weakness; flesh and Spirit; us and Him, and, the Creator and creature we are preaching the cross.

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

There was a dissolution of His body and Spirit on the day of crucifixion. His Spirit was commended unto His Father; the body was laid in the tomb. This same Spirit raised Jesus from the dead on the third day. He became the "first fruits." His body was the first human body to be clothed with immortality. The Man, Christ Jesus, was raised from the dead! This was accomplished in His resurrection. He being a cross of Himself and us, we being in Him, He being raised from the dead, gives

us the basis of our hope of the resurrection of our bodies by the same Spirit. (See Romans 8:11).

Jesus Christ was King-priest. He was ruler over His own body. He was the first and only one born of woman who was able to keep His body under subjection to such extent that He did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. His composition being such, His body was an acceptable sacrifice and gift to the Father for His people. We find in Hebrews 5:1 that the duties of a high priest were to *"offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins."*

This High Priest forever perfected His people in the sight of God by offering His own blood as a sacrifice and His body, the life He lived here, as the acceptable gift unto His Father. He is our King-priest. He is the sole head and governor of the church, those who are called out by Him. His divine generation, His royal descent, His perfect nature, His wonderful offering, all this well qualifies Him to atone for His people. It further qualifies Him as the perfect King and Priest to illuminate His people with His light and nourish them with His wonderful gifts of grace and peace. He blesses them with that consoling peace that the world knows nothing about. He orders His people to walk in paths of righteousness. He leads them and holds them steady with His hand. When they falter and fall by the way-side, His eye is ever on them and His hand beneath them so that He gen-

tly picks them up and encourages them with the wonders of His power and grace. He purifies their souls with the washing of regeneration and promises purification of their bodies. He intercedes for them to the Father within the Holiest of Holies. Priests before Him could only offer sacrifice of the blood of animals; He offered Himself.

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

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

them to perform and performs for them that which He orders.

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

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

Preaching the cross includes not only the Cross of Jesus Christ but also the cross of His people. We read in *Matt. 16:24*, "*Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross,*

and follow me." The cross of two opposing characteristics consisting of the flesh and the Spirit must have been the cross under consideration. Each child of God "takes up *his cross*" when he is born of the Spirit. He is not familiar with the cross before this time because all he knows is his carnal natural desires, thus he is in fellowship with himself. He is in perfect agreement with himself before this miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit takes up its abode in the soul of an individual he begins to experience the cross the world knows nothing about. A child of God soon learns, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit*" (John 3:6). We learn by sad experience that we cannot spiritualize the flesh nor "fleshilize" the Spirit. (Pardon the newly coined word, but this is the only way I know to make it plain.) There is no blending the two together in this world, thus, the cross. The flesh shall be spiritualized in the resurrection. The soul is spiritualized in being born of the Spirit in this life. We cannot reform nor renovate the flesh so that it can agree with the spiritual, neither can we bring the Spirit down so that it can agree with the flesh. Paul said in Galatians 5: 17, "*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: [the cross] so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*" Those born of the

Spirit are possessed with dual contrary characteristics and experiences. No wonder we are strangers to ourselves!

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

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

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

*How perplexed is the path he
must tread!*

*The hope of his happiness
rises from feal,*

*And his life he receives from
the dead.*

*His fairest pretensions must
wholly be waived,*

*And his best resolutions be
crossed;*

*Nor can he expect to be per-
fectly saved,*

*'Til he finds himself utterly
lost.*

*When all this is done, and
his heart is assured
of the total remission of sins,
When his pardon is signed and
his peace is procured,
From that moment his con-
flict begins."*

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

The text says, "*The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.*" It has a reverse effect upon those who perish. Those who are not born of God cannot receive the things of the Spirit. Preaching the cross "*cuts them to the heart*" while it "*pricks us in the heart.*" It antagonizes them and comforts us. It drives them away while it draws us. It edifies us and confuses them. It is to us, "*the power of God*"; to them, "*foolishness.*"

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

sary for Christ to die on the cross considering they are able to take care of themselves?

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

The aforesaid questions above I know to be in harmony with the thoughts of the unregenerated mind. Preaching the cross was to me foolishness for years after I was ordained by man to preach! I religiously preached the power of man and the wisdom of man to make heaven his home! I have no stones to throw at them because I was as conscientious and honest in my convictions as anyone could be. I had not experienced the cross; therefore, I could not preach it. I know that something occurred to me one night as I closed a discourse on the subject, "*Sinners in the hands of an angry God.*" This mighty something that took hold of me crossed everything I had ever known and brought to nought all I had thought myself to be. I trust this was the Holy Spirit that manifested my righteousness as filthy rags in His sight. I trust that I was given the Holy Ghost conscience which was

a cross to my natural conscience. My life since that time has been full of conflicts and crosses. I have been convinced that it is through hell we enter heaven, and by the cross we obtain the crown.

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

Sometime ago at a funeral the choir sang, *"The Old Rugged Cross."* As they sang the words, *"I'll exchange it some day for a crown,"* my mind was deeply impressed upon that grand exchange. A crown of immortality awaits the mortal. A crown of righteousness awaits the enlivened sinner. A crown of glory is laid up for those who feel so low and insignificant. A crown of

eternal life will swallow up those who die in the Lord. The incorruptible crown shall clothe the corruptible body. We experience the cross here, but beyond this sphere of time we shall realize the crown.

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

love His appearing" (2 Tim. 6:6-8). May God bless these thoughts to your comfort and edification.

Elder E.J. Lambert

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

Let us consider Christ's death for encouraging us to confidence in coming to the throne of grace. This is the main ground of boldness in coming (Heb.10:19): *"Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."*

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

This blood satisfies justice, and answers all the claims and charges of the law against us. What mars boldness like fears of a standing

controversy betwixt heaven and us? God is holy, we are vile sinners; God's law is strict, we have sinfully broke it, and deserve hell most justly. No answer can be given but by this blood. What would the law have, but Christ gave? Would the law have a sinless man to answer it as it was first given to sinless Adam? "Lo, I come," saith our Lord Jesus, without all sin: a Man against whom, for Himself, no charge or challenge. Would the law have perfect sinless obedience? Christ did perform it. Must the law have life and blood for every breach of it? Christ never broke the law; but the burden of millions of breakers and breaches of it lay on Him, and His blood was shed for them: and hereby He fulfilled the law, *"put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"* (Heb. 9: 26); *"finished the transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, brought in everlasting righteousness, sealed up the vision and prophecy, and anointed the most holy"* (Dan. 9:24).

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

Copy, Dec. 1992,
Gospel Standard

March 26.

"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." - ISAIAH *lv.* 13.

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

the more they are enabled to walk closely with the Lord, the more they discover the wretched wanderings of their base and sinful hearts.

Elder J. C. Philpot

June 8.

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

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

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

Elder J.C. Philpot

PSALM 43.

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

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

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

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

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

MEETINGS

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION MEETING

The 5th Sunday meeting of the "West Country Line Union," consisting of Dan River, Greensboro, Moons Creek and Big Meadows Churches, will convene the 5th Sunday the 31st day of July 2005. Big Meadows will be host.

Follow Highway 87 from Reidsville and after crossing I-85 South of Graham, NC, go approximately 17 miles, across "Cane Creek" bridge and turn right at top of hill, go 4 miles to crossroad and turn left 1 mile to Church.

All lovers of the truth are invited and we especially welcome any Elders who have a mind to come.

ROMANS 14:8.

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR MAY 2005

Cleo Underwood, VA -----	5.00
Winfred Young, NC -----	5.00
Randolph Plybon, VA -----	5.00
Edna Graves, AL -----	5.00
Andrew Agee, VA -----	5.00
Eld. Barnabus Brammer, PA --	5.00
Arlene Hole, NC -----	5.00
Don Ferguson, CAN-----	25.00
Eld. James Pugh, AL -----	15.00

OBITUARIES

**MEMORIAL FOR
DEWEY ANDERSON TATE**

In early September, 2002, I had the opportunity to have a very interesting and emotional visit in my driveway with Brother Dewey. On this bright, sunny day he had come to my home because of what he advised as a "need to talk to somebody". Brother Dewey was in a lot of physical pain and with his cane and some assistance from me he got out of his truck to talk, but would not agree to go inside the house. For about an hour he shared with me some of his innermost feelings and how he needed help. He was quite distraught, very despondent, and

felt as "alone" as he said he had ever felt. He talked a lot about what medical doctors had done for him, but in a very emotional and tearful manner conveyed that his recent experiences had led him to believe how much he needs his Lord and Savior. Building this relationship was important to him.

As a result of our discussion, he wanted to know who our pastor was at Dan River Church and if I would set up an appointment for the two of them to get together. I made contact with Elder Kenneth Key who scheduled visitation with Brother Dewey. From this time forth Brother Dewey began attending church services.

Since Brother Dewey's death I learned from his daughter, Karen, that one year after the terrorists attacks in 2001 that Brother Dewey had a dream. This would have been about the time he came to my home "to talk" in September 2002. She said that he had shared with her that in this dream the Lord and three Angels appeared before him. He was greatly moved by this experience and other things happening in his life and I believe this is what prompted our meeting in my driveway.

As indicated earlier, Brother Dewey immediately began attending Church.

His daughter, Karen, supported him, and was responsible in getting him to church and just being there for him. On the fourth Sunday in

September (09-22-2002) he joined the church and was baptized the fourth Sunday in October 2002. As long as he was able he attended church and was a good and faithful member; A lover of the doctrine of salvation by grace.

Brother Dewey grew up in a Primitive Baptist family. His parents, Harry and Nellie Tate, who preceded him in death, were members at Dan River Church, and in his early childhood he attended with them and his siblings. He often heard his mother sing a lot of the old hymns. One that she sang a great deal was *"How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours When Jesus no Longer I see"*. According to his daughter, Karen, this was one of his favorites and was sung at his funeral.

Brother Dewey was born on February 10, 1933 in Rockingham County, NC. His death occurred at Carolina Medical Center in Charlotte, NC on March 26, 2005. On this date it pleased our Heavenly Father to call our beloved brother home above. He was taken from his labors here to rest in God's eternal love.

On December 20, 1952, he was united in marriage to Shirley Pruitt. She preceded him in death on September 9, 1991. They were blessed to have three children; All of whom survive; A son, Dewey Keith Tate, and Daughters, Karen Tate Reynolds, and Kimberly Tate Spaulding.

Other surviving family members include six grandchildren and one

great grandchild. Brothers: Robert, John Dillard, Cecil and George.

Stepbrother: John Wayne Tate.

Sisters: Lorene Lawrence, Bessie Sparks, Elaine Smith and Debra Boulding. Step-Sisters: Glenda Gunn and Betty Carol Ellington.

Brother Dewey had great faith in the Lord. After his surgery and during his hospitalization, prior to his death his patience and humbleness was an example of what the grace of God can do in one's heart. All was done for him that loved ones could do, but still the Lord saw fit to call him home.

The church, family, and community will miss him, but we know that we must submit to God's will for he doeth all things well. Our hope is that God will comfort the bereaved family and give them the strength to bear their loss ever looking to him for guidance.

The funeral service was conducted at Dan River Church on Tuesday, March 29, 2005 by his pastor, Elder Kenneth R. Key. Many paid tribute to this beloved Brother. The body was laid to rest in Dan River church cemetery to await the coming of our Lord.

May God bless this lovely family and comfort and reconcile them as only He can do.

Written by request of Dan River Church.

John Collie April, 2005

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

SONG

*Let worldly minds the world pursue,
It has no charms for me;
Once I admired its trifles, too,
But grace has set me free.*

*Its pleasures now no longer please,
No more content afford;
Far from my heart be joys like these,
Since I have know the Lord.*

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

*Creatures no more divide my choice,
I bid them all depart;
His name, and love and gracious
voice,
Have fixed my roving heart.*

*Now Lord, I would be thine alone,
And wholly live to thee;
But may I hope that thou wilt own
A worthless worm like me?*

*Yes, though of sinners I'm the worst,
I cannot doubt thy will;
For if thou had'st not chose me first,
I had refused thee still.*

Newton

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	194
Elder Richard H. Campbell	
CORRESPONDENCE	200
ARTICLES	202
Harry Cannaday	
VOICES OF THE PAST	208
John L. Hastings	
Elder J. C. Philpot	
Ray Kauffman	
MEETINGS	214
CONTRIBUTIONS	215
OBITUARIES	215
Georgia Louise Eaton Edwards	
Geneva K. Musgrove Pettis	

 EDITORIAL



Elder R. H. Campbell

“For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead.” (Rom 11:15)

I have read this text, many times and wondered about it, and passed on to read other scriptures without any understanding on the meaning of this verse. I felt that I could see that the olive tree, which is referred to in this chapter, was the household of faith, but, when you

get to the point of the branches being broken off, others being grafted into the tree, and others being grafted back in again, it just did not make sense according to my understanding of the other scriptures. I read it again a few weeks ago, and seemed to see more in it than I had ever seen before. I believe that it is a very significant event in the salvation of the children of God, for I see it as a parable of how the new covenant was introduced into the plan of salvation, and how the old covenant was brought to an end. As I read it, and began to meditate upon it this time, I began to see a picture unfold, and for the first time felt to have an understanding of what was under consideration. I will leave it to your discretion as to whether I have any understanding of it now.

The eleventh chapter of Romans, it seems to me, is a detailed description of the fulfillment of the words of the apostle Paul, as recorded in, (Heb 10:9) *“Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second.”* This is what occurred when, Jesus the Son of man, had fulfilled his mission here on earth, dying for the sins of Israel under the first covenant. (Heb 10:15) *“For this cause he is the mediator of the new testament that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal life.”* This was

the time when the law was taken away, as Paul describes in, (Col 2:14) *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."* Now with the law of Moses being ended, the Jews were no longer under a covenant relationship with their God, as they had formerly been, and therefore they were now in the same position in their relation to God that the Gentiles had been under the mosaical law. They had no legal standing before God, in the form of a covenant relationship, as they had under the law. This was not a change in plans, but rather a fulfillment of prophecies as made by Isaiah and many of the prophets of old, in which the old testament, would give way to the new.

(Jer 31:31) *"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God,*

and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember them no more." When this covenant was established, as the apostle Paul stated, (Heb 8:13) *"In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to pass away."* And the hope of Israel is cut off because the covenant relationship was ended.

This is the new covenant which God, by the mouth of the prophets, had said that he would make with his people, in that day. This covenant was not with all of the people, even as the law of Moses which God had established beforehand, did not include the whole nation of Israel, for Paul said, speaking of Israel, (Rom 9:5-6) *"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect, for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."* Under each covenant, there was an elect people with whom the covenants were made; and they were those who were chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world that they should be holy and without blame before him in love, and is effective with none

other. These covenants were with the Lord's portion, Israel the lot of his inheritance: for when he set the bounds of the people, in the beginning, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel, the seed of the woman, as mentioned in, Genesis 3:15, the elect seed.

As the apostle Paul was quick to point out, (*Rom 11:1-3*) *"I say then hath God cast away his people? God forbid, for I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot not the scripture saith of Elias? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life."* This is the cry of many, in all ages of time, as they see how the world has gone after the gods of the world and have no time for the true and living God. Paul then updated Elias' prophecy by saying, that even as it was in Elias' day, so it was in Paul's day, a remnant according to the election of grace was not cast away, and this same thing can be said in our day. The covenants did not save the Lord's people, as he said (*Rom 11:7*) *"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded."* It is by election, whether

under the gospel or under grace. Election and grace are but the ways in which their salvation is manifested in the different administrations, as regarding who are God's chosen people. This is made known unto them by the grace of God, and no one else is aware of it, and will deny that it is true. Under the law Paul said, "All are not Israel, which are of Israel because God gave some of them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, and the same applies today, and this caused them to be completely unaware of this truth. In the gospel dispensation Jesus said, (*Mark 4:11-12*) *"And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."* Note the similarity of the work of God, under the different covenants, both included definite impossibilities for man to find out the ways of God, in his own wisdom.

Israel, as a nation, rejected Christ, and therefore were cut off, (cast away) from the olive tree (which represents the whole household of the elect), because of their unbelief, and are therefore now in the same position that the Gentiles

were under the law. They are in the same state of ignorance and unbelief that the apostle Paul said that he was, before his experience on the road to Damascus, where, as regarding the gospel; they were enemies for the Gentiles (gospel's) sake, but as concerning the election they are beloved for the Father's sake. Paul was quick to point out, that none of the elect are actually permanently cast away, because they are received back as he said, *(Rom 11:15)* ***"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead. They are brought back into the olive tree, even as the gentiles are, (Eph 2:1) "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sins:"*** They are grafted back again into the olive tree, in the same manner that the gentiles are grafted in for the first time.

The change in the administration from the law of Moses, to the covenant of grace did not increase the total number of saints of God, because that determination was made before the world began, they were all chosen in Christ Jesus originally. This fact is proven by Paul's statement above, God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew, ***"for I am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."*** He had been under the law, and as such was cast away, when the law was ended, and

he was blaspheming and persecuting the church of Christ, trying to destroy it, but now he has been grafted back into it, under the new covenant of grace, and was made to be a preacher of righteousness of the faith that he once hated. This is brought to pass because of holy calling of God, by which he was sent, by Jesus, unto the Gentiles, to open their eyes, turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ. This method of calling has not changed from the old covenant, case in point, Jacob and Esau. *(Rom 9:11)* ***"For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth."*** So, as it has ever been, the election hath obtained the salvation of all of the Lord's people, and it is by the grace of God unto all.

As stated above, the Jews had no legal claim to the olive tree, because the first covenant had expired, and the Gentiles had never had a right to the tree of life: (of which the olive tree is representative) but by the grace of God, all of the chosen, both Jew and Gentile, will be grafted into the olive tree. This is accomplished when they are born of the Spirit, because this is the only way that any can see the king-

dom of God. Jesus confirmed this again when he said, (John 14:6) "Jesus said unto them, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." and this applies to both Jews and Gentiles whether under the law or grace. Paul said that the Gentiles could not boast against the branches, who have been cast away because of unbelief, because they must all stand by faith. (Rom 11:22) "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness: otherwise thou shall be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in again, for God is able to graft them in again." The proof of this text is in the fact, as quoted above, that the apostle Paul was cut off, when the new covenant came into effect, but was grafted in again, by his experience on the road to Damascus. This is the way and manner in which it happened to the apostle Paul, and he said that he was a pattern to them who would thereafter believe on Christ unto life everlasting.

(Rom 11:25) *"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceit; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."* None can boast of this or be wise in their own conceit, for as Paul recorded (I Cor 4:7) *"For who maketh thee to differ from an-*

other? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not receive it? So the last shall be first and the first last: for many be called, but few are chosen: there were many Jews but few were chosen of God, and in like manner there are many gentiles, and only a remnant shall be saved." Paul realized this, and mourned for his brethren according to the flesh, as all of God's children do, for there is no pleasure to them, that any should perish. (Rom 9:1-6) *"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsman according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to who pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect, for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel."* (many are called, but few are chosen) There is an elect group among both Jews and Gentiles who will inherit heaven and immortal glory, but not all that cry

unto him, Lord, Lord, are his children. All of the chosen vessels, of both groups, are the ones to whom the promise is made, and are the ones to whom the scripture refers when it says, *"And so all Israel shall be saved."* Moses said, *"The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance, and Jacob's name was later changed to Israel, and where this name appears in scripture it represents the Lord's portion."*

The gifts and the calling of God are without repentance, for God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. They are all where the apostle Paul said that he was, *(I Tim 1:15-16) "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."* This statement was made after his experience on the road to Damascus, after he had received his commission of God to go and preach unto the Gentiles, and not prior to his conversion, when he had said that he was in a state of ignorance and unbelief. This is one of the most comforting of all scriptures, to the little trembling child of grace, because each feels this same un-

worthiness, and upon reading this scripture will say, if the apostle Paul felt this way, and he is a pattern, then surely there is hope for me, because that is certainly the way that it is with me.

As I understand the above scripture, it is but a part of a parable of how the transition from the law to grace was performed, by God, and as is stated above, all Israel shall be saved without the loss of one, because there is no instant in time where the salvation of any of the saints was in jeopardy. The old and new covenant are not the result of a change in the original plan of God, but a demonstration of the power, wisdom love and grace of God toward his children, and his bringing them home safely without the loss of one, in spite of what they were in nature, or any lack of righteousness of their own..

(Rom 11:33) "O, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the lord? Or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, And through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Man cannot, by searching, find out the ways of God, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him;

neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, for as Paul wrote to Timothy, *(I Tim 3: 16)* ***“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world and received up into glory.”*** We meditate on the scriptures, and study them daily, in an attempt to discern the truth, but it comes only by revelation, and that comes at God’s appointed time. This may be when they are reading or meditating upon the scriptures, or it may come at a time when they are busy with other matters, but if they arrest the mind, then they will stop, in their mind, and experience one of those precious times of refreshing, of being raised up above the cares and troubles of this life, for a season, and are given, to feast on that heavenly manna which comes down from above, and they are blessed to worship him in Spirit and in truth, and they are blessed to experience one of those little Bethel spots that Abraham spoke of, in his travels here on earth.

How grand and glorious is his power, wisdom, and love as it is made manifest in the salvation of the saints. He alone, is worthy of the worship, praise and adoration of his

children, worlds without end, because he is their salvation, under both the old and the new covenants. There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord, God the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; these three are one, and bear record to these truths.

In bonds of love.
Richard H. Campbell

CORRESPONDENCE

Summerfield, NC
June 19, 2005

Dear Elder Terry:

Please renew our Sign’s of the Times for two years. Enclosed is a check for fifty dollars (\$50.00) please use the rest for anything needed.

We are 85 years old but thankful we are able to stay home and look after each other. We thank the Lord for his merciful kindness to us all these years.

We appreciate your work with Signs of the Times.

Thanks,
W. H. Norman
Maedell Norman
3221 Pleasant Ridge Road
Summerfield, N.C. 27358

426 Lilly Rd. N.E.
Apt. 133
Olympia, WA 985106-6932

Dear Elder Wm. H. Terry

Considering the fact I am now 96 years old, in good health, and having taught school for 35 years before I retired in 1967. I still know how to write correctly; but it doesn't suit me to fail using what little I do know.

I love to receive the Signs of the Times and I hungrily read it from cover to cover. I couldn't believe I had failed to send a renewal check this month because I was sure I had mailed the renewal a month ago. It has been dear of you to continue sending the Signs in spite of my failing mind.

I feel my life has been in God's Holy Hands for as long as I have lived. And I felt His urge to ask for membership with my mother's Primitive Baptist Church in Yakima, WA in August 1973. Two of favorite Elders of the church (Elder Spangler from Danville, VA and Elder Ben Preston (both now deceased),. baptized me in Lake Mayfield near Mossy Rock.

My heart rejoices with the several close contacts I have had to know that Jesus has blessed me with The Holy Spirit in my heart and soul. I have had spoken words to me in answer to my prayers to answer problems that beset me.

My mother, Josie C. Mitchell was a life long Primitive Baptist. Her

love and gentle guidance has been the story of my life as I was led to joining the church. Elder Beebe's sermons were enjoyed in the Signs as long as Mother lived. There is no church in my vicinity; that is, our church. To me, it is the pure essence of "The Rock" God's Holy Church.

Excuse this long letter, but I feel so blessed; and I'm happy to know a few of the brethren on the East Coast. It keeps me in touch along with the "Signs."

Thank you for the part you do to produce and send such a spiritual help to me.

Sincerely,
Alma Wilson

ST. JOHN 15:20-23.

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.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.

He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

ARTICLES

Having been requested by some of the brethren to write some of the experiences I hope has been the dealings of the Lord with me and what I hope the Lord has done for me a helpless sinner.

After having a dream a few months ago that I saw a precious sister (Mary Poff) standing alone in this large field where she looked so forsaken and alone.

It seemed I walked slowly up to where she was at, desiring I might say something to her for comfort. I asked if there was anything that I might do to help. Her reply was you can write your experience and I am now trying to attempt to do that. Somehow I feel I must try to make this effort. I feel to be so insufficient for this task yet I feel I must try to make the effort to write with the feeling that if anyone would find any comfort in it that God would be praised. Here trusting that God would reveal to me some of the things, and the joys I have received by His mercy to a helpless hell deserving sinner as I feel to be.

When but young around 13 or 14 years of age I can't remember dates as some are blessed to do, because I thought at first that the thoughts I was having and concerned about were imaginary. I remember my brother Roy and myself were spraying apple trees. Our stepfather

Charlie Sutphin had passed away leaving three young boys 3, 4, and 5 years of age. Roy and I were trying to help mother make a living for us. I also has a sister (Hazel) approximately 11 years of age. While I was pumping the sprayer which was a hand pump in a 50-gallon barrell fastened on a sled, there was a terrible condemned feeling that came over me. That was a great sinner before a holy and mighty God. It seemed that I had mistreated everyone and I was in a miserable condition. I thought as soon as we quit for the day it being later in the afternoon that I would seek some secret place and try to beg God to forgive me of my many sins which came up before me they being so great, they seemed to be as mountains.

That evening I sought a secret place not to be seen of anyone to try to beg God to have mercy upon me a great sinner. It seemed God wouldn't hear one such as I. I made promises I would quit doing some of the things I was doing and do better. I found out that I couldn't keep the promises I would make that I only became worse. I think this was about the year 1938. We all had to work close together to stay together and we were all very close to our Mother and each other. I stayed in this condition until about the year of 1942. We had moved to Floyd County on a little farm and one night I awoke, and a great light came down through the house and it carried one away very close to me. As the light

went upward it seemed *it* was taking this one so close to me away.

Odell one of my three half brothers had to have an appendix operation and the thought of this light was the first thing that entered my mind, but he got along all right. In 1943 my wife had to have a serious operation and I almost lost her but she recovered and I was so thankful still thinking of this vision I had seen.

One day my brother Roy and I were cutting corn and he said that he couldn't see. I had to lead him to the house. We brought him to the Gill Memorial Hospital where they run a series of different tests, but it seemed they couldn't find the trouble and we would have to take him to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

I got my Uncle Talmadge Young, who was always so willing to help any way he could.

When we got to the Doctor appointment in Charlottesville, Virginia the Doctor said there was no doubt in his mind that he had a tumor on the brain. We were heartbroken, and we had to leave him down there. In those days it seemed to be a long ways to us. He was operated on in a few days and he lived approximately 2 years from that time being completely blind. When he passed away it seemed I had lost part of myself. I felt a great comfort feeling he was the one God took in the vision. I couldn't wish him back for the Lord gave him a beautiful hope and I feel he is at rest. He de-

sired a hope so much or some evidence that he could feel some assurance when he passed away of a better home when he was gone. One Sunday Elder John P. Helms came from Paynes Creek to see him and he told Elder Helms some of his feelings and how he desired a hope or some evidence that he was a child of God. Elder Helms told him when the desire of this was there that it would come in time. Not long before he died he was on his bed in the daytime and he said a voice spoke to him "*Open your eyes and you shall see.*" He said he opened his eyes and saw the most beautiful place he had ever seen, everyone was dressed in the prettiest white that he had ever seen and so peaceful. He was so happy that he called me from my work and told me and Mother that he wanted me to take him over to Elder B. O. Thompson's who lived not far away. So we took him and he wanted to join the church. Elder Thompson told him some of the brethren and himself: would come over which was in a night or so and he could tell the brethren his desire. He told me if I had not taken him to Elder Thompson's that night he believed he could have driven himself. The brethren received him into the fellowship of the church and when he was baptized; there was ice on the water but he said it wasn't cold to him. He was most of the time rejoicing what he hoped the Lord had Done for him, and desired to meet with the breth-

ren until his death.

Before he died I had been in such a state of condemnation it seemed I couldn't live. I couldn't understand what was wrong with me if I was Losing my mind or if I had a dreadful disease." I do believe it was the worst disease you can have and that is a state of sin and condemnation. I being the only one to help support the family at this time it seemed that there was a continual prayer in my heart to God that he would direct my mind in a way that I could make a living for I realized that my life, mind, breath, and everything was in God's hands, that without him I could do nothing. I would work long hours and at night it seemed there was a burning bottomless pit, the most terrible place I had ever seen was around me. I don't care what anyone had done to me I couldn't wish anyone to go to this horrible place. It seemed that I was condemned to be cast into this place. I was afraid to go to sleep, afraid God would cast me into this place for I knew He would be just in doing so. But how I did beg to Him for His mercy and to spare me. My pillow would be wet with the tears each morning when I would try to thank him that I had been spared another night. Yet through the day I would feel so heavy and a groaning in me that God would spare me. I felt so cast down when in the fields plowing. It seemed I couldn't make it from one end to the other. I would at the ends leave the team and hide behind the bushes to try to beg for strength

to continue and that I might have strength to work to provide for the family. Sometimes I would become so heavy that I would stop in the middle of the field down in the furrow, and try to beg God for strength to continue.

I went in this condition for sometime. It seemed I had come to my end. I had spent more of the day among the bushes trying to beg God for mercy and for strength than I had worked. It seemed I had come to my end and that night I must die and be forever lost; there was no hope for one such as I and I would go to this terrible place prepared for the wicked. That evening I went to the house and my Mother had supper ready, I sat down but I couldn't eat. My burden was so great. I couldn't hold back the tears not wanting anyone to know I was in so much trouble.

The thought came to me, I will try to go one more time and try to beg God to have mercy upon me, for this night I must die. There was a large oak tree just away from the house where no one could see me. I thought I would go there. It seemed I had just enough strength to get to this oak tree I fell to the ground with my mouth in the dirt. It seemed I had not strength to open my mouth to say a word but there was a groaning in my being to God to save me, I perish. All at Once something wonderful happened to me. I arose clapping my hands, I seemed so light and great joy filled my heart and I

was praising my God for such a great deliverance from this great condemnation. This great condemnation has never returned. Somehow I believe we are delivered from something (sin and condemnation) to something (a hope of eternal life when this life is over) and we have a desire to be with ones (our brethren) which have been through their similar trials and have been brought along in the same manner.

The Lord having been so good to me and delivering me from such a horrible condition I so often doubt if I am mistaken. Yet I know such blessings as these can't be purchased with or be compared with such things as silver and gold or anything in this world. Not long after I felt I had been delivered from this death I started to bed one night and there was such a heaviness upon my heart that I can't describe the weight that I thought I couldn't live. A still small voice spoke into my very soul (please be still) and all this weight was gone. I was singing the hymn.

*I know that my redeemer
lives, What comfort this sweet
sentence gives,*

*He lives, He lives who once
was dead,*

He lives my ever living head.

At this time I believe if anyone had asked me if I was saved, I would have said yes.

This feeling didn't last long. I was doubting if this could be for one

such as I. I would take my Mother, Roy and at times the rest of the family to church most every weekend. We would often attend a little church at the top of Bent Mountain at that time called Union Church, where Elder John Wood preached every third Sunday afternoon. Often he would tell how I was getting along and I wondered how he knew so well my feelings. It seemed he was preaching to me and the tears would stream down my face. I didn't want anyone to know I was interested in the Old Primitive Baptist. I wondered what few friends I had would think. It seemed people would make fun and criticize them. I wanted to be popular and have a large farm and be important. Sometimes I would enjoy the preaching so much I would wish I could just get under the floor and hear this preaching and no one would see me shedding tears. About this time I had become so heavy again. I was a stranger to myself and I thought to everyone else. How sweet the hymn seemed to me at this time. I am a stranger here below and what I am this hard to know. This hymn seemed to my case.

At this time we had a little farm close to Paynes Creek church where Elder B. O. Thompson ran a mill. I had to go through the mill lot to get over to our place. One day as I drove by the mill I was in such a condition and so heavy I stopped my truck and went inside the mill, and seeing Elder Thompson I went and put my arms around his neck weeping and told him I would like to talk to him. I

requested that we go down in the basement. I didn't want anyone to see me in this condition. After telling him my feelings he told me there would be a baptizing in the mill race a certain time and for me to bring my clothes that he felt I was burdened to join the church. He was so kind to me I felt relieved after talking to him. Then a little later I began to have bothered him with my troubles. I thought he wouldn't have anything to do with me anymore. When the time came for the baptizing I was afraid not to take my clothes as Elder Thompson had asked me but at that time there was no way I could offer to the church. My mind was so far away.

Not long after this I was at the Mt. Union church and Elders J.P. Helms and B.V. Helms held services at this time as Elder John Wood had moved up to Manassas, Virginia. I enjoyed the preaching so much not thinking anything about joining the church.

When they closed the meeting and had published an open door for the reception of members, as they were singing and shaking hands, there was such a great love that filled my heart before I knew what I was doing I was up at the pulpit asking for a home with these dear people. (I hope this was the love of God that drew me to the church.) I looked around and my wife came also asking for a home. They received us into the fellowship of the church as candidates for baptism.

Not having any thought of joining the church but when they asked me the question, it seemed the answer was present and I said Paynes Creek. Then they asked who we wanted to baptize us and the answer was present Elder J. P. Helms.

I seemed to be lifted up with rejoicing but when I started to open the car door to come home the feeling came upon me what is this you have done, I thought I deceived these people. I went home feeling very low. Certainly not telling or boasting we had joined the church. At this time I was 20 years old, and it seemed I was certainly going through life the opposite way I had planned. This was in the year 1944. In the year 1945 the church chose me to serve as assistant clerk and at a later date was chosen clerk. Being unlearned and not knowing anything about church business I didn't think there was anyway I could perform such a task. Yet I had a desire to be submissive to the brethren's wishes. I had such a hard task trying to write the minutes of a meeting and I couldn't read it for crying when the business meeting came. Elder Thompson was so patient with me and would just wait until I was given grace to continue.

In the year 1946 the church asked me to serve them as deacon. This I thought to be another impossibility. Yet desiring to be submissive to the church, I told Elder Thompson if this was the request of the church I would do as best I could as

God would give me strength. I could not refuse feeling I had a great burden, and such a stranger to myself and I didn't know what it was for. A presbytery was called in 1946 and ordained me a deacon for Paynes Creek church. Oh how I tried to beg the Lord if I wasn't called to such a sacred place that he would manifest to me and my brethren to not go through with this work. It seemed I was praying in my heart continually and would seek secret places to beg the Lord to guide me and to keep me.

I hope this has been a easier task for my brethren who have been ordained to this work.

I have now tried to serve the brethren at Paynes Creek over 40 years. Sometimes it seems I am made to take inventory myself and the requirements of a deacon and it seems I have not filled the first requirement or qualifications but yet I am blessed to press on by God's grace. The church has given me a wonderful home and have looked over my imperfections. The Lord has been so good to me.

David says when trouble came I remembered the Lord. When things seem to be going along smooth how we do forget Him and what we are but when afflictions arise and troubles come we know there is only one that can save us and we do beg Him for His mercy. Not justice, if we got justice God would have destroyed me long ago and banished me from His presence forever. Never to feel His presence or have any

hope of eternal life when this life is over.

I have been brought to realize and I will say know that parents, kinsman, friend or anyone on earth could or can not help my helpless condition but the only true and living God can. Twice in later years, one night in my home and once in a motel in Braderton, Florida, I was blessed to feel I hope and believe that I felt the presence of Jesus was around my bed and this great love filled the room. It seemed I knew it was Jesus and I desired so much that He wouldn't leave, for the peace and love seemed to fill the room. My pillow was wet with tears of joy. Feeling that He would leave but hoping that He would stay and I could feel this peace and love forever. My hope is this is a taste of heaven on earth also meeting with our brethren when we are blessed to feel His presence in our meeting, and His love manifested. It is my hope that in the resurrection morning He will raise this body and change it into a body like unto His own glorious body to praise Him in perfect praise forever. Then we will come into possession of our hope that He has given us.

Oh to think that this will last forever no day or night there. No sorrow or pain. No afflictions, but all will be peace and joy in praising God forever in perfect praise. Then we will come into possession of hope that He hath given us. It seemed in my early life after I joined the church

that not anything was important to me. I only wanted to know I was a child of God. One day I was reading in Romans 8:24 and it reads *"For we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for. But if we hope for that we see not there do we with patience wait for it."* After reading this scripture I felt so highly favored to be blessed to hope in the hope, and I am so thankful I am blessed to hope in the Lord. So much of my time I wonder if I have been taught of God, or if all these things that I have experienced have been imaginary. Sometimes I don't think so this way being contrary to our carnal nature. I don't think any flesh would nor could follow or choose to come through these great afflictions as His lot but God brings, His children through great afflictions to show them how weak and sinful they are and without Him they can do nothing. There are other experiences I have had in life I would desire to write but it seems I can't at this time write them. Hoping that if there be any comfort to you Sister Mary that you will be blessed to give all the praise to Jesus who suffered, bled, and died upon the cross that sinners must be saved. Written by a sinner saved by the grace of God, if I am saved and not by anything I can do or have done. God chose a special people in before the foundation of the world and He came willingly He was born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Ghost to do the

Father's will and when He said "It is finished" I believe He saved everyone that the Father gave Him in the beginning. For He said all that the Father hath given me I have lost none, but the son of perdition that the scriptures might be fulfilled.

Not one will ever be added to this number, neither will there ever be one taken away or lost but it is all fixed eternally. I feel I must quit. I hope you will pardon all errors and come to see us when you can.

A brother in Christ, I hope
Harry Cannaday

VOICES OF THE PAST

GENESIS I. 3.

"AND God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

I will first say that this is a subject too high, sublime and wonderful for me to attempt to expound, but I am impressed to write a few thoughts in connection with it. I trust that he who is able to guide our minds, will guide my pen, and I will leave what I shall write for the brethren to judge.

In the first place, I believe every word that is written in the Scriptures was written by inspiration of God, and that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. In the first verse we are told: *"In the*

beginning God created the heaven and the earth." What is intended by the expression, "In the beginning", With our God there was no beginning; for if we believe the Scriptures he is eternal. But there was a beginning with this earth, and this creation which God created and of which he said that it was good, was the beginning that is spoken of. We should carefully notice the first thing that was created. It was the heaven, the abode of his people, and then the earth, which is his footstool. Then all things were created upon the earth before man was made, to support and sustain his natural life. As all things were created before man was made, he could not say that he created anything; to God he must give all the glory. If this be so naturally, much more must it be so spiritually. Then God prepared the garden and all the trees that were in it, of which Adam might partake, save the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; but by this man's transgression were many made sinners. The Lord purposed that Jesus should come in the flesh, and prepared him a body to this end, yet without sin, that by one Man's obedience many might be made righteous. We are told that the earth in the beginning was without form and void. Now, to my mind, the Scriptures do not only set forth these things as one would write history, but they are also types of better things. To the carnal mind they are not anything more than a history of that which is natural and

that is as far as the natural mind can see. It is as impossible for the natural mind to see above this as it is for water to rise above its own level; but to the spiritual mind, when it pleases God to reveal the glory and beauty which shines forth out of these things, they bring forth praise to God for his goodness and mercy in preparing such things for them that love him. We can see that this earth which was created, and upon which we live, with all creeping things, with all its storms and tempests and all things else that it contains, is a type of the heavenly world; but how void was this body of ours of all spiritual things when it was born into this world.

It is said, "*Darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*" These Scriptures are beautiful when it pleases God to give us to look into their depths and see the spiritual beauty which is in them. As the natural earth was, void and dark, so we by nature are void of the knowledge of God until he moves upon the face of the great deep. Darkness covers from our view all spiritual things. We have no thought of the things that are hidden, as it were, beneath the sod until in the warm springtime they burst forth, green and tender.

Now I come to the first verse which I quoted: "*And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*" How mysterious is the work of God. He created the heaven first,

showing that the heaven is above the earth, and that the darkness was before the light. The earthly man is before the spiritual man, and all is darkness to the soul until God says, "Let there be light," or until he moves upon the face of the waters, and we are born into that new kingdom. We knew no more about that light until he said, "Let there be light," than we knew about the natural light of this world before we were born into it; and when we are delivered we know not what the light is. But the newborn babe soon learns to know the light from the darkness, and while it does not know what either is, it soon learns to cry for the light; just so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit, like Saul of Tarsus, when the Lord says, "Let there be light," they fall to the ground. Not that they all fall to the ground literally, but they are brought down and made to cry with Saul, "What wilt thou have me to do?"

Now further on in this chapter it is said that God divided the light from the darkness. In spiritual experience we are made to realize this dividing, for at the first, as said before, the child does not know one from the other; yet it knows that it likes the light and will cry for it. Until it pleases God to divide the light from the darkness we are constantly crying for the light, yet not knowing what we are crying for, but we know that there is something we desire and long for, and when it pleases God to divide the one from the other,

then the evening and the morning are the first day with our souls. This, the first day in our experience; we have not known what all this meant before. We may have seen the light for some time, but to us it was dim, and as though in the distance, but now it is divided, and we are basking in the sunlight of his presence. He does not take away the darkness entirely, he only divides it from the light. Had he taken away the darkness altogether, we should never have any more dark seasons. This would not be good for us, the night must come. But we do now know the night from the day, the darkness from the light. Our God has divided them, and how we long for the light when the dark seasons come, and how we rejoice when we hear the singing of the birds again and catch a glimpse of the light in the east shining forth from the Sun of righteousness. We rejoice to see the dark cloud pass over, and to behold the bow in the cloud shining in its radiant beauty as a token of the covenant of God with man. O what glory is in these things; it is high; I cannot attain to it. How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. It is written: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."-2 Cor. iv.6. What wondrous grace he has bestowed upon his people, saying, "Let your light so shine before men, that they

may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." It is not glorify man, but give God all the glory. O may he divide the light from the darkness in us, that we may praise him for his goodness, and to him be all the praise, honor and glory. Amen.

Your brother,
JOHN L. HASTINGS.
BROOKLYN, N. Y.,
Nov. 6, 1907.

"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

BENNING, D. C., April 17, 1909.

DEAR EDITORS:-With much love for the glorious doctrine of salvation by grace I make the attempt to write a few lines, knowing full well that if it were not for grace this poor, helpless worm of the dust would be forever lost. My mind of late has been on Christ's sermon on the mount. (Matthew v.) He taught his disciples, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Throughout that whole chapter what comforting words to those who know the joyful sound, having

been taught of the Lord, for we cannot know it any other way. Christ said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." The servants who testify of him today are they who are born of the Spirit; no others can testify of him. Dear brethren, if we love this doctrine, then we are the poor in spirit and certainly are blessed. He speaks to those who know the joyful sound. I feel to thank the Father in heaven that he has "hid these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father for so it seemed good in thy sight." When we feel in our hearts that we are the children of God, then we can say,

*"Come, happy souls, approach
your God
With new melodious songs;
Come, render to almighty
grace
The tribute of your tongues.
So strange, so boundless was
the love
That pitied dying man,
The Father sent his equal Son
To give them life again."*

We know our lost and ruined condition before the just and holy God, and those who know are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; *"If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righ-*

teousness." *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* *"who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect. It is God that justifieth."* *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword"*.

Now, dear brethren, knowing these things, what manner of love we should have toward one another, for God is love; he loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins, living in open rebellion against him, as Saul was. We should not let trifles prevent us from attending the meetings of the church. Christ told his disciples to love one another as he had loved them, and to forsake all and follow him, and said, *"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."* What wonderful love, to suffer and die for his people, his church, his bride; such love is past our natural understanding; his ways are as high above our ways as the heavens are above the earth.

Please pardon me for intruding on your time and patience with my poor letter. May God's richest blessings abide with you both, and all the readers of the SIGNS. It is a welcome visitor to my house. If you see anything in this you can publish it, if not, it will be all right with me.

Your unworthy brother, if one,
THOMAS ALDEN.

BALTIMORE, Md.,
August 24, 1909.

ter to a close; if you wish to publish it, please correct all mistakes. Very respectfully,

RAY KAUFFMAN.

DEAR BRETHREN EDITORS:-
Inclosed you will please find two dollars for the SIGNS OF THE TIMES. I have nothing to tell, but thought to try and write you a few lines, though I cannot explain my feelings. I am a deaf mute, yet I do not complain about it; but I often wish I could speak and hear, but God knows what is best for me. No tongue can express the gratitude I feel in my heart, for I know I am with God's people, and am a member of the church, which is the Primitive Baptist. I thought I could never explain the condition of my mind with regard to my dear mother's religion, but my mind follows hers. She died four years ago, and I was so sorry to lose my darling mother, but I know certainly she is in heaven, where I hope I will be when God calls me. I feel that I could never stop praising my God, and also never want to leave the church. As I am a deaf mute, I have a very good reason to subscribe for the SIGNS, which teaches me about the love of God because I cannot hear the preaching. I think every mute should subscribe for the SIGNS, and they could read it in their own homes, and learn more about God and his love. I will be glad in my heart to read the SIGNS when it comes to me.

Well, I had better bring this let-

NOTICE

In the July issue of the "Signs" we listed a notice of the West Country Line Union Meeting. We listed names of Churches in the Union and by human error Pleasantville was left out. Pleasantville Church is indeed a member of the West Country Line Union. WE want to apologize to Elder Wray and other members of Pleasantville Church and beg them to please pardon the error.

Elder Kenneth R. Key

PSALM 119:9-12.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

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.

MEETINGS

PIGG RIVER ASSOCIATION

Directions to the Pigg River Association to be held, the Lord willing, the first Sunday in August, Friday and Saturday before August 5th, 6th, and 7th. The meeting will be held on the grounds of Chestnut Church in Franklin County Virginia.

Those coming from the North on 220 after passing Rocky Mount, at first stop light, turn left on 619; go 3.7 miles, turn right on 724 (Goose Dam Rd.), go 1 mile to church.

Those coming from the South on 220, go app. 13 miles from Bassett Forks, turn right on 724 (Goose Dam Rd.) App. 2 1/2 miles to church.

We welcome and invite the ministers of our Faith and Order, our Brethren and Friends to be with us.

Jamie E. Cooper, Clerk

SMITH RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Smith River Association will convene the Lord willing; with Union Church, Patrick County, Va.

The Meeting to begin on Friday before the first Sunday in September, (Sept. 2, 3, 4.)

The church is located on state road #623. Those traveling 57 east

or west turn on Fairystone Park Road travel a short distance and turn left on 623, follow to church on the right.

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

Those traveling highway 40, (Franklin St.) east or west turn on State Road 605 about 5 miles west of Ferrum Va. at Crossroad Market. Go through Ingramville over hill, turn right on 623 and follow to church on the left.

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

Tony R. Horton

SOUTH OUACHITA ASSOCIATION

The South Ouachita Association will be held, the Lord willing, on Saturday and Sunday, September 24 & 25, 2005.

New Hope Church, located at Spearsville, Louisiana, will host the Association. All lovers of the truth are invited to come and be with us.

Thanks,
Ned Barron
Association Clerk
(318) 778-4217

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JUNE 2005

Albert Krewatch-DE	25.00
James Shelor-VA	5.00
Carrie Jo Williams-TN	5.00
Gene Ambrose-VA	5.00
Loy Rodgers-AR	5.00
Ruby Queen-KY	10.00
Tim Barron-TX	5.00
W.H. Norman-NC	25.00
Alma C. Wilson-WA	5.00
Amy Lane-NC	5.00

ST. MATTHEW 5:10.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

OBITUARIES

**GEORGIA LOUISE
EATON EDWARDS**

Our Precious Mother, Sister and Friend finished her walk in this life on Sunday, February 27, 2005 at her home. She was the widow of Roscoe E. Bud" Edwards; they were married for 44 years.

Born Oct. 5, 1932, in Patrick County, Va., to the late Roy and Vera Bowman Eaton. She was retired from Proctor-Silex Inc. and was a member of Old Hollow Primitive Baptist Church. She is survived by three daughters and sons-in-law, Kathy and Douglas Handy of Stuart, Va., Susan and Jerry Shelton of Ararat, N. C. and Anita and Eric Linville of Winston-Salem; a son and daughter-in-law, Anthony and Melanie Edwards of Rural Hall; six grandchildren, Shawna, Rebecca and Jill Handy all of Stuart, Va., Chad Edwards of Rural Hall, Patrick and Erica Linville, both of Winston-Salem; three sisters Jean Young of Ararat, Va., Janice Collins of Winston-Salem and Eva Wyatt of Reidsville; six brothers, Roger Eaton of Tobaccoville, Roscoe Eaton of Stuart, Va., Noel Eaton of Ararat, Va., Clayton Eaton of King, Dillard Eaton of Dobson and Terry Eaton of Mount Airy. In addition to her husband and parents, a son, Barry Scott Edwards; and a sister, Betty Johnson preceded her death.

"Mama" was blessed with a strong faith and praised God for all the blessings he had given to her and her family. She never spoke of her illness much except that it was part of her trials and tribulations on earth and to have a home in heaven, it would be worth it all.

On Sunday morning at 3:00 surrounded by her children, their spouses and her dear sister Eva she took her last breath. How fitting for our precious Mother to go to sleep in Jesus on Sunday. As long as I can remember Sunday was her favorite day of the week because she would get to go to church and hear her belief. I thank God and feel privileged to have had her as a Mother and Friend. The funeral service was conducted by Elder Alan Terry, Elder Hale Terry and Elder Larry Hollingsworth at Moody Funeral Home Chapel in Mount Airy. Burial was at Mountain View Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery.

Written by: Your Loving Daughter and Sister in Christ I hope, Susan.

Done by order of Old Hollow Church in conference June 12, 2005. 1 copy sent to Signs of the Times and 1 copy given to the family.

Elder Alan Terry, Moderator
Ola Moser, Clerk

GENEVA K. MUSGROVE PETTIS

It is with much sadness that I attempt to write a memorial for my mother Geneva K. Musgrove Pettis.

Sister Geneva was born July 28th,

1921 in Forest Hill, Louisiana. She was a faithful member of Concord Primitive Baptist Church for many years, joining in 1949. She became the clerk in 1964. When the old church closed, she traveled 45 minutes to Union Primitive Baptist Church in Hale, Louisiana. The trip was often hard for her, but it didn't make a difference how far she had to travel to hear God's words.

The joy of her life was cooking. She not only prepared countless meals for her family, but she often cooked for the sick and frail in her neighborhood. She always cooked enough for any army, but none ever went to waste. Her home was always open to everyone – even to those who were, at times, not the kindest to her.

Her parent's Ezell and Cass Musgrove were also Primitive Baptists. Ezell was a deacon for Concord Church on the Hamburg, Arkansas Road.

Sister Geneva married Homer Pettis-who preceded her in death a few years ago-and they are both survived by their four children: Paul, Ouida, Betty Jo, and Margie, and by seven grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

Her funeral was held at Golden's Funeral Home in Bastrop, Louisiana. She will be loved and missed by so many.

Thank you,
Margie Nell Pettis Ray

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

VOL. 173

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NO. 9

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

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

SONG

KIND are the words that Jesus speaks

*To cheer the drooping saint,
"My grace sufficient is for you,
Though nature's powers may faint.*

*"My grace its glories shall display,
And make your griefs remove :
Your weakness shall the triumphs tell*

Of boundless power and love.

What though my griefs are not removed,

Yet why should I despair?

While my kind Saviour's arms support,

I can the burden bear .

Jesus, my Saviour, and my Lord,

'Tis good to trust thy name:

Thy power, thy faithfulness, and love,

Will ever be the same.

Weak as I am, yet through thy grace

I all things can perform ;

And, smiling, triumph in thy name

Amid the raging storm.

Needham.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	218
Elder J. B. Farmer	
ARTICLES	222
Elder Larry Crotts	
CHURCH OF OUR FAITH	224
VOICES OF THE PAST	225
Elder John Stiff	
Elder Horace H. Lefferts	
Thomas Alden	
MEETINGS	237
CONTRIBUTIONS	237
OBITUARIES	237
Carnar Bud Crotts	
Lottie Riddle Minter	
Ora Turner Nichols	

 EDITORIAL

"For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." Zeph. 3:9



Elder J. B. Farmer

Sitting down, I have thought to write down a few of the things I trust have been revealed to me and to others also. I have been made to believe that the truth of the gospel is opened up to the preacher and to the hearer at the same time. Things that

are too wonderful for us in nature are graciously given to us by the Spirit of God that we may glory in Him and rejoice together in hope of eternal life.

Every word of God is pure. To be pure, to me, means to be unblemished and undefiled. It means to be altogether healthful, and good and profitable. It would be like a clear stream of water that has no impurities. It would be like a fresh baked loaf of bread just out of the oven. They are sweet and pleasant to the taste and nourishing — all good and nothing bad. We are taught that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. May our God cause us to look into His word and to understand it and to be edified and comforted by it, to His glory and praise.

God said that He would do certain things *then*. When is *then*? I am made to believe that *then* is in His time. He has made all things beautiful in His time. When it pleased God, He sent his Spirit to His people and arrested them and subdued them and revealed Himself to them as He did with Saul on the road to Damascus. Saul was going about in nature as a self-righteous, religious man, thinking that he was doing God service. He was persecuting the church and trying to destroy it -not realizing that he was not working the righteousness of God, but rather the wrath of man. I am made to believe that this is also a picture

of us when we were in darkness — not realizing our state.

God said that He would *turn* to the people a pure language. What does it mean to *turn* anything? In this case I have been given to believe that it means to give or to teach or to establish something. In one place it is written that He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. The Lord Himself gained the victory over sin, death, Satan, hell and the grave. He led captivity captive, and having done that, He gave gifts to men. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. He gave Himself to and for us if we are His. If He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not freely give us all things? He gave us His Spirit, and in Him we live and move and have our being.

God said that He would turn to the *people*. Who are the *people*? The *people* must be the ones that God foreknew in His everlasting love and kindness. They must be the ones He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son -- to be made in His likeness at His appearing. They must be those whose names He wrote down in the Lamb's book of life before He made the world. They must be those that He saved and called according to His own purpose and grace, even the ones He gave grace in Christ Jesus the Lord before the foundation of the world. They must be those who He called out of darkness into His marvelous light. They must be the ones

that He chose, even the ones to whom He revealed Himself. They must be those who are made to love Him with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. They must be the ones who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. They must be the ones who are made to walk by faith in the good works that God has before ordained for them to walk in. They must be the ones who are made to be faithful unto death that they might receive the crown of life.

God said that He would *turn to the people a pure language*. Now we know that a language is a form of speech that is particular to a specific people in a certain region. God has fixed it so that the people in one part of the world may not understand a single word of the language of the people in another part of the world. And that is the way it seems to be with the world when they hear the language of the children of God. God's children are given a different language from all other people. It is a *pure language*. It is undefiled with the wisdom of the world. It is the language of grace and love. The whole world of false religion speaks the impure language of works. They think that the supposed good works of the flesh or of the law will justify them before God. They think their own righteousness will save them. They think that if their good works outweigh the bad ones that they will be all right. But God's little ones are

taught by the pure language that salvation is by grace alone. ***“By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast.”***

We have been made to believe that the children of God are taught the *pure language* in a way similar to the child of nature. At first they are non-speakers — they have no words, so all they are able to do is cry. They are made to know they are helpless in themselves and dependent for all their needs. They are not able to express their thoughts in words, but their crying is understood by God because their crying is in a *pure language*. The first words of a natural child are usually Ma or Daddy. The first words of the child of grace are Abba Father. They are made to look to Him with love and trust, and to speak His name with all devotion in the *pure language*.

As the child grows in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, his words increase. He is taught line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. But his words are words of grace. His heart is established in grace, being made to know by experience that he is a sinner, and that apart from the grace of God, he is gone world without end. He is made to know that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved except the name of Jesus. When one's

heart is established in grace, he must speak the word of grace, because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. If his heart is established in grace by God Himself, nothing is able to change it. What God has done is forever. No one is able to persuade even one of God's little ones — not even that great deceiver, the devil himself — that salvation for time and eternity is other than by the grace and mercy of God.

By that same *pure language* all the children of the Father are made to call upon the name of the Lord. They are made to know the fear of God. His law is placed in their minds and written upon their hearts. This pure and holy law is the ministration of condemnation and death to them. They are shown that they are sinners before God and that there is a penalty for sin — even death. They are shown by experience that they cannot keep the law and are condemned and without hope in the flesh. But the law is a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. We are taught that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all them that believe. When Christ reveals Himself to his little ones, they call upon Him with that pure language saying, ***“God be merciful unto me a sinner.”*** And, ***“Lord, what will You have me to do?”***

In this *pure language* the children of grace serve Him with one consent, that is, in the unity of the faith. There is one Lord, one faith,

one baptism, and one God and Father of us all. They are made to desire to speak the same things in truth. They are made to labor together for the unity of the faith. They are made to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. They are made to examine themselves, whether they are in that faith. They are made to try the spirits, whether they be of God. They are made to examine all things and to reject that which is bad and to cling to that which is good. By grace and the wisdom of God, they are blessed to separate the precious from the vile. In this pure language they are made to speak the truth in love — to reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.

True preaching of the gospel is in the *pure language* that God has given to His own people. It is spoken in the *pure language*, and it is understood in the *pure language*. The true gospel is like a trumpet that gives a certain sound. And we are taught that the one who knows that certain sound only knows it because he is blessed of God to know it. The gospel of grace is the savor of death to those who perish, and the savor of life to those who are saved. Even as the priests of the Lord compassed the city of Jericho once a day for six days, so the preachers of the gospel have compassed the world for the six days of creation blowing their trumpets with a certain sound. To most of the inhabitants of Jericho it was a sound that brought

great fear of certain death and destruction. So also it is in the world today when the true gospel is preached. But to one house in the city, the house of Rahab the harlot and her family, it was a sound that caused great joy in anticipation of life and salvation to come. So also it is in the church of the living God today when the true gospel is preached.

On the seventh day the priests compassed the city seven times. And when they were commanded, they gave a great shout, and the walls of Jericho fell down flat and every man went up straight before him. I am made to believe that the great shout was in the *pure language* — that it was the shout of victory. When Christ comes in great power and glory with His holy angels, there will be a trump and a shout of victory. The world shall be destroyed by the flaming fire of His vengeance, and the family of God shall be delivered from the wrath of God and saved with that great salvation by the grace and mercy and power and love of God.

And when Christ comes to gather His jewels, they shall hear Him say in that *pure language*, "*Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*" To all others they will hear Him say, "*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*" In the mean time, God who cannot lie promised His people this:

"For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent."

This was written in love, and in hope of eternal life.

Elder J. B. Farmer
9-1-2004

ARTICLES

A LIFE OF STRUGGLES AND HOPE



Carnar Bud Crotts

A small farm boy by the name of Carnar Bud Crotts came out of Cana, Virginia.

He was about the age of fourteen and was in search of work in the area around Mt. Airy, North Carolina. President Hoover was in office and times were hard. Carnar went in search of a job in Virginia and North

Carolina. One of the jobs that did not work out was peddling peaches and apples in the area. Failing in this venture then Carnar set out to find steady employment in the area of Bassett, Virginia.

Being poor, Carnar did not worry about the natural things of life, such as transportation and clothing, he just started walking in the hope that the Lord God would provide. The blessings of the Lord came in many ways for this young man. Through divine intervention, his steps were guided safely to Bassett and he obtained employment at Bassett Furniture Company. Since his father, Wiley Thomas Crotts, was a deacon of Sandy Ridge Primitive Baptist Church and was a wood worker, Carnar had prior knowledge of working with wood. During his earlier years, Carnar gained experience with the Civil Conservation Corps, furniture industries, and saw-mill work.

God smiled on Carnar in his provision of shelter. The place that God led Carnar's footsteps was a boardinghouse owned by Sam and Pearl Turner of Bassett. The Turner's had eleven children but were able to find room for Carnar. The oldest daughter was Annie and would become my mother.

Carnar and Annie had three children and I was the youngest. In retrospect, I can see that there was much love in the family and with the blessing of the Lord we were able to attend different churches to hear

the Old Baptist preaching of *“good news from a far country”*. Dad would ask me *“do you believe that what is to be will be?”*, and in my youthful ways and lack of revelation I would answer and not fully understand. I thought I believed it then and now I realize the true meaning of the words. My father asked the question in true faith, and I answered him out of respect.

The Lord God had a place for Dad with the true believers of the salvation by the Grace of God. This love carried him to all the Primitive Baptist churches that were foreordained for him to attend. In one year, my parents visited seventeen different Associations held in Alabama, Kentucky, West Virginia, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. These Bethel spots he would visit in the time span of thirty years. Even though he became disabled and had to walk with the aid of crutches, he did not let his disability stop him: from hearing the *“good news: from a far country”*.

Brother Crotts was a true believer and his hope was in the Lord Jesus Christ and the hope of glory. He loved reading his Bible and different articles of faith; in particular, Signs of the Times. Dad would read a printed letter from a reader and would write his own comments in the margins pertaining to his enjoyment of the article. The gift of the spirit was evident in his short comments. As his son and I hope,

brother in faith and love, I felt strongly the need to share some of the struggles and trials and tribulations of my dad's walk upon this earth. *“If we suffer, we shall reign with him”* (Timothy 2: 12). From these words, I find comfort in the hope that my Dad and Brother is with Christ.

A Brother in Hope:
Elder Larry Crotts

Included with this tribute is the obituary written by Sister Patricia Crotts.

PSALM 93.

The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.

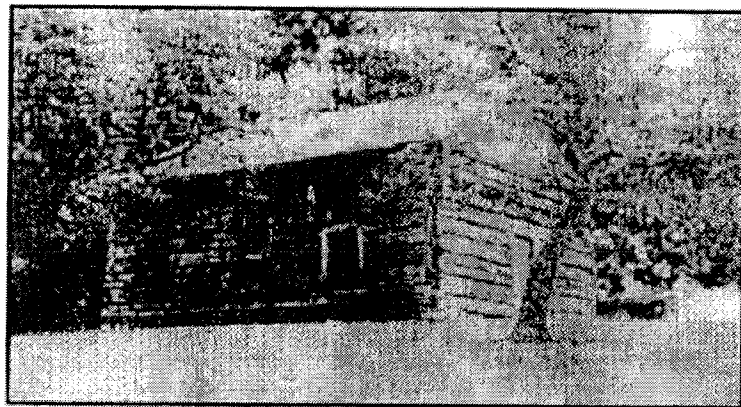
Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.

The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.

The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.

Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.

CHURCH OF OUR FAITH



250TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE AT SANDY CREEK CHURCH

On page 625 of Hassell's History you will find a reference to Sandy Creek Primitive Baptist Church, stating that more than a thousand Baptist churches throughout the south can trace their history back to this church either directly or indirectly. Elder Shubal Stems was the first pastor, answering a call from God to "go south" with the message of grace. Elder Stems arrived at Sandy Creek November 22, 1755, and he and his companions were constituted into a church called Sandy Creek (16 in number); Elders Joseph Breed and Daniel Marshall being in this number. In 17 years this church became a mother, grandmother or great-grandmother to 42 churches, from which sprang 125 ministers.

Sandy Creek Primitive Baptist Church will hold their 250th anniversary observance on Saturday before the 5th Sunday in October (Oct. 29, 2005), the Lord willing. Services will

begin around 10:00 a.m. and there will be morning and afternoon services. The brethren have restored the old log meeting house, which was built around 1802, and services will be held there and in the present meeting house. All are welcome to these services. As the membership of this church is very small, we ask that you bring a covered dish or the equivalent to help provide dinner for the large crowd anticipated.

Sandy Creek Church is located on Sandy Creek Road, just off the Ramseur-- Julian Road, 4 miles west of Liberty, NC. The nearest lodging is 15 miles away in Asheboro, NC: Comfort Inn (336-626-3680); Days Inn (800-222-0519); Holiday Inn Express (800-holiday); Hampton Inn (800-426-7866); Ramada Limited (800-2ramada); Super 8 (336-625-1880). For further information contact Elder Gene Hogan, Pastor, 336-857-2968.

Printed as it appears in the Gospel Appeal in June 2005.

VOICES OF THE PAST

THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE
 of the late
ELDER JOHN STIFF

A pioneer of Oregon Territory
 in 1848. Clackamas Co., March
 15, 1872.

Dearly beloved Brother Beebe,

By your permission I will endeavor to give through the medium of the Signs, a reason of the hope (Though small it may appear to me) which is in me. I was born November 10th, 1806, in Berkeley Co, Va. five miles west of Martinsburg, where also I was brought up to manhood. I was the youngest of nine children, of which number only two sisters with myself are now living. My parents were both Baptists of the strict Predestinarian order. My father was a deacon of the Mill Creek Church, then holding meetings in Gerardstown; but my father died when I was only one year and six months old; consequently the care of the family devolved upon my mother, who raised us up very strictly. But subsequently, however the Mill creek Church changed the place of holdings from Gerardstown to Opequan Creek, which latter place was nine miles from where my mother lived, for which cause I but seldom heard the truth preached. I

however attended the meetings of the following denominations nearly every Sunday, Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Episcopalians but generally the presbyterians, this being the most convenient. They adopted the "*Westminster Confession of Faith.*" Nevertheless their preachers preached a conditional salvation telling their hearers that if they would accept the offers of mercy and use the means of grace they would be saved; but if they rejected or slighted the overtures of mercy they would be damned, etc, This for the most part was the kind of preaching that I heard in my bringing up, except once in a while when an opportunity would occur that I could go to Opequan, and hear the late Elder John Hutchinson preach, who was the pastor of Mill Creek Church from my earliest recollection until I left that country A. D. 1832. I also occasionally heard Elder Francis Moore, Thomas Buck, James Reed, Wm. Gilmore, Whitely and others preach. I was born a natural religionist, and grew up a Pharisee. I had great preference however, in hearing the Baptists preach to any other denomination, and loved them above any other people, especially the preachers, whom I regarded as a superior order of beings. Then my hopes of heaven appeared firm and bright, not so much on account of the good I did, as the evil I refrained from. When a boy going to school, I really thought that I was better than any

of my schoolmates. And so self righteous was I, that I actually would refrain from stepping in the footprints of other boys, lest I should be defiled. In those days the Bible was my constant companion, and I loved to read it above any other book; why it was I cannot tell; but I was so delighted in reading, especially the New Testament scriptures, that I committed the greater portion of them to memory. Would to God that I could take as much delight in reading the scriptures now as I did then. One Sunday I went to the Opequan meeting alone and after the close, I asked Elder Hutchinson to accompany me home. He said he would like to do so, but he had left his horse at the widow Gorrel's (who afterwards married Morgan A. Vancleave) and came to the meeting in her buggy; but, said he, if you will go round that way, so I can get my horse, I will go home with you. To this I agreed, and there while dinner was being made ready, I was sitting in the portico, and the Elder and widow were seated in the parlor; I overheard the Elder talking about me. He said that I was the best boy he ever knew, that I was an exception, that there was not another boy in his knowledge that was so nice, and genteel as me. This was the very thing to feed my vanity, for I thought, Surely he knows. For I looked upon him as being almost inspired, and the Elder had often tarried at my mothers.

During all this time I delighted in reading the Bible, and other reli-

gious books and writings, and had no relish for any others; and above all subjects none delighted me more than to talk on religion or listen to others talking. Why it was I cannot tell. One day I took up the Bible to read, and opened to Luke xiii; There was present at that season some that told him of the Gallieans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

And Jesus answering, said unto them, suppose ye that these Gallileans were sinners above all the Gallileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you Nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish &c., verses 1-3. I then had different views on the above passage from what I now have. I then thought the perishing after death in another mode of existence. I had no idea that the pronoun ye, referred to the Jewish nation, and that the verb, perish, had reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in the general siege and dispersion of the Jewish people. I had often read the passage before without any particular impression being made on my mind; but now it fell with a degree of weight sufficient to cause the serious inquiry to arise in my mind, Have I repented? My answer was, NO! I have not. Well, now I must go to work. Here now is something for me to do. I must repent and be converted, or at last perish eternally in hell fire. Also Christ's words to Nicodemus, "*Ye must be born again,*" fell with a degree of weight

on my mind; I had no evidence that I was born again. So to work I went with might and main to accomplish these things; but alas! to my utter dismay and astonishment I found I might just as soon dislodge the starry firmament, and remove the earth's foundations, as to repent of my sins, be converted and be born again! During all this time I had no knowledge of what sin really is. I had never felt it as a heavy burden on my mind; but I had a great desire to be a Christian. I saw something so exceedingly beautiful in the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus that I desired it above every other object, and would according to my feelings have given ten thousand worlds, had I possessed them, for the evidence of an interest in the blood of Jesus. I would envy the apostles and disciples who were personally with Jesus. In all their troubles and sorrows they had a friend to go to. A Friend who was always ready to listen to their tale of sorrow, and who was willing at all times, and upon all occasions to administer to their comfort. They could know the words that he would say to them. And he never turned one poor hungry, thirsty soul empty away. Oh, that I like them could be with Jesus! I would tell him all my sorrows, the desire of my heart, and the secrets of my soul; and would know the words he would say to me. Would he turn me away? Would he bid me "Depart?" No he would not. But here I am in sore distress, and no friend

to go to. No one to communicate troubles to, or hear the sad tale of my woe. I call but get no answer; I seek Him but cannot find Him. Oh, that I could hear for myself, from His dear heavenly lips, those sweet words of consolation, once spoken to His disciples of old, "*Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God believe also in me*" &c. "*Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*" "*It is I, be not afraid.*" This would be enough! This would satisfy my longing heart, and would be the delight of my soul. This would be far better than millions of gold, or the wealth of ten thousand worlds like this. With these feelings I grew up to manhood, left my mother's home, and lived among strangers. Now I lost in a measure my relish for reading the Bible, and other religious books; months passing without even seeing a Bible; living for months where religion was never talked of, and perhaps never thought of. Consequently I sank into a kind of careless unconcerned state of mind, but still attended Baptist, preaching whenever an opportunity would occur. In the winter of 1832 I married, and in the months thereafter, my wife and I bid a last farewell to the place of our nativity, and started for the then far west, the state of Illinois, three of my brothers having gone there some years before. I purchased a piece of land joining two of them and settled

among them. My eldest brother had been a Baptist for many years, and lived religious, as well as talked religion. The nearest Baptist church to that place, held her meetings in the town of Danville, which was distant about seven miles. I occasionally went to their meetings. But I was not long living in that country until I was taken down sick of a fever and Oh, the horror and unspeakable anguish which seized my mind, my pen can never describe! My whole life now appeared one continuous course of sin and rebellion against God. Truly the hail of almighty wrath appeared to sweep away my refuge of lies, and the waters of trouble appeared to overflow my hiding places. See Isa. xxviii; 17,18. And Justice, stern Justice with his voice of thunder cried, *"Cut him down! cut him down!"* Oh, how exceedingly sinful did sin now appear! I could see now fully and for the first time realize in my own soul the truth of the saying, Isa.156; *"The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the soul of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."* I now thought my day of grace was past, the door of mercy was forever closed, and I must sink down to irretrievable woe, and be shut up in the prison house of sin, never more to be delivered. Oh! that I had my days to live over again, thought I, I cer-

tainly would more earnestly seek the Lord's favor and my soul's salvation; but now it is too late. These feelings I kept pent up in my own soul as a fire that burned to the lowest hell. One day while burning with a hot fever, and the force of hell burning in my breast, I asked my wife to give me a little saltpeter to cool my burning fever. She gave me a piece about the size of half a bean. I had no sooner taken it than, according to my feelings I became as cold as an iceberg, and had a numbness all over me, and I thought I was dying. My wife became alarmed, and ran to my brothers to get them to come and stay with me. I was now left alone to deplore my dreadful condition as a lost and ruined sinner. And Oh, the dreadful consternation and agony of soul I was in, no tongue can tell nor imagination picture out! and none can know or have the least idea, save those only who have traveled the same road. For according to my feelings I was standing upon the very brink, and about to take my final leap into the vast unfathomable abyss of endless perdition. My distress and agony of soul was so great, that I really conceived that I was already in hell, and in order to know, I looked around the room to see whether I was yet in this world or had gone hence. At length my wife returned with two of my brothers. They rubbed me with flannel cloths saturated with vinegar, and gradually brought me to my natural feelings again. My fever

now left me, and I became convalescent; but it was not long before my fever returned in the form of an ague, which continued with me nearly all winter. And what a dark gloomy winter it was to me. During this time I did not even try to pray, viewing that my fate was already unalterably fixed, and my damnation sealed. All winter, dark and gloomy clouds of guilt and unbelief appeared to hang over my mind. But now where, O where is that dear Friend from whose heavenly lips those words of mercy once so sweetly flowed; "*Let not your heart be troubled,*" &c. "*It is I be not afraid.*" and who oftimes said to the disconsolate, Fear not, and of whom I so lately envied the disciples the privilege of being personally with? Alas in my feelings I beheld him now in dreadful majesty, high seated upon a throne, the habitation of which was JUSTICE and JUDGEMENT! and from whose awful lips issued and came forth in thunder tones from the dreadful sentence of my eternal condemnation! Sometimes I thought I could see far off through the thick gloom, and dark lowering clouds of unbelief, a glimmering light for me. One evening the next spring I retired to bed wearied in mind by reason of sin and unbelief, and fell asleep.

I dreamed that I was in a garden and saw the Lord Jesus rising from the dead, and coming forth from the tomb. O! thought I, I have often envied the disciples the privilege, in all

their troubles and distress, of going to Jesus and hearing words of comfort from His heavenly lips; and now I have the like opportunity, and ran to him, imploring His mercy. I thought in my dream that He frowned on me, and looked extremely angry, which so distressed my soul that I fell at His feet weeping, and crying with a bitter cry, Lord Jesus, have mercy on me! In my dream I thought He then smiled, and took me up in His arms as though I were a little infant, and said "*Thy sins, Which are many, are all forgiven thee.*" In ecstasy of joy I awoke, and behold, it was a dream, and all the joy vanished, and I found myself just where I was before. The next day I went to assist a neighbor raise a house, where I met with my Baptist brother, to whom I related my dream. He said to me, "*Well, in old times God revealed himself to his people in dreams and visions of the night, and why not now?*" To which I replied, if it had been real, it would have remained with me. Still this dream was of great use to me afterwards, for through it I saw the manner in which God deals with His children. The language of my soul was now almost continually, day and night, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.*" Sometimes I would wake up in the night with such awful distress of mind, burdened with sin that in a moment the sweat would be standing in great drops all over my body. I now attended meetings every opportunity and O how

my Soul would go out in prayer to God, on my way to meeting; that He would speak a word of comfort through the preacher for poor distressed me. I could clearly see that the gospel of the Son of God contained exceeding great and precious promises for others, but ah me, I was an outside case, beyond the reach of mercy. Sometimes I thought I could see the promises for me afar off. At other times they appeared so near that I could almost embrace them; but when I would reach after them they were gone, and I knew not where. Sometimes a little hope would spring up within, but it would soon be gone. Thus I went on month after month. O! how my soul longed for deliverance. I was by this time stripped of all hope, confidence, or trust in the arm of flesh. I plainly saw that I must be saved by a power superhuman or lost forever. Thus I was brought by a way that I knew not, and in paths I had not known; and some of it appeared to me extremely crooked. I did not doubt the ability of the Lord Jesus, nor undervalue the blood of the everlasting covenant; but I could realize no interest in it. The following summer I taught a school in the neighborhood where I lived. One day when on my way to school bemoaning my sad condition as a lost, ruined and helpless sinner, suddenly these ever blessed words of the Lord Jesus came with power, as though spoken directly to me; *"Blessed are they*

which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Matt. v. 6. I immediately spoke out aloud, Lord, do not I hunger and thirst after righteousness? Therefore fill me out of Thy unwastefulness. I was enabled now for the first time to embrace the promises; for I viewed myself the very character to whom they belonged. I however went to school. At noon recess I went into a forest nearby as I thought to pray. I kneeled down, when a strange feeling came over me which I cannot describe. I arose to my feet and commenced singing, and wandered through the woods, sometimes singing and sometimes praising God, not knowing where I was nor where I was going, until I came again in sight of the schoolhouse. I turned to go away, feeling that I never wanted again to engage in worldly pursuits; my whole mind, for the time being, appeared set on things above. After some time however I returned to school, and on the 2nd day of June, 1838 I related briefly in substance the foregoing to the Danville church of Regular Baptists, and was received, and the next day, with my wife, was baptized by the late Elder Richard N. Newport, in the Vermillion River. But I have been a poor doubting sinner ever since, and the older I get the worse I grow.

ELDER JOHN STIFF.

HOSEA II. 14, 15.

“THEREFORE behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and to the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there, as in the days of her older youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”

God never forgets his people, but it cannot be said that they never forget him. They are full of waywardness and rebellion, which call forth his fatherly chastisements to reprove and correct them. It seems incredible that the people especially blessed with the presence of the Lord, and who had witnessed again and again his omnipotent power and omniscient oversight working in their behalf, could ever forget him or grow cold and indifferent toward him; not only so, but that they should give themselves over repeatedly to the foolish vanities (and idolatries which they had before learned could bring them naught but shame and sorrow, seems far more incredible; but of all this was national Israel guilty at the time of the prophecy quoted above. This nation so singularly chosen of God from among all nations of the earth, whereby it pleased him to show forth his honor and glory, was seen lusting after heathenish idols, forsaking the law of her Maker and

all his holy ordinances as prescribed by Moses, to seek the satisfaction of her natural inclinations in bowing the knee unto the gods of the Gentile nations about her. She had forgotten God's wonderful deliverance of her from Egyptian darkness and bondage, of his parting the Red Sea waters that she should pass through dry-shod, and had entirely lost sight of his guidance of her through the forty-year wilderness journey in the cloud by day and fire by night. In the time of great thirst he caused the rock to be smitten, that it should pour forth a stream for her sake; but it was forgotten, together with that time of great hunger when he sent manna from heaven for food. The service of the holy temple, the intercession of the high priest and the offering for sin were all forgotten. God brought her safely through Jordan's swelling flood into the promised land (Canaan) flowing with milk and honey, gave her the victory over her enemies and established her in that country which he gave her for her own. What more evidences could she require of his faithfulness? And how did she requite Him? Her answers were rebellion, pride, depravity and idoltry. At the time of the prophet Hosea, Israel was steeped in national corruption and was standing on the verge of the Babylonian captivity, and in all this was an ensample unto the Israel of the gospel age, not very far distant. These events of national Jewish his-

tory typify spiritual truths imparted unto the gospel church at the present time. There is a proneness to wander felt by the child of God that often gives him great concern, and this very concern, so long as it is present, is in itself a safeguard against yielding to temptation, but when one comes to that state wherein his wanderings do not cause anxiety, he is treading very near Babylon's captivating lure. When in the christian experience one passes from law to gospel, nature to grace, first realizes a hope in the virtues of Jesus' blood and sings for the first time the new song of praise unto God, then in the ardor of his first love is lost entirely to view the weakness of the flesh which will later endeavor to ensnare him into yielding to its temptations. Were the new birth a change wrought in the old man of our Adamic nature, no such danger could exist, nor would one ever wander after the false gods of the flesh. The new birth is the coming into manifestation of a new creature, created in righteousness and true holiness, but it is not a renovation of the old creature of sin and depravity. This makes the subject of grace a dual being experiencing the warfare between the flesh and the Spirit. There are times in the experience of gospel churches, and of individuals, when there seems to be little or no response to spiritual things, and a coldness as of frost seems to nip in the bud every good and beautiful

tendency to higher and better things; accompanying this condition there is also no manifestation of anxiety or grief concerning the matter, but instead an inclination to worldliness is manifested in a careless walk or conversation unbecoming the profession of a disciple of Christ, and a disposition to use the principles of Bible doctrine as a cloak to cover one's actions or utterances. This condition of a church or an individual answers to the condition of national Israel in the type at the time of Hosea's prophecy. The remedy for this condition is not in our hands, but in God's hand, and he will distribute to us of reproof and correction that we shall be ashamed before him for all our ways, and confessing our sins, be brought into repentance and forgiveness. The child of God that hugs some fleshly idol to his heart is sowing to the flesh, and will of the flesh reap corruption. Do any of us ever strive to lay up for ourselves treasures on the earth. Scarcely any are guiltless on this score, but labor and sorrow are all we get for our pains. This state of affairs cannot long exist with the Lord's people, for he is a jealous God and will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," is a command that must be fulfilled, and as surely as God has determined it, so shall they most certainly be brought to serve him to the exclusion of all things else.

"I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness." To allure is to attract and entice. In being thus drawn into a snare one is not conscious of his danger, nor that he is being tempted. Our slight indulgences of fleshly impulses unconsciously lead to more and more ungodliness, until we are enmeshed in a web from which we are unable to extricate ourselves. The wilderness referred to in the text is the utter worldliness of Babylon, and represents the wilderness of total depravity. It is waste howling. "Waste" because it is entirely destitute of any spiritual qualities wherewith to satisfy the desires of the new creature, and "howling" because it is full of the wild beasts of our nature, prowling around seeking what they may devour. When dominated by the flesh a child of God is drawn away by the lusts thereof and enticed. He is led into the wilderness, but when, within him, the motions of eternal life manifest themselves, total depravity becomes a mightily oppressive burden; then one knows the panting of the soul after God and what it is to be as a pelican in the wilderness, or as a sparrow alone upon the housetop; this is the depth of woe and the pit of miry clay. One deeply questions whether the Lord has forgotten to be gracious, and if his mercy is clean gone forever. I trust I do no violence to the text when I say that our fleshly lusts are those principles which allure us toward Babylon, although the pronoun "I" in the text

refers to God. Our heavenly Father not only takes cognizance of our fleshly wanderings, but ordains them, not as an end in themselves, but as evil out of which good shall come. We, his people, are not at liberty to do evil that good may come, but God has a perfect right to appoint such a path for us if he so chooses, and that without in the least impeaching any of his divine attributes. Whatsoever he does is right, because he does it. By causing his wayward children to realize the bitterness of the fruits of their idolatries, they are brought into that attitude of soul towards him of which he says: "*I will speak comfortably unto her.*"

Words able to comfort must be spoken by one fully acquainted with the needs of the case. Herein does the repentant child touch the Daysman, the Mediator, Christ Jesus, who was tempted in all points like as his people are, yet without sin, and is able to succor them when tempted, for he is touched with the feeling of their infirmities. He is the speaker of the comfortable words. Thus amidst the shattering of one's idolatries there arises a blessed communion with Christ as he comes near to comfort her who had wandered from her true Husband after false lovers.

"*I will give her her vineyards from thence.*" The fruitfulness of the church arises from her realization of the vanities of the flesh and of the value of Christ to her. When

mindful of her inherent weakness and infirmity, and aware that without him she can do nothing, she is not in danger of being taken captive by unbelief, but treads softly and humbly, leaning upon the staff of his precious promises. It is in her high-mindedness and self-confidence that temptation lurks, and until the Husbandman prunes these dead twigs the fruit of the vine will not come to perfection. It is in being made to realize the utter spiritual destitution of the wilderness of the carnal mind and heart that the soul is prepared for the growth of those vineyards whose grapes are the fruits of the Spirit enumerated by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatian Church. (Gal. v. 22, 23.)

“And the valley of Achor for a door of hope.” This is the valley wherein Achan, he that troubled the peace of Israel with his relics of Jericho’s corruption, was stoned to death with all his house. It is the valley of purging or of purification, and is the place wherein we are made to fellowship the sufferings of Jesus, who purged away all our dross and sin and purified us of unrighteousness. The golden wedge of self-confidence is often buried in our tents, but when the light of Jesus’ truth discovers its hiding-place, a sense of guilt fills us with anguish, and we are found crying, “Lord, save us: we perish.” This is the fiery trial wherein is wrought the refinement of faith’s gold and the destruction of unbelief’s wood and

stubble. This deep distress which serves to tear our idols from us and turns our faces toward the temple again, is the door of hope, or that by which hope enters anew and afresh into our souls. When we were drifting idly and calmly upon the smooth surface of fleshly security, we lost sight of our hope or any necessity for such an anchor. But in the midst of the storm its “anchor pull” is felt, for the severity of the tempest tests its security. If our hope were centered in some earthly thing, it could not endure the tempest’s rage, but the christian’s hope, though lost sight of in times of fleshly ease, is anchored in heaven above, in God’s love and power and infinite mercy. The higher we are tossed on the billows of trouble, the nearer we approach unto our anchor (hope), which is never so precious as when earth and its idols perish.

“And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.” She shall sing” there;” in that very place where has been witnessed her humiliation and distress she is made to sing; not in some other place, but there, where she has experienced so much hunger and thirst of spirit, shall she rejoice unspeakably. The very wilderness wherein her entanglement caused shame and sorrow shall be glad for her with the rising of the Sun of righteousness. The desert wherein her strength utterly

failed shall blossom as the rose with the presence of Him, the Bridegroom of her soul. God does not need to remove us from amid desolate conditions in order to make us happy in him. A prison is just as good to dwell in as a palace if Jesus dwells with us there. God does not wait until our bodies die to impart unto us the doctrine of the resurrection and its experimental comforts and benefits, but while yet in this time state we come forth from death in Adam unto life in Christ, and, like Paul, die daily, but nevertheless live by the life of Christ, which dwells in us. Though the experience of the wilderness causes repentance in sackcloth and ashes, yet it is where Jesus speaks comfortable words to his tried ones, and when he has revived their hope from the valley of trouble they find again that song in their heart which was theirs in the days of their spiritual youth, when in their first love and first enjoyment of a hope in the virtues of Jesus' blood. This song of praise, yea, even God's praise, testifies to the victory which God through Christ has given the church over all enemies of righteousness.

Unto all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, I affectionately tender the above message, I trust, in the fear of God.

Yours in gospel bonds,
 HORACE H. LEFFERTS.
 WARWICK, N.Y.,
 Dec. 11, 1907.

BENNING, D. C., April 17, 1909.

DEAR EDITORS: - With much love for the glorious doctrine of salvation by grace I make the attempt to write a few lines, knowing full well that if it were not for grace this poor, helpless worm of the dust would be forever lost. My mind of late has been on Christ's sermon on the mount. (Matthew v.) He taught his disciples, saying, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*" Throughout that whole chapter what comforting words to those who know the joyful sound, having been taught of the Lord, for we cannot know any other way. Christ said, "*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*" The servants who testify of him today are they who are born of the Spirit; no others can testify of him. Dear brethren, if we love this doctrine then we are the poor in spirit and certainly are blessed. He speaks to those who know the joyful sound. I feel to thank the Father in heaven that he has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. When we feel in our hearts that we are the children of God, then we can say,:

“Come, happy souls, approach your God

***With new melodious songs;
Come, render to almighty grace***

The tribute of your tongues.

So strange, so boundless was the love

***That pitied dying man,
The Father sent his equal Son***

To give them life again.”

We know our lost and ruined condition before the just and holy God, and those who know are ***“born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;”*** ***“If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”*** ***“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”*** ***“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect it is God that justifieth.”*** ***“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword,”*** Now, dear brethren, knowing these things, what manner of love we should have toward one another, for God is love; he loved us when we were dead in trespasses and sins, living in open rebellion against him, as Saul was. We should not let trifles prevent us from attending the meetings of the church. Christ told his

disciples to love one another as he had loved them, and to forsake all and follow him, and said, ***“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”*** What wonderful love, to suffer and die for his people, his church, his bride; such love is past our natural understanding; his ways are as high above our ways as the heavens are above the earth.

Please pardon me for intruding on your time and patience with my poor letter. May God’s richest blessings abide with you both, and all the readers of the SIGNS. It is a welcome visitor to my house. If you see anything in this you can publish it, if not, it will be an right with me.

Your unworthy brother, if one,
THOMAS ALDEN.

MATTHEW 18: 18-19.

Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

MEETINGS

**DIRECTIONS TO THE EASTERN
KEHUKEE ASSOCIATION**

The twenty-third session of the Eastern Kehukee Association, Lord willing, will convene with Skewarkey Church located in Williamston, NC. Meeting time is October 1 & 2, 2005 at 10:30 am each day. The church is just off US 64E. Take Exit 514 toward Williamston. Go about 1 1/2 miles and the church sits on the left. It is a big white board building.

All our correspondence and friends are welcome.

Naomi Coker, Clerk
252-823-0786

SULPHUR FORK ASSOCIATION

The One Hundred Sixtieth session of the Sulphur Fork Association will be held, the Lord willing, with Prospect Church on Saturday and Sunday, October 1 & 2, 2005.

Prospect Church is located on the North side of Highway 67, about three miles East of Sims, TX. (look for a sign.)

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

Miles Bird
Association Clerk
318 / 687-6775

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR JULY 2005

Jerald Hatchett - OK <i>In memory of</i>	
Linda J. Hatchett	50.00
John Swilley, Jr - AR	5.00
Vivian Underwood - VA	5.00
Victor Terry - VA	5.00
Amy Heppler - AZ	15.00
Margie Ray - LA <i>In Memory of Mom</i> (Geneva Pettis)	100.00
Douglas Hodges - VA	5.00
Margaret Smothers - NC	25.00
Susan Shelton - NC	5.00
Mary Lee - NC	5.00
Mary Hawkins - NC	25.00

OBITUARIES

CARNAR BUD CROTTS

Carnar Bud Crotts, 89 of Bassett, departed from this life on Friday, December 12, 2003. Carnar was a true believer in the power and grace of God. For many years, Carnar was a familiar sight coming into the churches struggling to walk with the aid of his crutches. Never losing sight of the true doctrine, through all his earthly struggles, he remained an inspira-

tion to those of us who loved him and called him husband, father, and brother. He was born in Carroll county April 29, 1914, the son of the late Wiley Thomas Crofts and Mary Hawks Crofts. He was preceded in death by four brothers; Robey Crofts, Virgil Crofts, Greeley Crofts, and Nuel Crofts, and a sister, Ellen Hawks.

Surviving are his wife of sixty-seven years, Annie Turner Crofts of the home, a daughter Shirley Crofts Shelton of Bassett; two sons, Buddy Crofts of Ridgeway; and Larry Crofts of Bassett, seven grandchildren, two step-grandchildren; ten great-grandchildren; three step-grandchildren, and three great grand-children.

Funeral services were held on Sunday December 14 at the Old Center Primitive Baptist Church by Winfred Young, Elder Michael Young, and Elder Lane Carter. Interment was in Old Center Primitive Baptist Church cemetery.

Carnar became a member of New Spoon Creek Primitive Baptist church on August 11, 1991. Laying to rest one of dear brothers in hope, our final earthly gesture of respect, left us with a desire that our hope and faith could match our dearly departed brother. His absence in the churches will be felt by all who knew and loved the humble spirit of Carnar Crofts.

Sister Patricia Crofts

LOTTIE RIDDLE MINTER

It is a feeling of unworthiness and sadness, I attempt to write an obituary for Dear Sister Lottie.

I grew up knowing and loving Sister Minter, our families were so close!

She was always there to help us, and anyone that needed her. I remember one night when we were small, my Mother was in the hospital. Brother and Sister Minter went with us to see Mother, and when we left the hospital our family was devastated not knowing what was to become of us, we were crying. There was a heavy fog, and my Father (ELDER DAVID SPANGLER) had a difficult time getting down the mountain; but Sister Minter's arms were around us and she helped us to know that we would be all right. I will always remember that night and her.

She taught me so many things and there was a joy about her as she served.

When I joined Dan River Church, she reminded me of things I was expected to do as a member. I happen to know there are many members who could tell you the ways she guided them and helped them. This was very helpful, or it was to me. This was done with love.

Brother Gold Minter was one of our special deacons, and Sister Lottie as a caring deacon's wife. She met all the requirements mentioned in the Bible:

“Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things.”

Sister Lottie was all of these. Much of her life was spent caring for those who needed help and comfort. She took care of the things she could do to make Dan River Church a haven for Brothers and Sisters of our Church and Sister Churches. She entertained people from all over our country and Canada with love and wonderful food. My Mother, Sister Nannie Spangler, joined the Church one night (Feb. 2, 1932) at the hospital, and Sister Minter joined that night, also. Juanita their daughter and I were baptized many years after that night, together.

Brother and Sister Minter, after the division and the Church was restored to the group who believed in the doctrine we still believe. They were blessed to see how the Church was blessed and grew. I strongly believe God blessed the Church and people, like the dear Minters, to walk together, to pray together and worship together. We all know from where our blessings come from — from above!

Sister Lottie was born July 5, 1910 and died April 6, 2005 in Winston-Salem, N.C. She was born to the late John Ira Riddle and Lenora Eanes Riddle. She was a faithful Sister, Mother, Grandmother, Great Grandmother, Aunt and Friend.

She was a member of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church (since 1932). She served her community

with much Caring. She was a Volunteer at Morehead Memorial Hospital from 1974 to 1996.

When there was a job that needed to be done she always was the first one to volunteer. She wanted the job to be done, the way it should be done.

Sister Minter a much loved wife of Brother Gold Minter for 58 years until his death. She was preceded in death by her husband, a niece Lottie M. Law and her husband Roy Law, Son-in-Law George S. Law, two sisters Alva Hailey and Virginia Garrett, two brothers Willie and Emmet Riddle.

She is survived by her daughter Juanita Law, her grand-daughter Delores Law Sanders and husband Robert, great-grandchildren Kirk and Caroline Sanders all of Winston, Salem, N.C. A great nephew and wife Larry Law and wife Rhonda of Kernersville, N.C.; and Linda Law Sasser and husband, David, of High Point, N.C.; and a Sister Betty Everlena Cannady of Eden, N.C. and beloved nieces and nephews.

Her beautiful funeral services were April 9, 2005 by Elder Kenneth Key, her pastor, and Elder Raymond Goad.

Interment was in Dan River Cemetery.

May the Lord comfort us at Dan River and give the family, especially dear Sister Juanita Law, grace to comfort her at this time. We will miss Sister Minter but she will be remembered by all of us at Dan River as a

faithful and fearless defender of the Gospel of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Written by request of Dan River Church and Sister Juanita Law.

Submitted With Love
By a Sister In Hope,
Mildred Spangler Graham

ORA TURNER NICHOLS

Sister Ora was born in Floyd County Virginia on September 10, 1909. Her parents were Stant and Ella Turner. She was a graduate of Radford College and worked as a teacher for several years.

Sister Ora was married to Brother Deacon Lonzie Nichols on March 26, 1932. To this union they were blessed with 4 children. 2 sons and her husband preceded her in death. Sister Ora departed this life February 9, 2005 at her home surrounded by her family.

Surviving are 2 daughters and son-in-laws: Venda & Bobby Booth, Audrey and Lawrence Eugene Cahill. 3 grandchildren: Blaine & Vanessa Cahill, Tim & Kim Cahill and Vickie and Richard Smith. 5 great-grandchildren: Pam Smith, Heather Cahill, Jennifer Smith, Brad Cahill and Brooke Cahill. 2 step great-grandchildren: Darrell Cox and Pam Burns. Brothers and sis-

ters: Sparrell Turner & Venice Barton. 3 sister-in-laws: Arlene Turner, Nola Pulcher and Janice Pulp. One month later after Sister Ora's funeral, Eugene Cahill followed her in death.

Sister Ora at Paynes Creek Church was blessed to be baptized on October 13, 1961. I was also blessed to be baptized with her by the late Elder Odell Thompson. Sister Ora was a firm believer in the Primitive Baptist Church and believed in Salvation by Grace and Grace alone. She attended her meetings as long as her health permitted. She loved her church and family and you were always welcome in her home. Sister Ora was blessed to read her Bible daily and always wanted to hear from the churches. She was blessed with a wonderful mind and she looked forward to her mail.

The funeral was conducted at Woods Funeral Home in Floyd, Virginia by her Pastor Elder Hale Terry and Elder Alan Terry. Her body was laid to rest in the Jacksonville Cemetery in Floyd County.

May God comfort and sustain all who mourn the loss of our Dear Sister and my aunt. We feel our loss is her eternal gain.

Written by request of Paynes Creek Church.

Agnes N. Sutphin, Clerk
Elder Hale Terry, Moderator

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

"The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon"

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POEM

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cowper.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 242
 Elder Cleo D. Robertson

CORRESPONDENCE 246

VOICES OF THE PAST 247
 Elder James M. Blanchett
 Elder E. J. Lambert
 Elder J.C. Philpot
 Elder W. D. Griffin

MEETINGS 262

CONTRIBUTIONS 263

OBITUARIES 263
 Grace Creason Locke
 Iris Freeman Puckett

EDITORIAL

UPON THIS ROCK
 I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh

and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” St. Matthew 16:13-19.



Elder Cleo D. Robertson

The scripture that seems primarily upon my mind is: *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.”* But, I believe that the other scriptures are necessary for the context of this statement by Christ. Since the beginning of this year, there has been much said about Peter being the rock on which Christ built His church and Peter being the first pope.

Christ asked his disciples, *“Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”* They responded that some say you are John the Baptist; some say you are Elias; some say you are Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. In other words, the people of the world did not know who He was and neither do they today. They

saw Him with their natural eyes; they heard Him with their natural ears; but, they did not know that He was truly the Son of God. Would we, in our flesh and with only our carnal minds, have known who He was? No, we would not. His body of flesh was a veil that they could not see beyond with their natural eyes nor understand with their carnal minds. Christ was not asking to find out what the ones of the world thought of Him. He knew. He was God. The fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily. It was for the benefit of His disciples. For then He said unto them. *"But whom say ye that I am?"* Simon Peter spoke up and said, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Jesus said unto him, *"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."* Christ did not address him as Peter, but rather as Simon Barjona. Barjona means son of Jona. Simon was the name he had been given by his parents. Christ was telling Simon that he did not learn who Christ was by any means of the flesh. Neither did his father in the flesh teach it to him, but this understanding was given by God. God revealed to Simon who Christ was. No one this day can know Him any other way.

Then, Christ said, *"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."* Simon's par-

ents did not name him Peter. Christ gave Simon the surname of Peter. *"And Simon he surnamed Peter."* *Mark 3:16.* *"Simon, (whom he also named Peter)"* *Luke 6:14.* *"And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."* *John 1:42.* Some say that Peter means rock and therefore Christ built His church upon Peter. Peter was the surname that Christ gave to Simon and, therefore, a family name. It means "A stone" and sets forth that Peter is of the rock. Simon Barjona sets forth the family that he is of in the flesh. Peter sets forth the family that he is of spiritually. When the two names are used together, Simon is always first as Simon Peter. The natural or fleshly name is first and the spiritual is afterward. *"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."* *I Corinthians 15:46.* In our experience, the natural or fleshly man came first and then the spiritual or new creature in Christ. If the church were built upon Peter, it would be as the man that built his house upon the sand. *"And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that*

house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” Matthew 7:26-27. Built upon Peter, the church could not stand for it would have no foundation. When Christ began to tell His disciples that He must suffer many things, die, and be raised again the third day, Peter rebuked Him and said, “Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.” Then Christ sharply rebuked Peter, saying, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” When Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas came with a great multitude with swords and staves to take Him. Peter and the other disciples forsook Him and fled. Later, when told that he was with Jesus, Peter denied Christ three times. Built upon Peter, the church would have been destroyed.

There are many scriptures in the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, that state unequivocally that Christ is “the rock.” “Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” Deuteronomy 32:3-4. “For who is God, save the Lord: and who is a rock, save our God?” II Samuel 22:32. “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and

that Rock was Christ.” I Corinthians 10:4. The serpent upon the rock could in no way inflict his poisonous venom into the rock nor leave any mark upon the rock. This points to Christ after He was baptized and led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan. He was tempted in every point as we are and yet without any sin. He told Satan to get behind Him and the church being in Him, He put Satan behind the church. Isaiah prophesied, “And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” O, to rest in the shadow of our rock! We find no relief under the scorching heat of our sins, temptations, afflictions, and trials of every sort. But, in the cool, refreshing shadow of the great rock is rest and peace for our weary souls. His grace is indeed sufficient. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” I Corinthians 3:11. These scriptures should be sufficient to show that Christ only is the Rock.

“And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” The Apostle Paul set forth the gates of hell in Romans 8:38-39, “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." This includes trials, tribulations, afflictions, and persecutions. Since none of these things can separate you from the love of God, the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church upon the rock. Christ said, *"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 5:10. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. *"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."* Matthew 5:11-12. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Christ said in Matthew 7:24-25, *"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken Him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."* The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Christ told Peter that He would give unto him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Peter was never given any authority to decide who went to heaven or who did not. God

elected His people unto salvation before the foundation of the world and gave them unto His son. The kingdom of heaven spoken of here is the militant church on earth. The keys are the gifts of understanding of the doctrine and order of the church as given to the apostles by Christ. The apostles, including Peter, preached and wrote epistles to the militant churches declaring what was bound and what was loosed. In other words, the apostles set forth the doctrine and the order of Jesus Christ which the churches were to follow, as well as those things the churches were not to follow which were unsound doctrine and disorder. *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."* Acts 2:41-42. The Apostle Paul writes Titus, *"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine."* The Apostle also writes, *"Let all things be done decently and in order."* I Corinthians 14:40. Also, to the Colossians, he writes, *"For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ."* Colossians 2:5. *"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and*

offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Romans 16:17. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." II John 9-10. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." II Timothy 3:16-17.

Peter was given the gift of an apostle and there were only twelve. There have never been any since. He also writes that he was an elder. *"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder."* I Peter 5:1. But, he was never the rock nor was he ever a pope.

Elder Cleo D. Robertson

ISAIAH 43:1.

But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

CORRESPONDENCE

8-10-05

My Dear Brethren:

I am so thankful we have people like you, that can write the blessed thoughts to send out to people like me to read. What a wonderful feeling it is to know that my Redeemer, My Saviour, that has kept me all these many years, believing this truth as it is in Christ Jesus. I have been a member since August 1947 of the Primitive Baptist Church. I would not change it for the whole world. It is something I have in my heart that man can't take away. What a glorious feeling that man has nothing to so with. Its not bought with Silver or Gold, but through this Blessed Saviour our God that gives it freely.

Its so wonderful to read the experience of my Brethren, whom I have never met, but feel such love for them. Remember this poor sinner in Prayer.

Sister Lovie A. Thompson
122 Lighthouse Church Rd.
Siler City, NC 27344

CORINTHIANS 1:3.

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

VOICES OF THE PAST

**ELDER JAMES M. BLANCETT
EXPERIENCE AND CALL
TO THE MINISTRY**

Dear Brethren; - feeling impressed to write some of my thoughts in childhood and youth upon the subject of death and religion, and at the request of many brethren, to write my experience and call to the ministry, though feeling incompetent to the task, I attempt it. I was reared between two mountains of the Blue Ridge, where my opportunities were limited. I went to school only three months. No church was nearer than seven miles. My father and mother were Primitive Baptists. My mother's conversation on the subject of death brought solemn thoughts on my mind. On one occasion, at the age of five years, she was taken sick very suddenly, and looked down at me at her feet and said, "*Matt, without a change I shall have to leave you. But I have a hope that I will be with my blessed Jesus in heaven. Be a good boy, and it may be he will bring you to me.*" I left the room, but did not get out of her sight. An awful gloom arrested my mind. I felt that I wanted to do as she told me, for I loved her. I could not sleep — when I would retire at night, my mind being so concerned about dying, and being put under the ground. As I grew up to the age of

nearly thirteen my mother was taken suddenly ill and in a few days passed away. She called the family to the bed and bade them farewell.

When she gave me her hand she said to me, "*I am going to heaven, be a good child. The Lord will bring you where I am.*" She then sang, "*Bright angels crowd around my bed, To carry me home when I am dead,*" and then passed away. But there was not power enough in her language to make me feel that I was a poor lost sinner. Something very strange took place with me a few months hence. On the 14th day of February, 1848, some of the larger children mortified my feelings, and the first thing on my mind was that I had no mother to comfort me. I went to her grave, and got on my knees to beg the Lord to send her back to me. While there I felt as some voice said to me, It is not my will that she should come to you. But I will bring you to her. I left the grave somewhat reconciled to my lot. I believed that there is a great God, and there must be a great change in me before I could meet Him in peace, and that depended on the life that I lived. Many times under the fear of impending danger I would say, if the Lord would let me live I would live a better life. But as soon as danger was passed I was the same in practicing the vanities of a sinful mind, but often troubled in mind about death, until about the age of twenty when it was suggested to my mind to not concern myself about religion—that it was an un-

popular thing — that the world would slight me. Wait until you are married. Then will be time enough. On the 18th day of January, 1855, when in my field, about 1 mile from home, in a minute I felt that I was going to die, and eternal judgement was now what I dreaded. I left work and went to the woods to confess to the Lord what an awful sinner I was, and to beg Him to let me live to get home. I returned to my work feeling a little relieved. But in a few minutes the same trouble fell on me again. I left and went home. I wanted to see my wife before I died. When I reached home she came to the door. Her appearance pierced me, for she knew I was a poor condemned sinner. I bursted into tears, and went to search for some secret place to try to pray. I did not want anyone to know that I was in any such deep distress. I felt that I had committed the unpardonable sin, the day of grace had passed, the door of mercy was forever closed against me. Sometimes my heart was so hard that I could not shed a tear, and yet I felt sensible that I was a dreadful sinner. In a moment I would be in tears and my cry was, Oh Lord have mercy on me a poor sinner, When I would try to pray my words would seem to fall to the ground. I viewed myself to be so sinful that I became afraid to lie down for fear the Lord would smite me with death. At the same time the breathing of my heart was, Lord have mercy on me. I felt that I had some fatal disease, that

would soon take me away. I thought that everyone knew that I was in this condition. I had not told anyone, but condemnation must be visible to all. On the 16th day of September, 1856, about 4 o'clock in the evening, I was impressed with the attempt that I had made to pray, and my words did not go above my head and that Jesus was above all heavens. My words could not reach him. No comfort could I find, nothing but condemnation to me in the Bible, and oh that it had been my lot to live when Jesus was in the world when I could fall at his feet and beg him for mercy, there might then have been some chance for poor sinful me; but wicked men have crucified him, and if I had been there I would have fought for him. Until I lost my life to rescue him, and thereby there might have been some chance for me. But in a moment I viewed him on the cross with his hands and feet expanded. I felt that I could hear the hammer driving the nails in his hands and feet, and the words sounded in my poor soul, Your sins helped to nail him there. My poor sinful body fell to the ground. I know not how long I lay there, but when my strength returned I went to the house. I wanted to see some of God's children. I loved them, and the great grief with me was that I had sinned against such a good and merciful God, and now to be cast off from him and his beloved children was more than I could bear. The next morning was Sunday. Mother

Barnard was going to visit our house. I wanted to see her come, and felt that I wanted to beg her to pray for me. When morning came I looked for her with eager desire. But when she came in sight with her two little twin boys in her arms, my beloved and much esteemed brethren E.M. and E.P. Barnard, I felt to be too great a sinner to be in her presence. I left and went to the woods remaining there for some time. In the evening I concluded that I would go with her and help her carry her babies, and ask her to pray for her poor, wicked and sinful son. I went about three hundred yards when I suddenly felt that I was not worthy to be where she was. I made a moan, and she turned and looked at me. I handed her the babies and her looks at me sounded in my soul, farewell, poor condemned sinner. I walked a short distance and fell to the ground. I wanted to see some way to be saved if it could be without God changing from his perfect holiness. I could not see how that could be. All that evening and at night when the sun set I bade farewell to it in feelings. I lay down that night, whether awake or asleep I know not. I viewed my life as a candle dazzling in the air. I felt that I was dying and called my wife, and told her that without a change I could not live, and not to sin against a good and merciful God as I had done. I begged her to go after her father and mother to come and pray for me. She cried aloud and said she could not leave

me, to go with her. I made arrangements to go, but was pierced with the feeling that I would commit a sin in disturbing those good people. I told her to lie down. I sat by the bed side, and walked the floor that night. When day broke I felt thankful that the Lord had let me live to see another day. I went to the woods to beg remained there till called to breakfast.

I went to the table with my hat on to conceal my grief. I made an effort to eat, but felt that I was not worthy to partake of the smallest of God's blessings, and burst into tears and left, and went to the woods again. I fell on my face and wanted to be more humble. Oh that I had never been born was my cry. I wanted to be anything of God's creation but that sinner. I remained there until about 9 o'clock in the morning, when I felt to go to the field in sight of my wife for her comfort. When I came in sight of her she was looking for me. In a moment I felt that I was sinking, and turned to tell her I was gone. But the burden was gone and I felt that I was changed soul and body. I cried, as far as the east is from the west, so far hast thou separated me from my sins O God. There were a few minutes that seemed that everything was praising the Lord for his blessed salvation. But it was here, if the Lord has ever called me to the work of the ministry in these words, "*Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in my holy mountain.*" In a mo-

ment the depravity and helplessness of a sinner was presented to me. I cried, Lord, I cannot do them any good. In a moment I sensibly felt and saw that all power is in Jesus, and that every sinner that mourned on account of sin would not be turned empty away. I stood amazed and wondered what it all meant.

I went back to the woods to try to pray again, and when I got on my knees to beg as before, to my surprise I asked the Lord to pardon my sins, if he had not pardoned them. I was amazed at my request, so I paused, and aimed to leave out the if, but it was the same thing again, and I found myself praying for a lady relative who came out of a Methodist family. In less than two years she professed a hope in Christ, and joined the church. I loved the brotherhood. My soul was weighted with prayer, and supplication for sinners, and to try to comfort the mourner. Unfortunately at that time all the churches in this country were in confusion, which gave me a great deal of trouble. In consequence there of, and owing to my impressions to preach I remained out of the church till July 5th. My distress during that time I cannot express. I concluded that if I would join the church that my mind in regard to preaching might be relieved. I joined at State Line and was baptized on the second Sunday in Sept., by Bro. S.J. Lackey. When he raised me out of the water my soul leaped with joy. As I reached the bank the text again came

with great force, "*Blow the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in my holy mountain.*" It was of such weight that I burst into tears. I hope that I felt the unction of the Holy Ghost. We returned to the house and at the close of the meeting there were eleven persons came and asked Bro. Lackey to pray for them. One was the companion of my youth who I hope had been in trouble for a long time. I returned home feeling joyful in part. But owing to my impressions I was cast down when I would view the perfect holiness of God, and compare it with my sinfulness, oh how I would shrink, and one scripture after another would come on my mind, "*Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.*"

Let me be where I might be it was so. I was almost continually begging the Lord to send some other and release me. I was not eloquent, and had no learning. I roved in the mountain to try to ease my mind in regard to preaching, but could not. I think I have realized as loud preaching between my plowhandles as I ever heard. I lived in rebellion against my impressions to the sorrow of my soul. I could not help fearing that it was all imaginary, or Satan was thereby endeavoring to entangle me. I tried to beg the Lord to give me some sign whether he called me or not, and to take me out of the world rather than that I should attempt to preach un-

called. Many times did I feel that death would be sweet to me.

When the war broke out I felt that I would rather go to the war than the pulpit, for I would be in obedience to my country, but could not know that the Lord had called me to preach. I believed that the war would test the matter. If I was wounded I might know that the Lord had not called me. I served three years and was not wounded, nor even had my clothes cut with a ball, but passed through many dangers. At Resaca, Ga., I well remember, in a charge on the enemies work, my front man was shot dead, and a cousin on my right was wounded. The line charged to their works. They were firing on me from two ways while I was in a few feet of their breast-works. I believe that the Lord was with me. I feared no danger. It was one of the brightest times of my life. It seemed to be said to me, "*Fear not, no harm shall befall you, for you shall testify of me before many people.*" I turned and looked each way and I was alone. No man except one was on the whole line. I went back to the line, carrying with me a wounded companion, feeling humble, and I trust meek. I felt from that time on as if the Lord would let me live to get home that I would not rebel any longer. I reached home the first of April, 1865. Oh how thankful I trust I felt to meet with my family, and the dear children of God. Our meeting time came off. The Brethren, Arrington and Plasters asked me on

the stand, but the cross was too great. I wanted a greater sign to satisfy and confirm me in this great matter. On Sunday evening of our July meeting, when I left the congregation, in my feelings I bid farewell to them. I reached my father-in-law's. I felt that the Lord was going to kill me for my disobedience.

There was a time I was unconscious, I know not how long. But the first I knew, old mother Barnard was consoling my wife in her humble manner, telling her there was no danger of my dying until I had filled my course in the ministry. I reached home that night feeling feeble. I lay down on the bed my companion standing by me.

I was begging the Lord to tell me what my duty was, and I would obey. Oh what vehemency, oh what desire of soul and mind I felt— that I could not live. In a moment I viewed Jesus and the apostles in the kingdom of glory. In a moment I viewed the obedience of them to the fulfillment of the Father's will. I realized my disobedience so sensibly that I was not worthy, and the scripture came again, "*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in my holy mountain.*"

I cried aloud and said, "*Lord, let me live, and if thou wilt give me one word to say, let it be to the glory of thy name.*" The next meeting came, and I went on the stand with a heavy cross, begging the Lord to convince me by the feelings that followed my labor.

After talking some minutes I sat down, and I think I felt as pleasant as I did when I recieved my hope.

I want to relate the events that I have passed in my ministry. On Friday night before the second Sunday in November, 1865, I dreamed that I was south of my house, standing on the bank of a beautiful stream of water. Some distance in front I saw six beautiful men walking on the water leaning on staves in their hands, and drawing a net having seven wings. One staff, there was no man by it. I was taken up and carried, and my hands placed on it, and it seemed to carry me with ease for a short distance, when I became weighty, I let loose, and I fell into great distress.

The next morning I left for State Line where I was expected to meet with Elder Cassell and Lackey on a funeral occasion. I met brother Lackey and attempted to preach, and I felt well a few minutes, and stopped in a few minutes. An awful dread came on. I went with brother Lackey to the widow Hill's, the wife of Elder James Hill, to attend some funerals on the next day. My distress that night I cannot tell. My wife and three children I felt would perish if I did not return and provide for them. About 9 o'clock I parted with brother Lackey in tears. He went one way and I another I started to the hills of Dan River to stay till the meeting was over, and return to my poor wife and children, to try to care for them and never try to preach any more. I

went to the river hill, and looked for the most comfortable place, as it was cool. I made an effort to go, and fell on my face, and felt that I should die. I begged the Lord to let me go home to my poor wife and children and care for them. While there I viewed my wife and the three children between the heavens and the earth with a wreath of light around them, and it was said to me in my soul, "*Let the dead bury their dead. Go thou and preach the kingdom of God. I will sanctify your labor to their support.*" I arose reconciled, and went to the house, and met with brother Lackey. We burst into tears and he said to me, Brother Blancett, you can't get out of the bounds of God's power, go on and preach. I willingly went, and felt in my labors that surely I was not in this sinful world.

Just one year after the church at Bell Spur liberated me to exercise a public gift, they licensed me to preach; and the second year, to a day they ordained me. I felt that they were too hasty, and that they were putting me under greater responsibilities than I was able to fulfill to the glory of God and the good of the church. But the Lord, I hope, has been my only trust, both in preaching and the administration of the ordinances of the church. But owing to the perverseness of my human nature, it all seems to have been imperfectly done. And, were it not for the evidence received in my labors in preaching and baptizing,

and for the dreams and visions of those whom I esteem as being the children of God, I should have sunk in despondency long ago.

I have served five churches as pastor and have baptized three hundred and forty-five persons; and the most of them have expressed in their experience, in some way or other, some relation to me or my labors. I now have the care (in the true sense, I hope) of four churches. I never would accept the care of a church till it had been made known to me that the church was a unit in the choice made.

Oh, what a joy and consolation we find when we meet all the brethren and sisters in peace and fellowship, filling their seats and manifesting their love, one to another. But how discouraging it is to find them in confusion and striving one against another. These things ought not to be, and could be avoided.

I will now relate one of the most consoling and blessed seasons of my ministerial life, My only son, who was afflicted with a serious lung trouble, and the Lord having blessed him with a good hope, sent to me, on Saturday of our July meeting, to have preaching at his house that evening; and that he wanted to see all of the church. He had not been able to speak for sometime above a whisper. So I made the appointment and served in preaching, and when I closed he said, "*Pa, I want to talk to the church, if I can be heard.*" The church assembled about his

bed; in a few minutes he received strength in speaking so that those in the yard could hear him. The brethren and sisters united in singing "*Amazing Grace;*" and then my dear neice, that we raised, Molly L. Hall, became so wrought upon by the Spirit that she came forward and was received.

It was a time of inexpressible joy realized by all that were present. The next Sunday meeting was set for their baptism. When the time came, my son had not stood alone for about five weeks. Some of the brethren visited him in the morning and gave up all hopes of him being able to go to church. He said with power, "I want to go to meeting," He arose from his bed and walked alone to the door, and they put him in a buggy with his father-in-law, Brother Simmons. When I met him he was looking very feeble, but was strong in the faith.

After a joyful service at the stand, and after hearing the experience of Brother Ambrose Jessup, I said to my son, "*Do you want to be baptized?*" and he answered, "*I do.*" He was lying on a spring couch, and they picked him up and, as he was being borne to the water, the brethren and sisters sang; and it seemed to me that their singing entered heaven, while the holy unction from the blessed Lord filled my soul.

Brother E. P. Barnard helped me carry with several others into the water, and I baptized them all, four of old Brother Sanders Jessup's

children and a daughter-in-law were of that number: That was one of the most heavenly days of my life.

I have now given some of the reasons why I hope the Lord has called me to the ministry, and some of the blessed seasons that I have enjoyed, which have encouraged me to continue to labor for these forty-five years. I have merited none of the blessings of God; and can truly adopt the language of Jacob, who said, "*few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.*" *Gen. 47;9*. I only live by hope. For over fifty-six years election, predestination, sanctification, and the holy calling, unmerited by the sinner, has been my meat and drink, believing it to be the doctrine of Christ and the apostles.

Brother Branscome, my mind is on some points of doctrine, but I will close for this time. I have given some of my reasons for trying to preach, and would say to all, who may profess a call to the ministry, that they should weigh their impressions by the scriptures, and take the advice of Paul, who said, "*Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

Brother Branscome, I feel unworthy to ask you to publish anything that I have written in your worthy and highly esteemed paper, the MESSENGER OF TRUTH which is so worthy of its title. Consider this scribble, and if it goes to the waste-

basket, you will not hurt me; for I want your valuable paper maintained.

Yours in hope of eternal life,
James M. Blancett.
Mayberry, Va.

From Elder Lamberts book,
"Tried In The Furnace".

BAPTISM

February, 1951

The subject of baptism has been a subject of great controversy throughout the centuries. Many false erroneous theories have been advocated which have tended to confuse the minds of God's little children. This is due to the fact that theologians have attempted to supplant a theological meaning of the term that is foreign to the classical meaning in order to prop up their false theories in trying to hinge salvation on the volition and work of the creature. This has narrowed the conception of the term, baptism, to that ceremonial use of water to admit members into an organized body here upon earth termed the church. I do not believe the term is so narrow in its scope. When I think of baptism I like to meditate upon the classical meaning instead of the theological use of the term.

To baptize is to immerse, submerge, envelope, overwhelm or sink; to dip, wash, or drench; to consecrate; to completely subdue. This

is the essence of the classical meaning. Even theologians who advocate sprinkling as the proper mode of baptism admit this. I think that baptism in literal water is figurative and typical of the baptism that is essential unto salvation. No man is able, empowered or authorized to do that. This is the work of God.

I want to call your attention to one Scripture that will conclusively prove that water baptism is not meant every time the term is used in the Scriptures. Jesus said as recorded in *Luke 12:50*, "*But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.*" The word straitened means pained. He was undoubtedly speaking of His baptism in death. He was speaking of the time when death would envelop Him, when He would be overwhelmed with suffering and submerged into death. This statement was made approximately two years after His baptism in Jordan. (I think His baptism in Jordan was pointing to, and figurative of, His baptism in death.)

Now, let us consider *Romans 6:3*. "*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*" Paul did not say or hint at water in this expression. If Paul had said, know ye not that as many of us as were baptized in water were baptized in Jesus Christ and into His death; then, the modern theorists would have something to base their arguments upon. Since he did not

say this, let us take for granted that he said what he meant and meant what he said. He said, "*were baptized into Jesus Christ.*" Can any man immerse one into Jesus Christ? We may baptize in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost but man cannot baptize into Jesus Christ. I believe that God chose His people in Christ in the annals of eternity before time ever began. "*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world*" (*Eph. 1:4*). "*Whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son*" (*Rom. 8:29*). The entire family of God was baptized into the body of Christ by God, our Father. "*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body: so is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body*" (*Cor. 12:12, 13*). "*We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus*" (*Eph. 2:10*). If we were chosen in Him, created in Him, and baptized in Him, we were mysteriously in Him being bone of His bone as He accomplished the law to a jot and tittle while He sojourned in this world of sin and sorrow. I believe that as Jesus performed the law to a jot and tittle, Jehovah could see the entire family of God performing it as they were members of His body, being baptized in Him. The one baptism spoken of in *Ephesians 4:5* is that performed by God, the

Father in the Son through the operation of the Spirit upon His children. This baptism is essential unto salvation but cannot be performed by man.

Yes, God's children were "baptized into His death." They went down with Him into death because they were chosen, created, and baptized in Him. If we be children of God we paid the penalty of death in Him! This being true, justice is completely satisfied in Him for each and every child of God. Nothing can be charged to them.

We have touched upon the subject of baptism relative to all the family of God being baptized at once together into Jesus Christ and into His death. Now, we want to meditate upon the experimental phase of baptism. We want to consider the individual, personal baptism that is experienced by each and every child of God. This experimental phase of baptism is progressive in its application as we shall see, the Lord willing. It begins in regeneration and ends in the immortalization of the body. John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins as recorded in Mark 1:4. All those who made manifest that they were in possession of this baptism by confessing their sins he baptized in the river Jordan, (Mark 1:5) which was an outward manifestation of being in this condition. The rule is according to the words of Jesus as recorded in *Mark 16: 16*, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall*

be saved." The form of the verb used shows that it is not water baptism that is under consideration. The present tense of the verb shows that it is a condition they are now in. They are overwhelmed, immersed, or enveloped now. Are they now enveloped in water by the administrator? No, they are now enveloped in repentance by the Holy Ghost! This being submerged in repentance affects the cry for deliverance or salvation from their sins. This salvation is promised in this statement by Jesus. The hope of each child of God, who is so baptized in repentance by the Holy Ghost, is salvation from their sins through the merits of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When one is baptized in water he outwardly manifests this condition and hope through the grace of the Father, the merits of the Son, and guidance, operation and revelation of the Holy Spirit.

"*John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*" (*St. Luke 3:16*). The effect of the Holy Spirit baptism is regeneration. The souls of God's people are baptized into death and resurrected unto life here in time; and, the bodies of God's people shall be baptized into death and resurrected unto life immortal into the great beyond - the end of this sphere of time. This is

that for which we patiently wait and hope.

The natural soul trusts in natural man being inspired by the natural carnal spirit. This is the soul that sins. It shall die (Ezek. 18:4). All people are born naturally in this condition. When it pleases God to baptize the soul of one of His people by the Holy Spirit, He kills and makes spiritually alive the soul. Yes, the soul is overwhelmed, immersed, and submerged into death and resurrected into a new life. The soul that has been so wrought upon by the Holy Spirit shall never die. It is a new creature. According to *Psalms 107 the experience of the redeemed is, "Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the Lord in their troubles and he delivered them out of their distresses."*

This is brought about by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We read in *Luke 3:3, "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."*

This does not say baptism of water but of repentance. This means that you must be overwhelmed, submerged, and immersed with repentance. It is a godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of (2 Cor. 7:10). When you are overwhelmed with repentance you abhor yourself; you repent in dust and ashes. When you abhor yourself you die to the love of self. You sink into despair; you

are immersed in trouble and distresses. As He did not leave Christ in the grave He does not leave your soul in despair but raises it up a new soul. This is verified in *Psalms 23:3, "He restoreth my soul."* You are then a new creature motivated by a spiritual soul. The mortal soul which is subject to death, has been baptized with immortality. This makes the soul immortal. Now, you are an immortal soul dwelling in a mortal body. This body has not yet been baptized with immortality. That will be the crowning work of the Holy Spirit.

Paul says in *Romans 7:24, "Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"*

Paul realized the sinfulness and mortality of his body. All God's children are possessed with the thorn in the flesh and infirmities of the flesh. Our bodies are subject to weaken and die. We cannot do the things we would because of the evil that is present in our fast decaying bodies. The body becomes lame and tottery with age. Our bodies become weak because of disease. Our natural eyes become dim and our natural ears deafen. Our memory fails and our ability to comprehend is affected. Our natural minds fail to function as they once did. I feel that as we experience these things we become more and more desirous of the immortalization of the bodies. *"Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adop-*

tion, to wit, the redemption of our body. (Rom. 8:23). Yes, the bodies of the saints shall be baptized into death and shall be completely submerged, enveloped, swallowed up, or baptized with immortality. "So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15: 54). This will be the answer to the prayer as recorded in 1 Thess. 5: 23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The baptism in water is figurative of this baptism that is essential unto salvation. This is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God: which is a figure of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. See 1st Peter 3:21. There are two kinds of conscience. There is a natural conscience and there is a Holy Spirit conscience. A good conscience is a Holy Spirit conscience. I believe that God's people are wrought upon by His Spirit and are made anxious to follow Jesus in baptism. They are desirous to outwardly manifest this faith in the Father baptizing them in the Son by the Spirit by submitting themselves to baptism in water in the name of the Father, and the son,

and the Holy Ghost. As the candidate for baptism is passive in the hands of the administrator in the act of baptism in water, so he manifests that he is passive in the hand of God in Holy Spirit baptism which is essential unto salvation. He manifests his faith in being in Christ as He went down into the grave and came up out of the grave. As baptism into Jesus Christ and into His death is the door of entrance into the Church which is the one invisible body including all the children of God, so baptism in water is the door of entrance into the church in its organized form upon earth.

John required those whom he baptized to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. I believe such characters are the only ones worthy to be received into the organized Church. When one comes confessing his sins, and considering himself as the chief of sinners and less than the least of all saints, speaking of his unworthiness, my heart goes out to him and I am given to fellowship him. When such an one comes testifying that his hopes for salvation from sins is solely based on the grace of God and the merits of the Lord Jesus, I consider him as a proper subject for baptism in water into the fellowship of the organized Church. None but those who have been baptized with repentance would come bringing such testimony from the heart desiring a home with God's people. The Church receives such into their fellowship and one properly ordained will gladly

administer the ordinance to that character.

I realize that I have just hinted upon this grand subject. These thoughts are my earnest and conscientious convictions. If they be true, may God be praised. If they be false, charge them to my ignorance and vain imaginations. May God bless this to your comfort and edification, if it be His will, is my prayer for Christ's sake.

Elder E. J. Lambert

"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 superabounding 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 15:9-

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

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.

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 mo-

nopoly 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 un-

changeable 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)

PSALM 95

O COME, let us sing unto the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the Hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice,

Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

When your fathers tempted me, proved me and saw my work.

Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

MEETINGS

CONTENTNEA

PRIMITIVE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing, the One Hundred Seventy Fifth session of the Contentnea Primitive Baptist Association will be held with North Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Beaufort County, North Carolina on October 8-9, 2005. All who believe and love the doctrine of salvation by grace are invited.

The Church is located 8 miles West of Belhaven, N.C. State Route 99.

Elder Gene Lupton
Association Clerk

STAUNTON RIVER ASSOCIATION

The Lord willing the Staunton River Union will be held at Canaan Primitive Baptist Church located on the Mt. Crossroad in Pittsylvania County, Virginia the fifth Sunday and Saturday before in October.

The song service will begin at 10:00 a.m.

All ministers of our faith and order are invited.

Elder Mark Terry, Moderator
Fred Murphy, Clerk

WEST COUNTRY LINE UNION

The West Country Line Union will convene with Dan River Church the fifth Sunday in October 2005. 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. Singing will start at 10:30 a.m.

Kenneth R. Key, Mod.
Bro. Allan Carroll, Clerk

CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR AUGUST 2005

Lena Gray-VA	10.00
Eld. Larry Hollandsworth-VA ...	5.00
Glenford Sigmon-VA	5.00
Walter Craft-W.VA	5.00
Helen Pittman-TX.....	5.00
Jerry White-KY.....	5.00
Larry Evans-MS	10.00
John Vipperman-VA	10.00
Wilma Cox-MS.....	5.00
Jean Moran-NC	5.00
Samuel Broach-NC	5.00

OBITUARIES

GRACE CREASON LOCKE

Sister Grace Locke of Benton, Kentucky died August 10, 2005 at her home. She was 95 years old.

Services were held on Friday August 12, with Elder Wayman Chapell officiating. Burial was in the Lyles Cemetery.

Sister Locke was baptized and received into the fellowship of Soldier Creek Primitive Baptist Church of Benton, KY, June 1968 along with her late husband, Warnard Locke and late son Roy Locke. Her late husband Warnard was ordained as a deacon at Soldier Creek in 1969, and remained so until his death May 31, 1986.

She remained faithful to the church and it's doctrine until her death. She was blessed to have good health up until three months before her death, but she never missed a church service.

She is survived by a son Charles Ronald Locke and 5 grandchildren, 5 great grandchildren, and 2 great,-great grandchildren. She was known by family, friends, neighbors and church brothers and sisters as a very loving person.

Submitted by:
Son and Daughter-in-law
Ronnie and Barbara Locke

OBITUARY OF
IRIS FREEMAN PUCKETT

With a mixture of spiritual joy and personal sadness we record the recent death of our beloved sister, Iris Freeman Puckett, at the age of 75. Sister Iris was born in Henry County, Virginia on September 30, 1929, a daughter of the late Harvey Freeman and Sis. Clara Harbour Freeman. She lived in Patrick County for the greater portion of her life, and was a long-time employee of United Elastics Corp.

On July 3, 1960 she was united in marriage to Bro. Paul A Puckett. They lived happily together until the Lord called her spirit home. She attended Liberty Church off and on most of her life. On the 1st Sunday, of April 1985, she was present on the occasion of the final appearance of our late pastor, Elder Bennie Clifton, who died the following month. She went forward to speak to him, and the Lord laid it on her heart to ask for a home with the church. She was gladly received and was baptized one month later by the acting pastor, Elder John Wingfield.

Sister Puckett was a loving and faithful member of Liberty Church. Her heart, her hands and her resources were always open to her brethren and sisters. Whenever Bro. Puckett was unable to be present because of providential hindrances,

she would carry out his responsibility as clerk, and she did an excellent job. Her presence and her sweet influence will be greatly missed by all of us.

Sister Puckett died in Reynolds-Patrick County Hospital on June 10, 2005. Her funeral service was conducted at the Moody Funeral Home Chapel in Stuart by Elder John Wingfield and Bro. David Wright, a close friend of the family. Her mortal body was laid to rest in Patrick Memorial Gardens. In addition to her husband, she was survived by one first cousin, Troy Harbour, his family and the children of his deceased brother, Henderson Harbour.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Bro. Puckett and to all who knew and loved Sis. Iris both by natural and spiritual ties. We have the blessed consolation of believing very strongly that her soul is peacefully at rest. Waiting for the final coming of her Dear Redeemer and Lord.

Done by order of Liberty Church in conference the 2nd day of July, 2005. One copy of this memorial record will be included in our church minutes, one will be given to the family and one will be submitted to the SIGNS OF THE TIMES for publication.

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

Signs of the Times

DEVOTED TO THE OLD SCHOOL BAPTIST CAUSE

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.
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POEM

LILLY OF THE VALLEY

*A garden grows in the hills of Zion
Where there are beautiful blossoms
of A special kind
The king of the garden is their love
to call
He's the lilly of the valley the most
precious of them all.
Sometimes these blossoms began to
droop
When they're hungry and thirsty for
the needed food
That's given to them in A special rate
By the lilly of the valley in His own
special way.
They just wait quietly for they know
He'll come
To brighten up their day with the
food they want
For He'll never leave them very long
in despair
The lilly of the valley very soon will
be there
Hark they hear the voice of the King
near by
They began to open for they know
He's nigh
Pretty little dew drops form in their
eyes*

*As they speak to one another in tones of light
Of love and joy and peace that the lilly gives
To the blossoms that He cares for in His lovely hill.*

PS. 23-3 "He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake"

Katherine Mathews

ST. MATTHEW 5:10.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL 266
 Elder Richard H. Campbell

CORRESPONDENCE 275

ARTICLES 275
 Belle Chaney

VOICES OF THE PAST 276
 Elder Jacob Castlebury
 Elder R. L. Dodson

CONTRIBUTIONS 287

OBITUARIES 288
 Elder Harvey Holland

EDITORIAL

*"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth the seed; and the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, and the hills shall melt."
 (Amos 9:13)*



Elder R. H. Campbell

I have always felt that this is not just talking about the crops and the seasons of the year, because the subject under consideration is the future of the children of Israel, and something which is to come to pass at some future time, regarding them. According to this text, there will be an ending of one era, or season, and the beginning of another, even seasons follow season and as crops follow crops except that it will all occur at the same time. It will be a time which will have a very great and significant impact in the lives of the elect children of God: a time when he would bring their captivity out from under the law of sin and death, and Amos says; that at this time God would plant them upon their own land, which he had promised unto Abraham and his seed after him, and that no more would they be pulled up and sent into captivity again for their sins; as they had been repeat-

edly, in the past. The days referred to in the subject scripture, I believe, relates to the time in which the first covenant will have been fulfilled, and the second covenant will be initiated, and it will all be done in a matter of days. This will be the time, as is recorded in the book of Hebrews, where referring to Christ Paul says, (*Heb 10:9-10*) "*Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*" Amos describes this change in terms we would normally use in farming, saying a time of plowing, sowing, reaping and the treading of grapes: using the various stages of a crop as an analogy, but I believe that it is actually referring to the ending of the mosiacal law, and the establishing of the gospel era. This is the time that Israel had been looking forward to for so long: the season when the Messiah would come and restore the glory of the nation of Israel, as it was in the former days. This event is described by many of the prophets, and is always depicted as a time of great change in the life of the children of Israel, a time like no other, and it would be accomplished by God; and would be for his own holy name's sake. (*Eze. 36:32*) "*Not for your sake do I this, saith the Lord God, but be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own*

ways, O house of Israel."

Jeremiah prophesied of these days, when he said, (*Jer. 31:31-34*) "*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts: and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*" This would certainly be a very drastic change indeed from the law of Moses, the covenant under which Israel was living at the time that this prophecy was written. It would be as dramatic a change as when God gave the law to Moses when he brought the Israelites out from under the captivity of Pharaoh, the ruler of the land of Egypt. Jeremiah did not fully understand just what

this meant, for he was but recording what been shown him, and that was that there would be this great change, and it would be by the will and pleasure of God. Jeremiah is actually speaking of a spiritual covenant which God would make with man, whereby, by the grace of God through faith and the new birth, man would receive the gift of eternal salvation, but it would be only to those that were chosen, in Christ, before the foundation of the world. This would be understood fully by those who lived in the time of the fulfillment of the prophecy, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Jeremiah had no knowledge regarding the new creature that would come forth, in a spiritual birth, nor that man would worship God in Spirit and in truth, because these were terms of which Israel, under the law, was completely ignorant. Peter explains how Amos and Jeremiah were inspired to record these truths, (*II Pet 1:21*) "*For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*" And the apostle Paul gave the reason that things were done in this manner, (*Rom. 15:4*) "*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*" The things which were written by the prophets were true and certain, and are great comfort

to those who live under the new covenant, because they believe that as God has promised by the prophets, He is still working things according to his will and purpose in their fulfillment.

I remember being in Hawaii many years ago, and we came to a place in the road where there was a large pineapple plantation which was on both sides of the road that we were traveling. There was a particular spot where four large fields of pineapple came together, two on each side of the road; and in the four pineapple fields, the process of plowing was going on in one field, planting in another, the harvesting of the crop in the third field and burning the old crop in preparation for the next crop, in the next field, and it was all happening at the same time. The climate is so uniform there that they do not have to wait for another season because of differing temperature and climate, as we do here, so that when one crop is harvested they immediately begin preparing for the next crop, and all four phases of a crop are being done at the same time.

To my understanding, this is exactly what is described in the above text, Amos is saying that the days are coming when the plowing, sowing of the seed, and the reaping, and harvesting of the crops will all be accomplished at the same point in time. In my personal experience described above, of course, it was in the things of nature, and we un-

derstand that the text is describing spiritual matters, but the occurrence is the same. The first dispensation (covenant) follows the second and they will both occur simultaneously. This is a necessity, in the subject which is under consideration here, because, there could never be an instant in time, in which the salvation of the saints was not secure and provided for, and under the direction and control of the administrator of the covenants. He does not have to wait for the changing of the seasons, the correct temperature, or the correct phase of the moon, because all of these things are under his control, as Solomon said in, (Pro. 16-33) *"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.*

It is recorded, (1 Cor. 12:5) *"And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord". Christ is the administrator of both the first and the second covenant, as stated by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews:" (Heb 9:15)*

"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal life." This scripture covers the first portion of the subject scripture, regarding the reaping of the harvest and the treading of the grapes, by which Israel, under the law, would

be justified, and receive the promise of eternal life. The sacrifices made by the children of Israel, under the law, did not atone for sin, but were only remembrances made each year that they were still sinners, but by faith, they were looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, who was to come, and who would make the true and atoning sacrifice that would put away their sins forever. (Heb 10: 11-13) *"And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."* Christ, the promised Messiah did come, and as the administrator of the covenants, fulfilled the law covenant to a jot and a tittle in their room and stead and they stand justified before God, and he established the second covenant by his resurrection. God's children, in this day, do not live under the law of sin and death, but rather, under the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus.

Christ's sacrifice, as the administrator of the first covenant, was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. This was accomplished by his, (Col. 2:14) *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it*

to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." Where there is no law, there is no sin, so under the new covenant, God's elect, are without sin before God. Sin certainly continues to dwell in the flesh, but does not dwell in the new creature in Christ, as John said, (John 3:9) "*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his sin remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*" I believe that the apostle Paul was referring to this fact when he said, (Rom. 8:3) "*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh*" and this is where sin would dwell thereafter: in the flesh, for it has no dominion over the new creature in Christ, he is a spiritual being that has been born of the Spirit of God, and whose seed remaineth in him.

I recently read, (John 4:36) "*And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto eternal life: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.*" And my mind went back immediately to the subject scripture, regarding the sower and the reaper. This scripture, in the fourth chapter of John is where Jesus is talking to his disciples, after he had talked with the Samaritan woman at the well, and he is talking

about the gathering of fruit unto eternal life and saying that one soweth and another reapeth. In my meditations on this, I was puzzled for a while, because he said one soweth and another reapeth, and then the thought came to me, that Jesus, the son of man, by his sacrifice reaped the harvest, which was the Jews, under the law as stated above, and as the eternal Son of God, he was here with his disciples, plowing the ground and sowing the seed of the new covenant.

He began this process by telling them of the future changes that would occur in their lives, in the future. This must have seemed strange unto them indeed, with their having lived all of their lives under the strict ordinances of the law. He began this labor in the fourteenth chapter of John when he said, (vs. 2-3) "*In my Fathers house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*" In the sixteenth chapter of John, he says in, (vs:7) "*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*" Also in, (vs. 13) "*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you in 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." And again, (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."* These scriptures are the seeds of the second covenant, a spiritual covenant: one for which the apostles were unprepared, at the time, for these new conditions were not met by sacrifices and burnt offerings, or by the efforts or commitment of man. These conditions would be accomplished by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God which was in position before the foundation of the world, and would insure the salvation of every heir of grace without the loss of one. On one occasion, someone asked Jesus, (John 6:28-29) *"What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."* Surely, the plowing of the ground and the planting of the seed of the new covenant; was Christ's teaching to the disciples these new things that were to come, before they came forth.

When the day of Pentecost was fully come, these things began to be made manifest as the disciples came together, all of one accord, and the prophecies of the men of old

who were inspired by the Spirit of God began to be fulfilled as the apostles began to experience the beginning phase of the second covenant. This was by the fulfillment of the prophecy by Joel, who said the Holy Ghost would be poured out upon all flesh, and their sons and daughters would prophecy, their old men would dream dreams, and their young men would see visions. This is the first evidence of the new covenant, the establishing of the church, as we know it today. This is the work of the administrator, as the mediator of the better covenant, which is established on the better promises.

For the reference above to the fact that, Jesus the son of man, reaped the harvest and tread the grapes, and that the Son of God plowed the ground and sowed the seed: I would refer you to, (Rom. 7:1-6) *"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?"* For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore. my brethren, ye also are become dead to the

law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." In these verses, I believe that the days that are referred to by Amos, in the subject text are accomplished. Under the terms of the first testament, the wife (Israel), is bound to one husband (the law) who died that she might be freed from the law of sin and death.

The church triumphant, is composed of both Jews and Gentiles, and it is by this means that those under the law of sin and death were freed from her husband, whose death atoned for her sins, under the law, and fully justified them before God. Those who were to follow were released from the law of sin and death and were free to be married to another, even unto him that rose from the dead. Remember, the above scripture, "differences of administrations, but the same Lord". It is in this manner that the middle wall of partition was broken down, thereby making of himself one new man, and so making peace, with continuity, among the whole household of faith. They are no longer twain, but one entity, Christ having abolished the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, which had separated them in the

former days, and then by his establishing the second covenant under which the saints live in this day and age. (*Heb. 8:10-13*) "*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 their 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, For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away*" This is the better covenant, which is established upon better promises, because all that is required under the new covenant had already been accomplished before it was established.

(*Mal 3:6*) "*For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*" So, whether they lived under the law of sin and death, or the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the promise made to Abraham stands sure, unto his seed, and cannot fail because the promise was made by God. The second covenant was not a change in the plans of God, but rather was a judgment of man in the flesh, as

he was when driven from the garden of Eden, and the law was given to make man see and acknowledge his total inability to attain unto righteousness, of himself. The righteousness under the law was but obedience to the oracles of God, but, that never promised eternal life. The law of sin and death was but a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, for under it the people learned that it is not in man that walks to direct his steps, and that he must look to another, the one prophesied by Moses who was to come, and to whom they were to look. They did not realize the fullness of this prophecy, and just what the prophet would do, but, since the prophecy was given by Moses, a recognized man of God and witnessed by God himself, they believed and looked for the day of his coming.

(Amos 9: 11) "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old;" The Jews were looking for the restoration of the tabernacle of David as it had been when built, but the glory of the new one would be on a grander and even more glorious scale than the first, because the glory would be spiritual rather than natural, as they were in the days of the original tabernacle. The glory of the new will exceed the glory of the first, and will continue until the end of this age, at

which time it will be replaced with an even greater age, in which all of the household of faith will be gathered together in the presence of God, where they shall see him as he is, be like him, and be satisfied. They will then understand all mysteries, and see the reason and purposes for all things, they will know even as they are known.

In the eleventh chapter of Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, the chapter which records many of the trials of God's children in their journey of faith, he 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."* Amos, in the above text is referring to the bringing in of that, better thing, which was the better covenant, established on better promises, that those who lived under the law should not be made perfect until the fullness of the gentiles should be brought in. They did not receive the fulfillment of the promises, in this lifetime, but all, Jews and Gentiles will receive the fulfillment of the promises together, in the final restitution of all things. *(Rom 11:32) "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."* And again, *(Eph 2:8) "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."*

The apostle Paul then continues

in the same theme, (*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 beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God,"* The great cloud of witnesses are the scriptures, written by those who have gone on before, and which are left on record to confirm your hope that you too are among those for whom Jesus came to seek and to save. When the scriptures say that Jesus came to seek and to save, I do not believe that he meant that he came to hunt for them, or to see how many he could find, but rather, he comes to them where they are and makes it manifest unto them that they are of the chosen generation. He knows who they are, where they are, and his coming to them is to give hope to the hopeless, strength to the weary, sight to the blind, and joy to the downhearted who have been made to see their own lost and undone condition in the flesh.

The beauty and comfort of these scriptures, to God's children in this day, is that they can look back, on the promises of God unto his chosen people; see the power, love and mercy of God being manifested as

he fulfills those promises, in spite of what man is in nature. God calls his people, from nature's darkness into his marvelous light, not because of any redeeming characteristics that man may possess, but, because it is his own good pleasure and purpose to do so, and that they should show forth all praise and honor unto his holy name, for his mercy and grace which he has bestowed upon them.

If this has been your experience, you can have fellowship for Amos, Jerimiah and all of the other apostles and prophets, and you are in good company. The prophets and apostles wrestled with these same afflictions, as you do now, and which you will continue to do, as long as you are clothed with this body of death. The apostle Paul cried, (*Rom. 7:24*) *"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death."* But he did not leave it there, he then went on to say, (*vs. 25*) *"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."* If this is your dilemma, then take heart, and continue to press on to the mark of the prize of the high calling of God, for you are on that highway, which is called the way of holiness, and where only the redeemed of the Lord shall walk.

In bonds of love,
Elder Richard H. Campbell

CORRESPONDENCE

July 4, 2005

Brother Terry;

Enclosed is personal check #2635 in the amount of \$30.00 for an extension of subscription to "*Signs of the Times*". I would also compliment the staff for selection of articles in Vol. 173, 7, July 2005.

Keep up the good work for the saints shall rejoice.

Yours in Christ,
John Suilley

July 23, 2005

Dear Brother Terry,

I hope this finds you, Sister Terry, and all of your family doing well. Please excuse me for being so late in getting my renewal of the Signs to you. I'm enclosing my check and my moms. Please use the remainder of each check as needed to publish the Signs or to help someone who can't afford the subscription. It is such a wonderful blessing that the Lord has blessed us with you, Brother Kenneth, and all the lovely editors that this dear old publication might continue. It has been a blessing to me since my teenage years when I first read issues at my grandparents home. As I get older, my meetings, the fellow-

ship of my brethren, reading my Bible, and the Signs becomes more precious as each year passes. I'm sure the Signs is an even or greater blessing to those who are not granted the sweet enjoyment of meeting together with those of like precious faith.

We miss seeing you and Sister Terry - had hoped to see you at the Staunton River Assoc. The Lord willing we hope to visit your Assoc. this year. May the Lord continue to bless and keep you both as the apple of His eye.

With much love and fellowship,
Mary Hawkins

ARTICLES

The Experience written and sent in by Belle Chaney of which was right many years back written with Love and Hope.

I remember the time in my life when I was greatly desiring something that I was unable to obtain. I read the Bible so much until my head could hardly hold up. I just kept on hunting, searching but still couldn't find and hardly knew what I was searching for. All I knew that I was searching for deliverance and peace from the state I was in. I remember just laying my Bible down for I had become so weary I was just about to lose all my strength I thought at that time I would never receive what I was searching for, but

lo and behold, in about 2 weeks I began to feel something within me raising my whole body up off of the ground. I knew of a surety it was of nothing I had done. I shouted out loud this is it, "the spirit of deliverance and peace. I felt I had obtained what I had been searching for so long. I felt I had all I needed to live by and go with me to the grave. I was satisfied and have been ever since. What the Lord does is done forever. After that sweet experience, I had a great desire, but kept putting it off, to read my Bible. One day I picked it up then I knew why, when reading I found something I had never found before. I had a new outlook as I felt so free, that sweet freedom, from the law of sin and death, from the old to the new. I have tried to explain the great mystery to the best of my ability. I felt, at the time, I knew what the song, "Amazing Grace," was all about.

Before concluding, I would love to thank him the True and Living God for all he has done for me.

From one who wishes to praise the Lord now, in the past, and in the future. Amen.

Love to all in Christ I hope,
Belle Chaney

REVELATION 7:15.

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.

VOICES OF THE PAST

THE EXPERIENCE OF ELDER JACOB CASTLEBURY(1804-1885)

Plymouth, Ill., Jan 10, 1875.

Dr. J. E. Goodson, - Dear brother in Christ; By your request, and now, by your permission, I will try to write something for the readers of your paper, the Messenger of Peace.

I will first give you a sketch of my life. I was born in the state of Tennessee, in Robertson County, in the year of our Lord, One thousand, eight hundred and four, on February the 28th. There was nothing remarkable in my early history; I grew up, as most young people do, thoughtless and unconcerned, about my future state, except occasionally, when circumstances forced me to think I must die, and leave all my friends and the things behind; but I soon forgot this when I returned to my comrades and the sports I loved so well. Thus my time passed until I was sixteen or seventeen years old. When I heard, preaching, I would feel bad, acknowledge that I was unfit for heaven, but thought that I would make amends for all the evils I had done.

When I became older, I settled in life, thus flattering myself that if I was married, and settled in some

regular vocation, I could then perform religious duties to a better advantage; and that I would do it so earnestly, that I would be entitled to forgiveness for the omissions of my former life. With these conclusions before me, I married young, in my twentieth year, and immediately emigrated to Illinois, when and where the struggle to gain a support for my family commenced, in a new and sparsely settled country, and, as you may judge, without experience. I met with many disappointments and reverses, in regard to accumulating property as I had anticipated. So much so that I found that instead of being better prepared to attend to religious matters than ever before, I found myself more perplexed and embarrassed, and had less time to spare to be devoted to that subject, than ever before, and fewer inducements held out to me.

For a part of the time I had been living among religious people, both Methodists and Baptists; but now, at the end of ten years experience of married life, I found myself living in a very irreligious neighborhood, and the People very much given to drinking and other dissipations; and although I partook with them in their sports, I was not at all satisfied with the prevailing principles of the neighborhood, and again resolved to move to a new settled place, and did so, stopping in Hancock County, in the year 1833, in the neighborhood where I have lived up to the present time.

But I state, that before I left my former neighborhood, I greatly desired that God would so order that I might find, and become settled, in a good religious community; and the Lord did so grant my desire, that I found one Baptist church, Middle Creek, with two preachers, located six miles north of my place, where I attended, in two weeks after stopping, and I heard the late Elder William Bradley, and Elder Thomas H. Owen, now in California; and although I did not endorse the doctrine they preached, yet they made a favorable impression on my mind, and I attended the meeting pretty regularly during the summer, during which time Elder M. B. Rowland moved into the country and settled on the quarter-section next to mine. He got on my track, and he told me everything I had ever done, or thought, on the subject of religion, and a great deal I had never thought of and it caused me a great deal of trouble, for it caused me to think of my past promises, and my failures to comply. I was thus exposed, as I verily thought the preaching all aimed at me, and that the congregation all had their attention drawn to me.

Under these circumstances, I resolved that I would quit going to the meetings, but I was so anxious to hear, that I would go again and again, to hear what they would say next.

Thus I passed the time during the winter of 1834, until in the month

of March, in which month I was taken sick. I then verily thought I was going to die and be forever lost. The thoughts of my former promises, all seemed to stare me in the face. It was then that I lost all hope of ever making any amends for my past sins.

The thought of leaving my family in a new settled country, with but little means of support, and without any permanent home or but few friends to care for them, when I should leave them, added to my troubles about the loss of my poor soul, which I then thought would be inevitable, I felt that it would be just if "I were sent to hell; God's righteous law would approve it well."

And here I will say, that I have now no recollection of having any thoughts about the salvation or damnation of anyone but myself. As a matter of course, I tried everything I could, and every form of prayer I could think of, to recommend myself to God; but all to no purpose. I read the promises to the poor, but could not appreciate them. It was in this condition that the ministers would describe my convictions, and I knew that what they said was true; but when they spoke of the joys of the believer, I could not understand them, for it was something I had not experienced, nor did I ever expect to. But still I would try to pray to God, to be merciful to me, a sinner.

I remember, one evening, after I had got a little better of my sickness, I concluded to go to a very lonely,

secluded place, a distance of about two or three hundred yards from my cabin, and once more to ask God for His mercy upon me. When I reached the place, I was afraid to kneel, but sat down on a log, and after studying over *my Case* awhile, I arose to return to the house but, on rising a hill on the way, I looked to the west, the sun was just setting, and I stopped and viewed it for a few minutes, and I verily thought that I should never see it again. Passing on home, I went to my bed, with the belief fully on my mind, that I never would live to see the sun rise. After long worrying, I seemed to drop into a doze of sleep, and dreamed that I was traveling with a large concourse of people. I had once before dreamed of being with the same people, but this time we were traveling on a different direction, and we had the river Jordan to cross; but before we reached it we were traveling over deep pits, which appeared to be covered over with a crust of sand, so that they could not be seen, until someone stepped on them, and fell in, from whence they were never recovered, nor did anyone stop to look after them, but journeyed on, merrily singing, until we reached the river, where the greatest confusion prevailed; some turning up, and some turning down to find a crossing place, while thousands were sinking in quicksands, and were seen no more, I turned down the stream, and on approaching the water, it shrank away, the sand dis-

appeared, and I stepped over with great ease, I immediately turned around to shout to others, where I had found good crossing, a little lower down; and these words were so sweet to me, that I continued to sing, that I had found good crossing a little lower down, until I awoke. My wife, and my mother, who was living with me at the time, after listening to me for awhile, said to me, "You are better as you have gone to singing." To which I replied, "*You need not be surprised, if I got to preaching as well as singing.*" I afterwards regretted having said it but it was just as I felt at the time.

This, dear brethren, is the first time I ever realized the love of God to my poor soul. I did, then and there, believe for myself, that he had saved me, for Jesus sake; and no man could at that time make me believe otherwise. I was then so happy that I was ready to conclude I should never see any more trouble; but I was soon taught a different lesson. I wanted to see Elder Rowland, and talk with him but he had gone that day, to help raise a cabin, some three-fourths of a mile away. I was so anxious to see him that I made mention of it to the family, but they objected to my going; they said I was too weak to walk so far. However, in the afternoon, I did go without their knowledge, hoping to have a good talk with him, on the way home, but when I reached the place they had about finished their job, and all them were in a merry glee,

joking and laughing heartily with the preacher, and all the company. I did not condemn them. It did not shake my confidence in the preacher, or the church clerk who was there both of whom I highly esteemed, but it did shake all the confidence I had in myself as a christian. I feared that I had been deceived in the whole matter, and started home with a new trouble on my mind. The thought of being deceived, on so important a matter, as the salvation of my soul, was more intolerable than anything I had ever thought of before. It was on my mind all the way home, until I was overtaken by the clerk, Brother Brattain. Brother Rowland had business on the other way home. When the clerk overtook me, we fell into conversation, and I related to him as best I could, my present troubles, as well as the happy state which I enjoyed the night before, and that day, up to the time I got to the house-raising. Upon hearing my relation of my feelings, he expressed no opinion, but sat down in the road and told me his experience; which, in many particulars corresponded with me, and seemed to afford me some relief at the time, but still left me in some fears. At length he reminded me that I had better go to my home, as the evening air was getting too damp for me to be out, as I was not well, so we parted. I had not been in the house long, before Brother Rowland came in, and I asked him some questions about revealed religion answered, but he said to me, "*tell it*

yourself;" and then I related my feelings and fears to him, to which he made no reply, but immediately left me and went home.

This circumstance was like a dagger to my heart, for I then thought that he knew that I was a poor deluded creature, and would not tell me so, for fear of hurting my feelings as a neighbor. O! what anguish of soul I then passed, for about one week; My conviction for sin had all left me; I could not mourn for sin as I had done, I could not pray for forgiveness as I had done, but I prayed to God, that if I was deceived, he would give me an evidence of it, by the returning of my former convictions, so that if it left again, I might have some evidence of my acceptance with God.

At length a verse of Scripture came to my mind, which gave me great relief. It set me to rejoicing again. *"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulations, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world."* But I was too ignorant to know where the text was to be found, though it removed all doubts at the time; and I have realized the truth of this text of Scripture all the journey of my way, ever since that time; both as regards the troubles of the world, and the peace of Jesus. I know, indeed, that it passeth the knowledge and understanding of man, no matter how well he is skilled in the science of the day.

On Saturday before the second Sunday in April, 1834, I attended the church meeting, and related the experience of my mind, and desired the church would deal faithfully with me, and to my surprise they received me for baptism, without asking any questions.

I was baptized the next month, on Sunday, by Elder M.B. Rowland, who remarked to the brethren, when he came out of the water, that he had baptized a preacher. I suppose he inferred it from the relation of feelings, as I could not give a relation of my experience, without referring to it; and here, dear brethren, I will say that if I had any call or promptings to the work of the ministry, previous to my engaging in it, it is so intimately connected with my deliverance from the guilt and bondage of sin, that I cannot separate them; but shortly afterward, my experience commenced.

During the next Fall, the brethren would insist on my taking some part in the public services of the meeting; which I did to some extent, until the next Summer, 1835, when a motion was made in the church to liberate myself and two others to exercise a public gift in the church. This brought on me some new trials.

I perfectly agreed with the church as to liberating the other two; but fearful the church had my name added, for fear of wounding my feelings, as I had been exercising with them; but in a private conversation,

the brethren assured me that my fears were groundless. Thus they continued to encourage me, and so to bear with me in my weakness, and instruct me until my ordination was called for, by some of the brethren in 1837.

This gave me new trouble; I felt that I had all the liberties that I wanted, or needed, and told the church so, and further, I told them that I did not feel that I was worthy to be promoted to so holy a position. That I could not feel that I could administer the holy ordinances of the gospel; and so the matter was deferred for a time; but was subsequently brought up again, when a brother objected to it because I had not desired it, which objection suited my feelings perfectly, for I thought that if the church waited for me to tell her that I desired it, that it never would be called for.

But, again in the Fall of 1838, the same brother that raised the objection, motioned for my ordination, when it was agreed upon, by the church; and here my heart rebelled against the church, and at my urgent request, the ordination was postponed for one month.

During which time I was driven to the Bible, to ascertain the will of God concerning me; and in my investigation, became satisfied that all the gifts of God to the church rightfully belonged to her, and that she was, and is, the proper judge of the same, and thus becoming reconciled to the

will of God, and the will of the brethren, no words can express the joy of my heart. It removed a burden off my mind, equal to that of my first forgiveness.

I have been thus particular in this place, to show my experience, as agreeing with the Bible, and that I could not experimentally agree with any man, who would say he desired the office, or felt that he was worthy of it.

When the church came together and I let them know that I was reconciled to their wishes, in this matter, a presbytery was called, and I was set apart according to the order in such cases.

By the forbearance of God and the brethren, and their encouragement, I continue to this time, witnessing the things which Moses and the Prophets did say should come, that Jesus should come, has come, and should be the light to the people, and to the Gentiles.

My experience in the ministry, from the first until now, has been a checkered scene; sometimes fearing and doubting, and sometimes full of rejoicing, and hope of the glory of God.

But dear brethren, I cannot say that I have been instrumental in the promotion of any great revival, or of the extension of the kingdom of God on earth; but I do think that I have enjoyed great comfort in my own soul, in proclaiming the gospel of Christ, where and when God has

revived his own cause in His people. And the brethren have given me great encouragement, to persevere in the good cause.

Some have professed to be comforted and edified by my preaching. Had it not been for such encouragement, I don't know but I should long since have abandoned the work, in despair; but by the grace of God, I am what I am, and I trust that His grace was not bestowed on me entirely in vain. Though my labors have been limited to a small scope of country, except when I have visited some association, though I have had, and still have, a great desire to travel, and form a more extended acquaintance with the brethren; but being limited in means, and having a great part of the time, a sickly companion to care for. This, dear brethren, is the only reason I have to offer for not visiting the churches at a distance, more often than I have. I hope you will forgive me and pray for me and mine.

Dear brethren, let us hear from you often, do write things that make for peace, and the things whereby one may edify another.

Your brother in hope,
ELDER JACOB CASTLEBURY

*Originally published in
The Messenger of Peace*

ACTS VIII. 33,

"In his humiliation his judgment was taken away."

We have been asked by a sister to use the above words at the head of an editorial. As much as in us is we desire to comply with such requests from our kindred in Christ. If the Lord stirs up the pure mind of his people and implants in their hearts a desire to know what the Scriptures teach, he is able to give the pen of a ready writer whereby their questions will be answered to their satisfaction, edification and comfort. All who have been taught of him know full well that he must enlighten the mind of his servant and give him understanding in order that he may be able to set things in their proper place. If we know our own heart we earnestly desire, both in speaking and in writing, to shew ourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. While we do not wish to court the favor of man, we are confident if we give expression to the things of God they will find lodgment in the hearts of those begotten of him and we will have their approval. There is abundant scriptural proof of the fact that God dwells in his people, and we can trustfully affirm, if we have any knowledge of the Lord's mercy, his long suffering, his forbearance and loving kindness, it has come to us

in a way of life at the hands of our brethren. Surely they have not dealt with us as we have deserved to be treated by them. It has greatly encouraged us at times to realize that we have brethren who can and do feel for us, whose prayers are continually going out to our covenant keeping God to make bare his arm in our behalf and fill our mouth with such things as will be suited to the needs of his children.

The words referred to are only a portion of the thirty-third verse of the eighth chapter of Acts, and considered by themselves at best can present only a part of the picture. In order that we may have a more complete background it will be necessary to bring to view some of the surrounding scenery, or the conditions leading up to and following after the utterance. In those days, as in these times and all other ages, the world was not a friend to the cause of righteousness. The forces of good and evil have ever been arrayed against each other. Paul tells us in the beginning of the chapter, *"At that time there was a great persecution of the church which was at Jerusalem."* He, himself, as Saul, having no knowledge of God, *"made havoc of the church, entering into every house and haling men and women, committed them to prison."* Because of this persecution, the saints were "scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria," but *"they that were scattered abroad went ev-*

erywhere preaching the word." Though scattered, they were the *"elect according to the foreknowledge of God,"* and *"the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his."* God's people can never be so scattered, or so far off but that his all-seeing eye is ever upon them, and he supplieth all their needs. *"The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto he way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert."* The eunuch of Ethiopia is a type of the church in nature; she is black as the tents of Kedar, and her place of dwelling is desert, and she is as powerless to change her condition as the Ethiopian is his skin or the leopard his spots, but God having begun a good work in the eunuch's heart, continues that good work by sending Philip to meet with him. As the eunuch read Esaias the prophet, *"The Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest what thou readest?"* Philip's heart seemed to have delighted toward this one with whom the Lord was dealing, for he *"ran thither to him,"* and the question he asked of the eunuch was evidence of the bond that bound them. It was the very question which he desired most of all to have answered.

As the king of old was troubled about his dream, which none of his wise men or magicians could tell him, and Daniel, the prophet of the Lord, came telling not only the dream, but the interpretation thereof, so Philip saw into the very depths of the secret places of the soul of this one who realized he was black and in a desert land, and as he spoke the language of his heart he had the witness within that Philip was a true prophet of the Lord. His reply could only have endeared Philip to him more than ever: *"How can I, except some man should guide me?"*

What a confession to helplessness and dependence upon the great Teacher. *"And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him."*

Oh how the poor heart that is hungering and thirsting after righteousness yearns for the messenger of the Lord to come this way, that he might come in and tarry in his house, in the place where he dwells, and deliver the message of the power and the peace of the gospel of the Son of God. *"The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth; in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth."* What an appropriate figure inspiration

uses here to typify the spirit that moved every thought and action of our blessed Lord. Guile was never found in his mouth, and when he was reviled he reviled not again. As a sheep, inoffensive and harmless, he was led to the most ignominious slaughter of all ages. While his humanity was weak and cried out again in the bitterness of the cup, being led of the Spirit, he could say, *"Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done."* He *"made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."* When his hour had come, he opened not his mouth to utter a word of complaint or objection, not a single struggle did he offer against his crucifiers. Unto such an hour and to die such a death came he into the world, according to the will of God. What great condescension that the King of glory should bow the heaven and come down into this world of degradation, to hang upon Calvary's cross between two thieves, and yet without assemblance of revenge or pride in all that he said or did. He was thus manifested to be the Son of God, or the Son of love, for God is love.

"In his humiliation his judgment was taken away." In his mortification and abasement he was deprived of his capacity to judge, and as they crucified him, *"and the*

malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left," he said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. *"In the Spirit he was perfectly resigned to the Father's will, and there is nothing on record to indicate that he desired any compromise, or that his own will should prevail in any way whatsoever, for he rendered a perfect obedience. Who, then, shall declare his generation? Who shall tell of the manner of his coming? He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of a virgin, in a manger, and there was no place for him in the inn. Who shall declare the purpose of God in his advent into the world, his sufferings, death and resurrection? Who shall explain the necessity of his life being taken from the earth, the dying of the Just for the unjust, and the power which wrought in him when God raised him from the dead? There can be but one answer to these queries: Those to whom is given "power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* Only they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep. They must pass through the gall of bitterness, and be made to know that vain is the help of man, and cursed is the man

that maketh the arm of flesh his trust, before they can discover the pearl of great price and know that great and marvelous are the works of our God in the salvation of his people. No others can declare the generation of him whose life was taken from the earth, whose kingdom was of this world. *"And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?"* What is the answer? *"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;"* they prophesied of one whose name was *"Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."* Truly he was full of wonder, the man of wisdom and the government of his kingdom is upon his shoulder. In that kingdom where Jesus reigns, peace prevails and he is the *"Prince of Peace,"* and those who are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh seek peace, and pursue it. In the day when the Lord alone shall be exalted the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down. *"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."* How wonderful when the Lord fills the mouth of his servant and he is enabled to preach Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end, who liveth, and was dead, and, be-

hold, is alive for evermore; preach Christ, and him crucified, as the Way, the Truth and the Life." The Scriptures testify of him. Therefore, whatever Scripture is used, whether in the Old or the New Testament, Jesus is the sum and substance of it, and "*the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*" This is the word that searches all things, yea, the deep things of God, and when it is preached in demonstration of the Spirit and with power to one it shows him all things whatsoever he did, and he is made to ask, Is not this the Christ? It shows him that Christ is all his worthiness and that he should not trust in himself; that to be like Jesus he must be humbled, brought low, and "in his humiliation" his judgment must be taken away. He is thereby made willing to submit his case to the brethren and be subject unto them. In the case of the eunuch it had to do with one outside of the visible church, and there was such power and sweetness in the opening up of the word to his understanding he was made to say, "*Here is water; what*

doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both unto the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

There are evidently many who are followers of the flock to day who have not been that they might take up the cross and follow him. This matter is one between the individual and his God. All the servant can do is to preach Jesus, and this is done only as he is endued with power from on high. We wish to emphasize, however, that the humility of Christ did not end at the water's edge. Truly he did humble himself in demanding baptism at the hands of John, and none realized this more keenly than did John, as was clearly shown by what he said, but the humility of Jesus was unchanging, ever abiding. There are those in the church today who act as though they left their humility outside when they were received into the fellowship of the church and were baptized. They are no longer willing to subject themselves unto the brethren, but in the lusts of their pride and desire for leadership boast that they will not take orders from anyone on earth. Nothing but wreck and ruin can follow such a course. We would to God that he might make known unto them that he dwells in his people, that "*the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of*

God: and if it first began at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

One may proclaim love and peace from the housetop, and yet every action proving selfishness to be the foundation upon which they are building. Let the servant remember Peter's exhortation to "feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all of you be subject to one another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." We would like to impress indelibly upon the mind of all the inspired writing: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings." In other words, how beautiful is the walk, the life, that makes for peace, and unity, and love. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Brethren, let us be nothing, and less than nothing, that Christ may be all and in all.

"Jesus the great, the mighty God, A man of grief became;

*In paths of meekness here he trod,
And bore the sinner's shame.
Humility, how bright it shined
In every act he wrought;
What lowliness of heart and mind,
Appeared in all he taught.
His love to men of sinful race
Glowed in his tender breast;
For man be yielded to disgrace,
Forsaken and distressed.
Led as a lamb to meet the sword,
He bowed beneath the stroke;
Not one revengeful, angry word,
The dear Redeemer spoke.
Oh may his meekness be my guide,
The pattern I pursue;
How can I bear revenge or pride,
With Jesus in my view?"*

Elder R. L. Dodson

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SEPTEMBER 2005

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Roy Ingram - VA	10.00
Alvis Shelton - VA	10.00
Hazel Garland - MD	25.00
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Wanda Brown - NC	5.00
Ronald Locke - KY	5.00
Donald Arne - SD	25.00
Allene Gallimore - NC	5.00
Julian Rutrough - VA	5.00
Grover Rogers - KY	5.00

OBITUARIES

ELDER HARVEY HOLLAND

Elder Harvey C. Holland of Kenly, NC was born July 21, 1921 and died May 29, 2005. His funeral was conducted on May 31 at Coley Funeral Home in Kenly, NC by Elder Harold Pittman. He united with Pittman Grove Primitive Baptist Church on April 11, 1971 and was ordained a deacon on October 10, 1971. Being told by God to preach, he was ordained as a Primitive Baptist minister in July, 1972. Elder Holland served as pastor at Mill Branch Primitive Baptist Church and Nashville Primitive Baptist Church. These churches were in Nash County. He was still serving Old Beulah Primitive Baptist Church and Pittman Grove Primitive Baptist Church at the time of death. These churches are in Johnston County. He served as moderator of the Black Creek Primitive Baptist Association from 1977 until his death. We the members of the Black Creek Association have sustained a great loss. He served the churches faithfully over the past 33 years. Elder Holland believed in a God who rules and reigns over all things and that eternal life was a free and unmerited favor that came by the mercy and grace of God Almighty.

Harvey C. Holland and Alice T. Holland were married for 59 1/2 years. They were highly favored with five beautiful children: Harvey Holland, Jr., Judy Batts, Nancy Johnson, Joan Driver, and Laura Thornton. He is survived by one sister, Rachel Outland and one brother, Bill Holland.

As well as serving his church and family in a noble manner, he also served his country on the battle field. He was proud to have served in the U.S. Marines during World War II. During this time he lost a finger and received a purple heart.

I met Harvey Holland in the mid-sixties and was present at the meeting on the day he joined the church. My father made the statement on that day that Harvey Holland would be a preacher. We walked together for many years in the Black Creek Association as the only ordained ministers. I do miss him greatly but I do believe he is at rest. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to all that knew him and especially to his companion, children, and grandchildren.

Written by:
Elder Harold Pittman

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.

Signs of the Times

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES, INC.

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

SONG

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

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

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

*Count ye her towers, how high they
rise,
Her golden spires, they pierce the
skies!*

*Her golden streets are fair to view;
Her palaces and bulwarks, too.*

*Then round her walk, her turrets ten;
Mark all her brazen bulwarks well;
Spread far and wide her deathless
fame,*

Her pearly gates and walls of flame.

*Her founder's love has ever proved
Like Salem's mount, which ne'er was
moved;*

*'Tis fixed on this eternal base,
The grace of God, and gift by grace.*

Kent.

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	290
Elder J. B. Farmer	
CORRESPONDENCE	294
VOICES OF THE PAST	295
Elder W. D. Griffin	
Elder D. V. Spangler	
J. L. Bocock	
CONTRIBUTIONS	310
OBITUARIES	310
Dreamer Lynn Hale	
Eugene Fielding Osborne, Sr.	
Claudis "Squib" Tucker	

EDITORIAL

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:32.



Elder J.B. Farmer

We all are brought, from time to time, into situations and states of mind, which cause us to fear. The prophets felt this fear, and so did the apostles and so do we. Paul even confessed that he was with the church at Corinth in weakness and in fear and much trembling. What a

great comfort it is to know that we are not by ourselves in these things. I think the called ministers of the gospel feel this most acutely when they are brought before the people of God to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Why is this? I am made to believe that they see themselves as worms of the dust that are not sufficient for these things in themselves. They are made to know that the preaching of the gospel is not in the strength of the flesh, but rather in the power of God by the Holy Spirit. Likewise, all the little ones of God, when they are made to view themselves as being undone and so weak in the flesh, fear, knowing that they cannot find how to perform that which is good. They are made to understand that they are not able to keep themselves from the evil one.

When we say or do or think things not fitting for God's children, Satan whispers, *"Surely you don't have a part in the kingdom of God or you wouldn't behave this way."* Then the fears descend upon us and bring us down in the dust of the earth. And here we must remain until the Holy Spirit speaks peace to our souls. God is merciful unto His people and makes them to understand that salvation is by grace, not of works. He shows them that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And He tells them that Jesus Christ came to save sinners.

He speaks the truth to them that no one is able to bring anything to the charge of God's elect, for Christ died for them and He washed them from their sins in His own blood, and that He has been raised from the dead, and is now at the right hand of God making intercession for them according to the will of God. Why does God do such things for His people? I am made to believe that it is because He loves them and has loved them with an everlasting love. God so loved the world (His people) that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth (the ones given faith to believe) upon Him should not perish but should have everlasting life.

This perfect love casts out fear. Do we not see evidence of this when the minister is delivered from the bondage of fear as the Spirit of God moves upon him and the congregation? Do we not see this fear replaced with holy boldness as the truth is brought forth in the power of God? Have we not experienced this fear being cast out, after we sinned and were made to suffer godly sorrow, which works repentance? Has not this fear been removed when our attention has been taken from our sins to His righteousness and holiness? Have we not experienced the casting out of fear when the dread of destruction has been replaced with the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins? And

do we not see our fears put away when our hearts are filled with love and hope?

Jesus said in power, "*Fear not.*" This is the command of God to His people. It literally means that the child of God must not continue in the state of fear. He must be delivered from that fear by the power of God by the operation of His Spirit. It is a sure thing with God. The Child of God must be lifted up out of that fearful state and made to rejoice in hope of eternal life because God has declared it to be so. His little ones are made to reject the whisperings of the devil and to fulfill the commandment of God to resist him. And the certain promise of God, Who cannot lie, is that when we resist the devil, he shall flee from us.

Jesus called His people the, "*little flock.*" Aren't you glad that Jesus referred to His people in this way? When we look around and see a few members here and there in the various churches across the country, is it not a comfort to have assurance that the people of God are the fewest of all people upon the face of the earth? They are as the stars of the heavens and the sand of the seas, innumerable. But they are the remnant according to the election of grace. Jesus said that where two or three are gathered together in His name that He would be there in their midst. It has ever pleased the God of heaven to confound the mighty

with the weak things of this world. The mighty cities of Sodom and Gommorah were destroyed, but a few souls, even righteous Lot and his family were preserved by the mercies of God. The great city of Jericho was destroyed along with all in it except for Rahab the harlot and her family – one house out of the entire city. So it was with Noah and his family when God destroyed the world with the flood. And so has it been with the whole family of God through the ages. The family of God is a little flock which God has loved from the beginning, and which He will bring to glory without fail.

We know that a flock of sheep is totally dependant upon the shepherd. When the wolf comes, if the shepherd were not present, it would tear and destroy at its will, because the sheep would not be able to defend themselves. They look to the shepherd for help and deliverance. So it is with the little flock of the Good Shepherd. He is ever with them to deliver them out of all their troubles and He will never leave nor forsake them. He is not afraid of the wolf because He has power over it. And he loves the sheep, even to the extent of laying down His life for them. And they are made to love and trust the Good Shepherd.

Jesus said to His sheep, *“for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”* It is

evident that Jesus is comforting His people with His words. He called His Father, *“your Father.”* Jesus makes it plain that the heavenly Father is not only His Father but also your Father. And He makes it manifest that your Father loves you. Your Father proved His love for you in that it pleased Him to give you the kingdom. We are all children of parents, and some of us have children. Either way we are made to know that good parents delight to give their children good gifts because of the love that is present with them. If we being evil know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

We are taught to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. By the grace and mercy and power of God this we do, if we are His. The little children of God are made to seek to enter that kingdom and to walk around in it and to behold the things in it. But they are taught that the kingdom comes not by observation. They are made to see that this heavenly kingdom is not of this world but is spiritual. They are made to know that the kingdom of God is within them. God has given the kingdom to His little flock. They, with the eye of faith see the King upon His throne, high and lifted up. They see the strong walls of the

city, which keep out every thing that would defile or destroy. They see the inhabitants of the city in robes of pure white, which is the righteousness of Christ. They are made to understand the law that rules the citizens there is the law of love. They are made to know that the city is eternal in the heavens. They are given a sure and steadfast hope that the heavenly city is their home, and that they are strangers and pilgrims in this world – that they are only passing through this low ground.

Even though the devil tells us that we must surely come short of that kingdom and fall by the wayside, the Spirit of God continues with us, and the Hope of glory never fails us. The Holy Spirit counteracts the lies of the wicked one and gives assurances all along the way. He says by the apostle and to our souls, *“We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.”* And He gives us faith to say with the beloved apostle Paul, *“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”* And He gives us the steadfastness to believe along with Job, *“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”* Even though we know we are weak and unworthy according to the flesh, we are given all confidence that He is able to finish the good work, which He began.

Thanks be to God that, *“He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”* And thanks be unto God that the apostle said by the Holy Spirit, *“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.”*

May we be given faith and hope and love to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. May we be given to be faithful unto death that we should receive the crown of life. Written in love and in hope of eternal life.

J. B. Farmer
11-12-2004.

PSALM 90:1-3.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations,

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

CORRESPONDENCE

We were blessed to be partakers of a great feast that lasted for two days during our Association on the fourth Sunday in August. Not only were we blessed with the rations of spiritual food, the ladies of the church came through with an abundant amount of natural food, which was delicious and enjoyed by all.

Elder Marvin Brumfield, whom I have a great love for, preached an introductory sermon. Elder Brumfield comes from the Staunton River Association. Elder Brumfield was made to elaborate on things pertaining to this great salvation which is the deliverance of God in the hearts of God's believing family through God's precious grace. Elder Brumfield also expounded on righteousness that this favored few comes in possession of.

Elder Terry, the second speaker to come to the stand, is another very able speaker. Elder Terry comes from the Smith River Association. Elder Terry spoke of this highly favored few who are elevated from the pits of darkness, through God's precious grace, and made to feast from these heavenly rations when given the opened ear to hear. Elder Terry's sermon was well received.

Elder Connor, from the Pigg River Association, was the third able speaker to approach the stand. Oh, how he was elevated from the pits

of darkness, to bring that good news from that far country. Tears of Joy descended down the cheeks of that highly favored few who were made to rejoice through the channels of God's precious grace.

The fourth speaker, Elder Wayman Chappel was favored to bring forth one of the most highly worded discourses that I have ever heard him preach. Elder Chappel visited from Memphis Tennessee.

During this association, we had visitors from several states. The love that was manifested, is beyond comprehension of man. Everyone made themselves at home; and the love expressed in their countenances gave proof that all feasted from what was set forth.

Elder Wayman Chappel opened the Sunday morning portion of the association. Elder Chappel was blessed to bring a message of comfort for God's little ones.

Elder J.B. Farmer, our local pastor preached the closing sermon. Elder Farmer was blessed to speak comforting words to Jerusalem, telling them that their warfare was accomplished, and that they had received double at the Lord's hand for all of their sins. Elder Farmer was high favored to set forth a sovereign, loving, ruling God, a God who works everything after the counsel of his will. Elder Farmer is a highly gifted servant who sets forth God's sovereignty, throughout the channels of God's loving grace.

All the preaching inspired and delivered from the attending elders,

came forth in harmony, all declaring a loving, sovereign, ruling God; a God that rules and controls everything after the counsel of His will. I think the beauty of God's goodness was expressed in fellowship and nurturance unsurpassed over these two days.

After hearing the Good News from that far country, some verses come to my mind. These verses from the book of Ruth, focus on a point in time when Orpha and Ruth were leaving their mother in law Naomi. Orpha appears to demonstrate the way of the flesh when returning to her people and the ways of their god. Ruth, it seems, demonstrates this great love of the believer in sovereign grace. Naomi bade Ruth to follow Orpah. Ruth told Naomi, *"not to; urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go, I will go; and, where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God"*. Isn't this the words that the believers of this great church of God sets forth when they are lifted from the pits of darkness, and made to see through an eye of faith and walk in in that heavenly light?

I hope the reader will enjoy this telling of our Association meeting, thinking this is the way most associations unfold around the country.

In the bonds of love I hope.
 Riley Justice
 POB 272
 War, WV 24892 / 304-875-2960

VOICES OF THE PAST

Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy. The king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said unto Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save thee; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." (Zeph. 8:14-17)

The Sabbath is a beautiful text, a wonderful subject. Rightly understood, the whole of the New Testament is about gospel rest. Before we will ever come to enjoy that rest fully, we must have some understanding of God's rest from His work. This work embraces everything treated upon in the Old Testament. It is a time of turmoil, strife, law labor, with austere threatenings for not keeping the Sabbath holy. First, let us, as blessed of God, see what God's work as the creator consisted of, and let us not be threatening our brethren, nor enter into controversy about whether He made this or that, whether he did this or that. To treat the subject so carelessly and uncon-

cerned as to say that God did not make everything that was made, and all for Himself, is forever under the death knell for finding a safe promise of rest. If, in the examination of God's pre-Sabbath work, He did not make everything that was made, it does not matter how much text book knowledge is poured into the effort, there is absolutely no Sabbath rest for God or man that can ever be conjured up. God nor men can rest in another's work - only in His own.

There is no need for me to quote an array of Scripture to prove God made all things. Only one is enough; only one will suffice. *"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."* (John 1:3). Arguing about things is bad enough, arguing against God is worse. Therefore we will not have any of that. In the labor, and also in the past six thousand years since then, there has been nothing to disturb God, the Creator in Sabbatical rest. All of those eons of time with His rest from the natural creation, I am sure that the text before us is a good one, and that our Saviour God is now resting in His love since this rest is a perfect work of Him who is perfect. (Deut. 32:4) Furthermore, since He is to perfect that which concerns us (Psa. 138:8). I am sure that poor worn out sinners will also rest in Him as children:

"What think ye of Christ? is the test,

To try both your state and your scheme;

*You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of Him.*

*So guilty, so helpless am I,
I durst not confide in His blood,
Nor on His protection rely,*

Unless I were sure He is God."

And thus I left my feeble voice and wield my wobbling pen in defense of the glorious doctrine of God our Saviour, and that He is alright with the natural creation, having began His rest in and from what He created, and is still resting from, and resting in His natural creation knowing and having determined that no particle of that natural creation shall ever keep one whom He chose to bear witness to His saving grace will ever fail of formation as a son of Adam, and consequently shall be made manifest as a son or daughter of the most High God.

Personally, I believe that God made everything that was made, and that He had an object in view worthy of Himself in everything that is a thing. Neither the object nor the purpose has been side tracked in the least degree, even down to a hair breadth, for if He designed to make a thing, and it did not come up to, His predetermined specification, I cannot visualize Him as being able to rest with His failure.

In regard to God resting from His work and in His love; an imperfection in any of His work leaves all

room and expectation for failure in all of His work. Let me elaborate. I sometimes say both in the pulpit and on the printed page that I have not been called to preach absolute predestination—in fact, I doubt that any other man has such a calling. A man called of God is called to preach the gospel, to preach Christ and Him crucified; to present every man perfect in Christ (1 Cor. 2:2; Col. 1:28) That determination of Paul was voiced and useless unless God had declared or predestinated the end from the beginning. If I have ever felt called and impressed with the divine preaching of the gospel, it was at the beginning, and it is still the same today, to tell sinners of the great salvation that is in Christ Jesus. When a man -any man - yea, if you and you, ever preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified, it is worthless unless the testimony of Christ is true, to wit, *“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness to the truth”*. Every truth of the Bible is based on an earlier truth. The first deed leads to another deed; the first step into the bounds of the doctrine takes us all of the way through it. There is not any way, except the one way, which was, and always is, God’s way. Never having been anything but a poor country rustic, and even now lingering close around the evening shades with afflictions of the body increasing day by day, I still feel boldly to say that no writer or preacher can get Joseph down to

Egypt that he might engage in planting and storing corn for the preservation of much people, except the way God sent him. God purposed him to go that way, and I am not ashamed nor fearful in saying that no man can save the Egyptians, nor the Israelites, unless that way includes the wicked brethren, the wicked wife of Potiphar, the forgetful butler; and yet that in each case they were thoughtful of themselves in the satisfying of their own lusts.

Ah, yes, I say again, although I probably will have to run the gauntlet of unjust criticism, that unless I am mistaken in my calling, my impression, my experience from beginning until tonight, as I write, that it is to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Again, I could not have preached the first time had God not had control of everything under the sun to that end. Also, it is that way with the effectual callings; it is that way about the preservation of the saints to glory, it is that way in regard to the predestination of the saints to glory; it is that way about the resurrection of the dead. All of these doctrines are the solid truth of God, and to preach Jesus Christ, for me to rest in His love and in His work, is for me to have equally so from Him that the fixedness of one of them lays the inevitable decree of God and carries with it that each one and all of them are predestinated of God. This is why God rested from the six days of work. Everybody knows how you study about an un-

finished work. There can be no rest, no safety, no security for any of the work, unless all of the work is finished. I am sure; I am without a lingering doubt, but that He had everything pertaining to the salvation and deliverance of His people perfectly finished before He rested.

What a beautiful thought Zephaniah has presented to us of our God. *"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people"*. What will it take to comfort God's people? I cannot rest for a moment in His everlasting love unless I am equally assured that He has everlastingly fixed everything. To poor finite mortals there is nothing more disturbing than the unknown road, the uncertain quality and quantity of that with which we have to deal. Every farmer, every businessman, is non-plussed about every crop, every new order of business because of the unknown facing him. How sad it is to hear people talk so convincingly (?) of their relationship with God, and yet neither He nor they are sure about the outcome. There is no rest to a child of God in any such doctrine. God Himself, could never rest in His love in behalf of our salvation if He did not know and determine beforehand what the actions of those that He did not love would be.

But I know the unspoken harsh criticism of those who do not believe in the absolute sovereignty of God. They tell me with a glow of smugness and placidness in their countenance that they believe that God

knows the future of all things, but that He did not predestinate all things, but that He works accordingly along with His fore knowledge. My Lord and my God! How misleading such a thought is to me What? God foreknows all things, but He did not have anything to do with predestinating or establishing or fixing or limiting them? Tell me, dear reader, dear brethren, how in the name of reason could God ever rest in His love with such a horrible spectre facing Him at every turn? He knows adversities are coming; He knows that the foreknown things outside the pale of His determination can come up and bring things about that would destroy the welfare or the future home of one of those that Christ died for? Is that what you mean when you deny the unlimited sovereignty of God? Is that what you really mean when you say that since God foreknows all of these things that finally and eventually no one of His children will ever be lost. That reduces Him to a puppet held in tow by Satan who holds the string on Him. How sad, how eternally insecure has God been; no relationship with wickedness save that He knows about it; no control over it, save that He knows about it. It is in existence, although He knows about it, and it is presumed that He knew while He was before all things that it would come, but that He was helpless to keep it from coming. Yet He knew about it; He did not desire it to come, He did not have any purpose

in it coming, but He knew it was coming, and He had to stand by and see it enter into the world, while He hated it, and would much rather it not enter, yet He stood by and it came into existence in spite of His opposition; His hatred to it.

God rest in His love when He had in all the universe a principle of sin that is engaged in opposition to one sinner being saved! There is not honor to be accorded such a weakling as God is, if that doctrine has a semblance of truth in it; there is no rest to God, and moreover no rest to the family of God, nor any rest to be had anywhere in this world or in promise for the next one, if this is true.

God is not resting in the fact that He has been and is continuing to out-manuever Satan, to out-wrestle him and obtain liberty for His people. Perish the thought! But He is resting in Himself, resting in His love, in His six days of work, in His having gotten the victory on the high and exalted Mount Calvary as the Man, Christ Jesus the Lord was put to death. I am sure that the prophet by the inspiration of God had the nucleus of the rich and glorious doctrine of redeeming love. The basis and foundation of this doctrine is in the finished work of God. Not one thing has been left out of His counsel. If so, no rest for God, no rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, no keen anticipation of the coming day when all of His blood-washed throng will be gathered home, and

based on such a weak system of salvation at this, I look back at Calvary and I am sure there was not joy for our dying Saviour, as there cannot be any rest for God in His love.

As God rested from His work in creation, thus bringing in the approved Sabbatical year of gospel rest, I look from that great and outstanding event in the history of the ancient world, and I look down from there across from the vista of the ages, and I see a great historic event transpiring in the rest and the completed salvation of God's family.

I beg you to travel back one step with us and we find the prophet being moved by the inspiration of God to write and to treat upon one of the most restful topics that has ever engaged the mind of man. He says "*The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and ye shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted is God with us.*" (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23) Everything that the devil could muster was engaged to outwit God, but God was with us. God being in the whole assembly of the first born, what could occur to cause the saints misery and unrest? It being God with them (us), yea, it having been God there in a body of flesh, what would have kept Him in the thousands of years, and the myriad and sundry events of all that time from resting in His love? It was He who was there; certainly God had not sent an emissary on this important work; He

came Himself, and He was One with us. How conclusively He sealed the destiny of all those that boast of their power, of what they can do. All free-willism, all self-righteousness coming from wherever it may, received a death blow. *"Thou couldst not have any power against me save it be given thee from above."* (John 19:10, 11) Talk to me about God resting in His love, but every blood-bought sinner is resting in His love; not in their love, nor in any other of the many works of faith, but in God's love.

Thousands of years ago God came down and wrought salvation in the earth. Ever after the saints rested in that love. Abraham saw and rejoiced in it; the Hebrew children had Him with them in the fiery furnace and rested through all of that fiery persecution; Job received from his Redeemer sustenance and a reconciled waiting and resting in hope of seeing Him for himself and not another.

When this Saviour was born of His mother by the work of the Holy Ghost, He tarried with her about twelve years. Did you ever notice that He rested that early in what He came to do? He forgot His mother. Have you noticed that she forgot Him for three days journey? Did you notice, after He began doing that which He came to do, that He did not rest in her, but His rest was in doing the things that He was born to do; the things that He came to do? When His mother came back seeking Him, He did not say to her, *"Mother, I am*

safe," but He spoke to them on that occasion, as He did on other occasions, as though she was a stranger. Even then, as the Christ lad, He was resting in His Father's business. His meat (food), His delight, His rest, was to be about the work that He came to do.

As He engaged in this work, it was a matter of necessity with Him. *"I must work the works of God, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work"*. The whole work of God in salvation was in His hands. I am not afraid to be positive about this. I find no objective that would be served by me being anything less than positive about this important matter. If, in preaching Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life; if, in coming to you in the *Signs* for nearly fifty years, I had presented a number of secondary matters to you in addition to Christ, there would have been no truth in it; there would have been no gospel in it; yea, there would have been no rest in it. Had He left off the least thing in His work which His Father sent Him to do, I seriously doubt that He would have gotten back to His Father. I do not want to sound off on that, but His father was well pleased in Christ; He was trusting in Him, if you please; He was resting in Him, and He did receive Him back into His bosom. I do not know whether He would have received Him back had He failed to do His will, but I do say that had He failed His Father would not

have been pleased, and God's displeasure would have been everlastingly known in heaven. You say as to whether it would be restful to look forward to, or as to whether it would be restful for a poor sinner to spend eternity in an unrestful atmosphere.

In conclusion, I know that such cannot be. Let me change that phraseology, and say that it could not be that way. It was fixed, predestinated, purposed in Christ, that He finish the work which His Father gave Him to do for therein He (Christ) found meat, food, delight, rest, and His Father has rested in His eternal love for His children, which love was manifested in Him sending Christ into the world, and verified by His dying words, to wit, "*I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*"

There is no other doctrine that sets Him forth as the God of poor sinners. Anything short of this in what is called time means that we do not have any dependable rest here, and it means that God never has, and never will rest in His love concerning the salvation of His elect people.

Now a word to one and all. My whole-hearted support of this restful God honoring doctrine does not mean that I expect to use predestination as a text every time that I write or preach. It does not mean that I am endorsing everything that is called Absolute Predestination. I never have done that, and God willing, I never will do that, but it does mean that wholeheartedly I do endorse

that the Bible abundantly teaches what I prefer to call the sovereignty of God over all His creation, but if you had rather call it Absolute Predestination, then I whole-heartedly endorse your right to do so, and you are my brother and my sister, if, indeed, I am a brother.

Furthermore, my unlimited endorsement of the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty or predestination does not mean three things, to wit:

1. I do not declare non-fellowship for any dear brother and sister that is not able to see and understand predestination as I have outlined in this article.

2. This does not mean in any sense that I believe or condone the doctrine that God is the Author of my sins.

3. This does not mean that I will not quote, believe, or even use as the best I can, any text that is in the Bible, going so far as to say that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and that all of it is profitable, and that God has said what He meant to say.

Now in conclusion let me say that for fifty years I have read the *Signs*, and for nearly that many years I have been writing for its pages. I do not think that I am wrong when I say that I have examined ninety percent of the issues that have been published since that memorable day in October, 1832. During that time the editors and contributors have differed on various

portions of the Bible. However, with but a couple of times nobody has run off home with the only glove that we had to play with, saying, "*If you do not play according to my rules, you will not be able to play at all.*"

Dearly beloved brethren, none of us are perfect (or am I mistaken in my assumption)? This is our only paper. Will you stand by and see it destroyed? For years I have solicited subscribers for it; for years I have solicited brethren and sisters writing for it. In the last thirty seven years I have, by the grace of God and by His tender mercy, been closely associated with Elder Spangler. Not the first time has he reprimanded me for not writing, nor has he found fault with what I did write. Elder Dodson told me when I joined the staff of the *Signs* at his earnest solicitation, that my writing would never have an editing pencil used on it unless it was a grammatical mistake that I had made. No one has ordered me around in these fifty years of reading its pages and writing for them. Nor has anybody been sending out guidelines for me to follow in my writings. As far as I know, I have not been denied access to all business matters pertaining to the *Signs*. I have not been to any meetings, nor have I sought to be. At the outset, Elder Dodson told me that all that he expected of me was to keep them supplied with copy for the *Signs*. I have tried to do that, and God being

my helper, I will continue to do that.

I did not always agree with Elder Dodson, but we had a kind brotherly agreement in the beginning and our relationship was as pleasant as it has been with any minister among us about anything. For forty years I have been intimately and familiarly acquainted with Elder David Spangler. We agreed years ago that we would be frank and cooperative about any matters concerning the *Signs*. I feel sure that no friction has entered into our relationship, and we have served churches together; I have baptized candidates for him at Dan River when he was unable, physically, to do so; we have jointly served two churches for a number of years; we have officiated at communions together; we have both gone into the water together and have both in joint action baptized candidates together. To be sure, we have not always seen everything just alike, and in those cases I would say to him, "David, I do not see that like you do," or he has said to me, "Dorris, I think this is a better way", and my testimony today after this close laboring together in the common cause of the churches and the paper, let us all lay down our bickering and let us go on to perfection.

Your little brother, trembling,
but pursuing,
Elder W. D. Griffin

TRANSCRIBED FROM A SERMON
PREACHED BY
ELDER D. V. SPANGLER
Snow Hill Church, October 23, 1975

May we turn to page 156. I would like for us to think about the sentiment of this hymn as we sing it. If you sing it without taking note of what it says, it is worthless:

*Come, thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace!
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.*

*Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above:
Praise the mount! O, fix me on it!
Mount of God's unchanging love.*

*Here I raise my Ebenezer;
Hither by thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.*

*Jesus sought me, when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;
He, to save my soul from danger,
Interposed his precious blood!*

*O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be:
Let thy grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to thee.*

*Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it!
Prone to leave the God I love!
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal
it;
Seal it for thy courts above!*

I am thankful to be with you. We had two things happen since arriving that has, you might say, made my trip worth-while; if there was nothing else. Some time ago I received an invitation to spend our time at this meeting in the home of one of the young members, Linda Adkins. Now I have a reputation in this country, of writing short letters, when I write. So I wrote, she said, in maybe two lines, "The Lord willing, I'm coming". As I said to her yesterday morning, "I am going to write you a long letter now, and the letter will say this, that if I hadn't received your letter, I don't think I would have come." So you all might take that as you want to. The other thing is I visited an old friend in the nursing home yesterday morning, Mr. Clarence Robinson, who attended my services many years ago. He is blind now and he didn't recognize my voice. When I told him who I was, the reaction was worth my whole trip. Oh, the reaction of joy he showed for a poor sinner like I am. It surely meant something to me.

In the 17th chapter of the book of John, I shall begin reading with the first verse.

*"These words spake Jesus,
and lifted Up his eyes to heaven,
and said, Father, the hour is
come; glorify thy Son, that thy
Son also may glorify thee: As
thou hast given him power over
all flesh, that he should give
eternal life to as many as thou
hast given him. And this is life*

eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

These are the words of Jesus. And the occasion was the approach to the cross and the laying down of His life for His people. I think the message begins with His summing up in the 14th Chapter of John. You know, Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us about the birth of Christ, the virgin birth, the geneology and the events surrounding His natural birth. But the Apostle John soars away in his bringing Him to us. He loses sight, you might say, of His humble birth, His geneology, as he said, "*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 the ministers here and elsewhere could never expound the expression, "The same was in the beginning with God." For the unity of the Godhead is there. The covenant relationship is there, in the description, "The same was in the beginning with God." And much of this chapter is bringing to us the relationship and the unity of God the Father and God the Son in the realm of salvation. Embraced in that unity is the people of God. Jesus in God and God in

Jesus, and He in them, and them in Him, etc.

In the 14th Chapter of John, Jesus begins to tell His disciples that He is going away. They are puzzled often concerning His going away. In the 14th Chapter He tells them, "*If ye believe in God, believe also in me. Let not your hearts be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you*". As the time would open and develop and be brought to pass they would see and know more about it. "*I go and prepare a place for you, and I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also.*" He tells them they know the way. Yet there is an inquiry in the mind of Phillip, and he said to Jesus, "Show us the Father". Show us the Father. You have talked about Him. Jesus said, "*Have I been so long with you and yet thou hast not known me, Phillip?*" "*Has all the work that I have unfolded as the eternal will of God in my life been unnoticed and unknown?*" "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*"

The word of God says, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." How many? Everyone! Everyone under consideration. So the 14th Chapter is laying the foundation of His coming again. We are still holding that forth to the people. If it has not become the key to hold, it never

will be. I am looking for the coming of our Lord. If I wasn't, I wouldn't be here this morning. I anticipate the event because He said, "I'm coming again." You can say it in the gospel, or however you please, but there is a second coming of the Lord.

Then Jesus brings the matter a little closer as He comes to the 15th Chapter of John regarding the unity of the Father and the Son. He said, "I am the true vine. My Father is the Husbandman." And He didn't forget to say in that chapter, "Ye are the branches". That is bringing into view in a lovely way, the unity of the Father and of the Son and with His people. "Branches". And in connection with that expression He said, "As I live, ye shall live." Just as certainly as I am alive, there is your life. "Ye shall live". There are about five occasions where the expression is used in these three chapters, "These words spake Jesus". It seems that there was a special significance in what He was saying at certain times. "These words spake Jesus" unto them.

I especially delight in the 15th Chapter in the words of Jesus when He said, "These words have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you; that your joy might be full." We will never know what salvation really is until we know the joy of our Saviour in saving us. Our cup will never be full. It will be half empty, until there is in our heart the knowledge that it was just as great a joy for Christ to save us as it is for us to

be saved. Paul said, "*For the joy set before him.*" It was always set before Him, and every movement of His life, He endured the cross despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God. God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name. Not only while Christ walked upon the earth, but in every phase of the salvation of His people did He have the preeminence in all things. But His place in heaven now, this morning, is as our Intercessor. He appears in the presence of God for us.

I remember the time I read that scripture in the 15th Chapter. It was at night and I was setting in my room. Whatever He had been telling in the 14th Chapter, and coming on down to the 15th, "*Ye are the branches,*" etc., *it seems now, He said, "These words He spake".* He says, "*I spake these words unto you that my joy might remain in you; that your joy might be full.*" I don't think that we would detract anywhere from God's grace and His mercy and His everlasting love for His people to say that even the Father in bringing many sons to glory through the work of His son will take pleasure in it, also. And in connection with that; there is something about the doctrine of grace and the wonders of God's grace that presents these two thoughts. When this world has been brought to a conclusion, and is over, there will be a people in heaven that God won't

be ashamed of. And the only reason there will be a people that He won't be ashamed of is because He will prepare them for it. And we also, my hearers, won't be ashamed. Christ was not ashamed to call His people, "Brethren". God was not ashamed to be called our God, He says that in the book of Hebrews. God was not ashamed to be called the God of the people pictured in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. It is the only way God could have a people in heaven that He wouldn't be ashamed of. He prepares them for it. And one of the great blessings of Grace is that God prepares us for what He has prepared for us. Have you learned that in your life? That same hand must prepare you for what God has prepared for you? Whether it is either joy or sorrow, it is the same thing. One is no different than the other. God must prepare us for joy as well as sorrow.

And now, Jesus in the 14th and 15th chapters has been preparing them for His going away. He has stressed to them that "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name it shall be given to you". That used to be a great puzzle to me. But when I found that the various names of Christ and the titles of Christ was found over 100 times in the Bible, I said, "His name must embrace every need of His people." Whether He is the Advocate, the Intercessor, or whoever He is, it must embrace it all. His Name! These Great Right Reverends, so and so's might think they

have a right long handle when they have two or three words attached to their names. But think of the Lord Jesus Christ having over 100 names and titles in the word of God, and each one suited to each characteristic of Him. Oh, my friend, isn't it a wonderful thing? I would travel thousands of miles to see Him one moment. He is the Kings of Kings. He is the Lord of Lords. Everywhere!

I have been in the city of Washington a few times, and they say every avenue leads to the Capitol. You go down Pennsylvania Avenue or Massachusetts Avenue, or any other, and they lead to the Capitol. But think here, every name of salvation, every phase of salvation of the people of God embodied in the Name of Christ that leads to Him!

You can have a dozen avenues in the city of Washington, and they would be crowded thoroughfares, wouldn't they? But there can be over a hundred names and titles of Christ pointing to Him and the virtue of Him and there is never any congestion in the way. There is always a way to see Him, and there is always a desire in the heart of those at the throne of God to say, "I would see Jesus."

Paul admonished Timothy to preach the word: to reprove, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine. I said not long ago that if the doctrine of exhortation wasn't in the New Testament I had been preaching a lie over 50 years. It is there and it is for the minister as God directs him. If it is preached in blind zeal it

is just as terrible as he is, but if it is through the constraining grace of God, then it is, as recorded in the New Testament, *“Exhort the church of God with all long suffering, and doctrine.”* *“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but they will heap to themselves teachers having itching ears”*. You know, I used to wonder what that was, “Teachers having itching ears”. I said, *“I have heard of the nose itching, but not the ears itching”*. Probably I shouldn’t say this, but I say a lots of things I wish I hadn’t said, and lots of things I don’t say that I wish I had said. But not long ago I heard a minister speak, and when he got through he took out of the pulpit like he was in a race with somebody. And he looked like he was itching to hear what somebody was going to say about the sermon he had preached. He must have had itching ears, do you suppose? I don’t know. I will leave that for you to decide.

But these words, now we are coming to the hour of Christ. We are coming to Him and the hour appointed in eternity that our Saviour must die for us. And now His prayer. His people come first. The awful hour is approaching that He must pay the debt that all mankind couldn’t pay. All the blood of all Adam’s race from Adam’s day to today couldn’t pay it. The blood of the Son of God only, could. And the hour, He recognizes very well. He

says, *“Father”*. *“These words spake Jesus and lifted Up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy son that thy son may also glorify thee.”* That is the unity of the Godhead. There is the husbandman and the true vine. *“As thou has given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”* That’s what we preach! Christ had power over all flesh for one end. To give eternal life to as many as thou has given Him. *“And this is life eternal; that they might know him”*. That is what it is. God has a sure and certain and definite way of bringing that life to them. The only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. *“And now, O Father.”* There was a time that our Saviour couldn’t call God His Father. There was a time when in His humiliation His judgment was taken away. There was a time that the literal words that were in the 22nd Psalm must be brought out of the lips of Christ. *“My God; My God, why hast thou forsaken me.”* Now what was He asking God for? He calls Him Father, and I like the expression. *“And now, Oh Father.”* We only hint at what is involved. We can’t tell it. What is He asking for now? What is the special request of Christ? *“Glorify thou me with thine own self”*. That is what He wanted. That is what He was asking for. And the kind of glory that He asked God to give Him was the kind

that He had with Him before the world was. Could He have asked anything greater? That in the hour of departure, the wonders of the covenant might be brought truly into view; that He who He entered into covenant with before this world was, there would be a continuation and a fulfilling of it in bringing Him from the dead. Paul said in the last chapter of the book of Hebrews, *"The God of peace"*; *"The God of Peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."* The blood of the everlasting covenant! Make you perfect, etc., and in every good work it was good. And now He asked God to glorify Him with His presence. That the fulness of the love of God in the moment when the covenant was entered into, and God's love for His Son and His Son for Him, and the love for His people and the love of the people of God for them. "With thine own self". That is the glory Christ is asking for. There is no question, is it? That is the glory He has asked God for. Glorify Him with Himself. *"With the same glory I had with you before the world was."*

Some try to tell us now and try to bring us a saviour like one peddling something on the street. That isn't the God I worship. Our Lord Jesus Christ stresses in these chapters in John that though He was going away, He wasn't going to leave them comfortless. *"I will send the*

Comforter, the Holy Spirit in my name, and he shall take the things of mine and show them unto you." That work is still going on. You talk about experiences of grace. Every time the Holy Spirit brings to the heart of a sinner the assurances of Christ's work and their need of it, it is an experience of grace. It is of grace, however it may come, and that which doesn't come by grace isn't of the Holy Spirit. It is of the flesh, whatever it might be. The Holy Spirit doesn't wander around at random looking for something to bring to the people of God. He doesn't bring just anything. He brings the things of Christ. He applies every promise that a sinner has ever received in his heart of heaven and immortal glory. The Holy Spirit brings it. And there is no substitute for it. You can have a lots of substitutes, but not the Holy Spirit because He is equal with Jesus Christ, Himself. *"And now, Oh Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the same glory I had with you before the world."* And an answer was given Jesus on one occasion from the Father, *"I have already glorified thee"*. My beloved children, this morning, our Saviour is at the right hand of the Throne of God. He is as much alive today as He was when He was here, and He now in heaven appears in the presence of God for us. He is our Mediator; the only one between God and man that has the power of mediation. Every requirement of God for His people,

Christ has met in His death and His righteous life.

And as the hour approaches that He must depart, He said, "*Oh Father*". Have you ever felt you could call God your Father? Have you ever felt the sweetness of your Saviour's love that you could never tell anyone of? Oh, my friend, I wake up in the hours of night sometime, and it is like day. Some avenues pointing me to the virtues of Christ. Something I haven't seen will appear. I want to exalt His name. I sometimes think as the poet said:

"I want to praise Him while He gives me breath; I hope to praise Him after death."

And in the 24th verse of the 17th chapter our Saviour prayed. Yes, my friend, He prayed, that those He died for would be with Him. And He didn't only pray for that, but that "*They shall see my glory*". I expect to see the glory of Christ. I expect to share in the glory of my Master. Will that be fulfilled? As sure as you are setting there, this morning. And when the hour arrives, Jesus said, "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.*" But He tells us here, "*I have finished the work*". Before He died He said, "*I finished the work*", "*All things that are written in the prophets and in Moses and the Law and the Psalms concerning me*". As He approached the cross He said, "*They have been fulfilled*". Every one of them. There hasn't been a one left out. "*And now, Oh Father, glo-*

rify thou me with thy own self, with the same glory I had with you before the world." Then in the next chapter when He leaves His disciples, He goes out to meet our great foe and His. As He approaches those that Judas was bringing He said, "*Who are you looking for?*" And then He said, "*I am the one*". "*I am the very one you are looking for*". His great love led Him to meet them. His great love for you, my friends, led Him to meet His enemy. The eternal relationship and the eternal love of God in Him led Him, and the enemy fell on the ground. I'm glad they didn't have to send after Him. I'm glad they didn't have to tie Him. I know that the lamb was tied for a time in the eternal covenant as a type of Jesus on the Jewish altar. He was bound with cords on it, bound to the altar, but here I see the Lamb loose, now. And He goes to meet them, and He opens not His mouth. "*Dumb before His shearers*". I said yesterday afternoon I had some thoughts the other day about Christ being dumb. I just touched it. I can't tell you about it. Dumb. Mute. Beyond speech! Carrying our sins to that cross. Oh, my friends, lift up your heads this morning. Many of us may never meet again here on the shores of time. Lift up your heads. Lift up your heads! Our redemption is drawing nigh! I thank you!

Elder D. V. Spangler

Dear Brethren:

Since the God of all grace has loved us from eternity with an everlasting love, and has manifested this by making us new creatures in Christ Jesus, may we, even here in this Association, give unto Him the glory due His Name.

It was God that began the good work in us, and as sure as He has begun it, so surely will He complete it-in His own way and time. Our God is for us, and this is our consolation under all circumstances.

We shall soon pass through Jordan to the blissful shores of our heavenly Canaan. Our Leader, Jesus, has taken possession of that inheritance for us: He has gone to come again for us. This should cheer us to the lot of our inheritance in this vale of tears, assured that He will lead us on safely until we enter into that rest where none of the inhabitants will say, "I am sick". Then the days of our mourning will be ended.

It is this we are hoping for; it is this we are waiting for; it is the anticipation of this that sometimes causes us to rejoice. How delightful it is to the mind of a believer, to think that this inheritance is infallibly secured to all the family of God. Brethren, how bright are your prospects: Your Sun is rising to set no more. Soon you will receive a palm of victory and a crown of glory.

You ought to rejoice, though now, if need be, ye are in manifold temptations. You may be poor, you

may be tried in body and in mind, you may be Borrowing, but look up, your redemption draweth nigh.

"A few more rolling suns at most Will land us safe on Canaan's coast:

Where we shall sing the song of grace,

And see our glorious Hiding Place."

In bonds, J. L. Bocock

CONTRIBUTIONS

OCTOBER 2005

Norvell Godwin, LA	5.00
Eld. Jimmy Gray, NC	5.00
Alfred Ratliff, VA	5.00
Mrs. Walter Harrell, TX.....	5.00
Flay Mordecai, MS	5.00
Thomas Nichols, VA	5.00
Wilton Sutphin, VA.....	2.00
Emmie Grayson, AL.....	5.00

OBITUARIES

DREAMER LYNN HALE

Sister Dreamer Lynn Hale passed away at her home on August 19, 2005. Her father, Lynwood C. Hale and grandparents Caleb and Clara Hale preceded her in death. She is survived by her mother, Martha Blount Hale and one

sister Marjorie Dawn Hale, both of Vinton, Virginia; also a special friend, Peter Egan of Lorton, Virginia.

A private burial was held on Wednesday, August 24, at Mountain View Cemetery in Vinton.

Sister Dreamer manifested a love for her church. She had many afflictions but was present at her church meetings when possible. She was blessed to be present the weekend of communion service and left a gift for her church. Sister Dreamer always gave her gifts as anonymous.

We will miss Sister Dreamer very much but may our loss be her eternal gain. I thank God and feel privileged to have known Sister Dreamer. May we all be submissive to God's will.

Written in request of the Salem Church.

Mary Poff, Clerk
Hale Terry, Moderator

EUGENE FIELDING OSBORNE, SR.

Eugene Fielding Osborne, Sr. 83 of Westminister, Md., died Friday afternoon, Sept. 16, 2005, at his home.

Born March 10, 1922, in Peach Bottom, Pa., he was the son of the late Isom V. and Rosa Miller Osborne. He was the husband of Jennye A. Gladding Osborne for 58

years.

He was a graduate of Quarryville High School, Franklin and Marshall College and Penn State College in Pennsylvania. He also graduated from University of Maryland Law School.

He was a veteran of the U.S. Army Air Corp., having served in World War II.

He was an electrical engineer, having worked at the Applied Physics Lab, Westinghouse Corp. and Air Arm. He later went into private practice as a patent attorney. He was a member of Dan River Primitive Baptist Church.

Surviving, in addition to his wife, are daughter and son-in-law Janet Pellam-Ford and Gordon Ford of Basin, Mont.; son and daughter-in-law Eugene L. Jr. and Cindy Osborne of Westminister, Md.; brother Bliss Osborne of San Antonio, Texas; grandchildren Amber and Allison Osborne, Jessica and David Pellam and Gwendolyn Culbertson and husband Charles; and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased in death by siblings Vaughn, Charles, Tommy, John, James and Grace Osborne, Mary Payne, Barbara Grace and Brucie Leftwich.

Funeral services was held at Myers-Durboraw Funeral Home in Westminister, Md., with Elder Kenneth R. Key and Gerald D. Fuss officiating. Interment was in Emmanuel Baust Cemetery on top a high hill with a beautiful view of the

country side and the little villages of Tyrone below.

Brother "Gene" was esteemed highly among the membership of Dan River Church. Although they lived many miles away they were able to come to our meetings as long as health would permit. It brought joy to our hearts each time they came. Brother "Gene" had a very spiritual mind and his greatest concern was the welfare of the Lord's people and their churches. He had a deep understanding of the scriptures and was a wise counselor. He had a photographic mind and read a lot and could remember what he read.

He loved the God he worshiped and worshiped the God he loved. As his outer body began to perish, his inner man grew stronger. In his last hours upon his bed Sister Peggy heard him praying a most beautiful prayer to God.

May the God of all grace and mercy be with Sister "Peggy" and her dear family.

Humbly submitted,
Elder Kenneth R. Key

CLAUDIS "SQUIB" TUCKER

Brother Claudis "Squib" Tucker departed this life June 21, 2005 at the age of 84. He was born December 28, 1920 and passed away at North Monroe Hospital after a brief illness.

Brother "Squib" united with New Hope Primitive Baptist Church,

Spearsville, Louisiana June 30, 1951 and was baptized August 5, 1951 by Elder R. W. Rhodes. He was ordained a deacon August 3, 1980. He remained a devoted member until his death.

He was well versed in the scriptures and was blessed with a good memory of the scriptures and would help supply the Elders when they needed assistance with a word or portion of scripture.

He was also blessed with a beautiful and strong singing voice and will be sorely missed as our song leader. Not only was he gifted in singing but also in prayer.

Over the years, Brother "Squib" and his dear wife traveled far and near attending the various meetings. He loved to engage in scriptural discussions with those of like precious faith.

Brother "Squib" married Clemmie Everett, who was a loving, devoted wife and helpmate for 62 years. She survives him, along with their son Stephen, and wife Rosemary. He is also survived by four grandchildren: Tonya Worsham and husband, Eric, Lonnie Tucker, Tiffany Tucker and Aaron Chen.

His funeral was conducted by Elder Theron Jones at New Hope Primitive Baptist Church on June 23, 2005. Burial followed in Spearsville Cemetery, awaiting the fulfillment of that sweet hope he was blessed to live by.

Submitted in Love,
Mary Barron

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